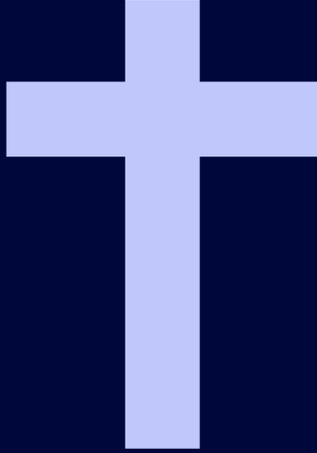


Free Bible Version



The New Testament and Psalms in the Free Bible Version
translation in American English

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Language: English

Dialect: American

Translation by: Dr. Jonathan Gallagher

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Note that in addition to the rules above, revising and adapting God's Word involves a great responsibility to be true to God's Word. See Revelation 22:18-19.

2024-02-21

PDF generated using Haiola and XeLaTeX on 22 Feb 2024 from source files dated 21 Feb 2024
db07ba5e-1edb-5225-92f0-5a83694a36a0

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Matthew

¹ This book is the record of Jesus the Messiah,* the son of David, the son of Abraham, beginning with the family line:

² Abraham was the father† of Isaac; and Isaac the father of Jacob; and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers; ³ and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah (their mother was Tamar); and Perez the father of Hezron; and Hezron the father of Ram; ⁴ and Ram the father of Amminadab; and Amminadab the father of Nahshon; and Nahshon the father of Salmon; ⁵ and Salmon the father of Boaz (his mother was Rahab); and Boaz the father of Obed (his mother was Ruth); and Obed the father of Jesse; ⁶ and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon (his mother had been Uriah's wife); ⁷ and Solomon the father of Rehoboam; and Rehoboam the father of Abijah; and Abijah the father of Asa; ⁸ and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat; and Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram; and Jehoram the father of Uzziah; ⁹ and Uzziah the father of Jotham; and Jotham the father of Ahaz; and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah; ¹⁰ and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh; and Manasseh the father of Amon; and Amon the father of Josiah; ¹¹ and Josiah the father of Jehoiachin and his brothers, at the time of the exile to Babylon. ¹² After the exile to Babylon, Jehoiachin was the father of Shealtiel; and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel; ¹³ and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud; and Abiud the father of Eliakim; and Eliakim the father of Azor; ¹⁴ and Azor the father of Zadok; and Zadok the father of Akim; and Akim the father of Eliud; ¹⁵ and Eliud the father of Eleazar; and Eleazar the father of Matthan; and Matthan the father of Jacob;

¹⁶ and Jacob was the father of Joseph, who was the husband of Mary, to whom Jesus was born, the one who is called the Messiah.

¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David add up to fourteen; from David to the Babylonian exile, fourteen; and from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah, fourteen.

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah happened. His mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph, but before they slept together she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Joseph, her fiancé, was a good man and didn't want to shame her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement discreetly.

²⁰ While he was thinking about all of this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and told him, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to marry Mary because she is pregnant by the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son and you shall call him Jesus, for he will save people from their sins." ²² (Now this all happened to fulfill what the Lord said through the prophet: ²³ "A virgin will become pregnant, and will give birth to a son. They will call him Immanuel," which means "God with us.")‡ ²⁴ Joseph woke up and did what the angel of the Lord told him to do. ²⁵ Joseph married Mary, but did not sleep with her until after she had given birth to a son, whom he named Jesus.

* **1:1** Or "Christ." Christ is the Greek word for Messiah in Hebrew. † **1:2** "Was the father of": or "fathered." ‡ **1:23** See Isaiah 7:14.

2

¹ After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea during the reign of King Herod, wise men* came from the east to Jerusalem.

² "Where is the King of the Jews who has been born?" they asked. "We saw his star in the east and we've come to worship him."

³ When King Herod heard about it, he was very disturbed, and the whole of Jerusalem with him. ⁴ Herod summoned all the chief priests and religious teachers of the people, and asked them where the Messiah was supposed to be born.

⁵ "Bethlehem in Judea," they told him, "for that's what the prophet wrote: ⁶ 'Bethlehem in the land of Judea, you are certainly not the least important of Judah's leading cities,† for a leader will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.‡' "

⁷ Then Herod called the wise men and met with them in private and found out from them exactly when the star appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem, telling them, "When you get there, search for the child. Once you find him let me know so that I can come and worship him too."

⁹ After they had heard what the king had to say they went on their way, and the star which they had seen in the east led them until it stopped right above the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star§ they couldn't contain their happiness! ¹¹ They went into the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. They bowed and worshiped him. Then they opened their bags of treasure and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² Warned by a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by a different route.

¹³ After they'd left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, and told him, "Get up, and take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt. Remain there until I tell you, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

¹⁴ So Joseph got up and took the boy and his mother, and left during the night for Egypt. ¹⁵ They stayed there until Herod's death. This fulfilled what the Lord said through the prophet, "I called my son out of Egypt."*

¹⁶ When Herod realized he'd been fooled by the wise men, he got very angry. He sent men to kill all the young boys in Bethlehem and the regions nearby who were two years old and under. This was based on the time frame he'd discovered from the wise men.† ¹⁷ In this way Jeremiah's prophecy was fulfilled: ¹⁸ "The sound of terrible weeping and mourning was heard in Rama, Rachel crying for her children. They are dead, and she can't be comforted."‡

¹⁹ After Herod died the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and told him, ²⁰ "Get up! Take the child and his mother,

* **2:1** Or "Magi." These are believed to be religious priest-rulers, probably from Persia, who studied the stars. † **2:6** "Cities," implied. ‡ **2:6** Referencing Micah 5:2 and 2 Samuel 5:2.

§ **2:10** Clearly meaning when they saw the star stop, since they had already seen the star and followed it all the way from their home in the east. * **2:15** Quoting Hosea 11:1. † **2:16** In other words, it had been up to two years previously that the star had first appeared to the wise men. ‡ **2:18** Quoting Jeremiah 31:15.

and return to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead.”

²¹ So Joseph got up and took the boy and his mother, and returned to the land of Israel. ²² But Joseph was afraid to go there after he learned that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod as king of Judea. Warned in a dream, Joseph went to the Galilee area ²³ and settled down in Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said, “He will be called a Nazarene.”[§]

3

¹ Some time later John the Baptist appeared on the scene, proclaiming in the Judean desert, ² “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has arrived!” ³ He was the one Isaiah spoke about when he said, “A voice is heard crying out in the desert, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord. Make the paths straight for him.’”^{*}

⁴ John had clothes made of camel hair, with a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts[†] and wild honey. ⁵ People came to him from Jerusalem, all of Judea, and the entire Jordan region, ⁶ and were baptized in the Jordan River, publicly admitting their sins.

⁷ But when John saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to be baptized, he said to them, “You vipers’ brood! Who warned you to run away from the coming judgment?[‡] ⁸ Show by what you do that you have truly repented,[§] ⁹ and don’t presume to say proudly to yourselves, ‘Abraham is our father.’ I tell you that God could make children of Abraham from these stones. ¹⁰ In fact the ax is ready to chop down the trees. Every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ Yes, I baptize you in water to show repentance, but after me is coming one who is greater than I am. I’m not worthy even to remove his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹² He has his winnowing tool^{*} ready in his hand. He will clean up the threshing floor and gather the wheat into the storehouse, but he will burn the chaff with fire that can’t be put out.”

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to change his mind. He told Jesus, “I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me to baptize you?”

¹⁵ “Please do so, because it’s good for us to do what God says is right,” Jesus told him. So John agreed to do it.

¹⁶ Immediately after he was baptized, Jesus came out of the water. The heavens were opened, and he saw God’s Spirit like a dove descending, landing on him. ¹⁷ A voice from heaven said, “This is my son whom I love,[†] who pleases me.”

[§] 2:23 Referring to Jesus. Matthew is not citing one specific prophecy here. ^{*} 3:3 See Isaiah 40:3. [†] 3:4 Probably locust beans. [‡] 3:7 Literally, “wrath.” [§] 3:8 Literally, “Produce fruit worthy of repentance.” ^{*} 3:12 Used after harvest to separate the grain from the chaff. [†] 3:17 Or “This is my son, the beloved one.”

4

¹ Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came and said to him, "If you really are the Son of God, order these stones to turn into bread."

⁴ Jesus answered, "As Scripture says, 'Human beings do not live by only eating bread, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' " *

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city † and placed him on the top of the Temple.

⁶ "If you really are the son of God, then throw yourself off," he told Jesus. "As Scripture says, 'He will order his angels to save you from harm. They will catch you so that you won't fall by tripping over a stone.' " ‡

⁷ Jesus answered, "As Scripture also says, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.' " §

⁸ Then the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in all their glory. ⁹ He said to Jesus, "I will give you all these if you fall down on your knees and worship me."

¹⁰ "Go away, Satan!" said Jesus. "As Scripture says, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve him, and him alone.' " * ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came to care for him.

¹² When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he returned to Galilee. ¹³ Leaving Nazareth, he came to stay in Capernaum, on the shores of the sea in the regions of Zebulun and Naphthali. ¹⁴ This fulfilled what Isaiah the prophet said, ¹⁵ "In the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphthali, on the road to the sea, across the Jordan River, in Galilee where the foreigners live: ¹⁶ The people living in darkness saw a great light; the light of dawn has shined on those living in the land of the shadow of death." † ¹⁷ From that time on Jesus began declaring his message, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has arrived!"

¹⁸ As he was walking by the sea of Galilee Jesus saw two brothers. Simon, also called Peter, and his brother Andrew, were casting a net in the sea. They made their living by catching fish.

¹⁹ "Come and follow me, and I will teach you how to catch people," he told them. ²⁰ They left their nets immediately and followed him. ²¹ Continuing on he saw two other brothers, James and John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them to follow him. ‡ ²² They left the boat and their father immediately, and followed him.

²³ Jesus traveled throughout Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, telling the good news of the kingdom, and healing all the diseases and illnesses the people had. ²⁴ News about him spread throughout the province of Syria. § They brought everyone who was sick to him: people troubled by seizures, the demon-possessed, those who were mentally ill, people who were paralyzed, and he healed all of them.

* **4:4** Quoting Deuteronomy 8:3. † **4:5** Referring to Jerusalem. ‡ **4:6** Quoting Psalms 91:11-12. § **4:7** Quoting Deuteronomy 6:16. * **4:10** Quoting Deuteronomy 6:13. † **4:16** Quoting Isaiah 9:1-2. ‡ **4:21** "To follow him," implied. § **4:24** The area to the north of Galilee.

25 Large crowds followed him from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and the region beyond Jordan.

5

1 When Jesus saw the crowds following him he went up a mountain. There he sat down together with his disciples. 2 He began teaching them, saying:

3 “Blessed are those who recognize they are spiritually poor, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are those who are kind* for they will own the whole world. 6 Blessed are those whose greatest desire† is to do what is right, for they will be satisfied. 7 Blessed are those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy. 8 Blessed are those who have pure minds, for they will see God. 9 Blessed are those who work to bring peace, for they will be called children of God. 10 Blessed are those persecuted for what is right, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. 11 Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and accuse you of all kinds of evil things because of me. 12 Be glad, be really glad, for you will receive a great reward in heaven—for they persecuted the prophets who came before you in just the same way.

13 You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt becomes tasteless,‡ how can you make it salty again? It’s good for nothing, so it’s thrown out and trodden down. 14 You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill can’t be hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a bucket. No, it’s placed on a lamp-stand and it provides light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way you should let your light shine before everyone so they can see the good things you do and praise your heavenly Father.

17 Don’t think I came to abolish the law or the writings of the prophets. I didn’t come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. 18 I assure you, until heaven and earth come to an end, not a single letter, not a single dot of the law will come to an end before everything is fulfilled. 19 So whoever disregards§ the least important commandment, and teaches people to do so, will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever practices and teaches the commandments will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 I tell you, unless your moral rightness* is more than that of the religious teachers and the Pharisees, you can never enter the kingdom of heaven.

21 You’ve heard that the law said† to the people of long ago: ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who commits murder will be condemned as guilty.’‡ 22 But I tell you, anyone who is angry with his brother will be condemned as guilty. Whoever calls his brother an idiot has to

* 5:5 Meaning meek, mild tempered. † 5:6 Literally, “those who are hungry and thirsty.”

‡ 5:13 Or “useless.” § 5:19 Or “invalidates.” * 5:20 “Moral rightness”: Literally, “righteousness.” However, this term is little used in general non-church language and so in this translation it is replaced with phrases such as “those who live right” or “those who do good/right” etc. This is more than being correct, it means living a life that is morally right.

† 5:21 Literally, “You’ve heard that it was said.” This phrase is used often in this passage by Jesus to refer to the laws found in the Old Testament. ‡ 5:21 Or “liable to judgment.” Exodus 20:13 or Deuteronomy 5:17.

answer to the council,[§] but whoever verbally abuses others is liable to the fire of judgment.* ²³ If you're at the altar making an offering, and remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your offering on the altar and go and make peace with him first, and afterwards come back and make your offering. ²⁵ While you're on the way to court with your opponent, make sure you settle things quickly. Otherwise your opponent might hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the court official, and you will be thrown into jail. ²⁶ I tell you the truth: you won't get out of there until you've paid every last penny.

²⁷ You've heard that the law said, 'Do not commit adultery.'[†] ²⁸ But I tell you that everyone who looks lustfully at a woman has already committed adultery with her in his mind. ²⁹ If your right eye leads you to sin, then tear it out and throw it away, because it's better to lose one part of your body than to have your whole body thrown into the fire of judgment. ³⁰ If your right hand leads you to sin, then cut it off and throw it away, for it's better for you to lose one of your limbs than for your whole body to go into the fire of judgment.

³¹ The law also said, 'If a man divorces his wife, he should give her a certificate of divorce.'[‡] ³² But I tell you that any man who divorces his wife except for sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

³³ And again, you've heard that the law said to the people of long ago, 'You shall not perjure yourself. Instead make sure you keep the oaths you swear to the Lord.'[§] ³⁴ But I tell you, don't swear at all. Don't swear by heaven, because it's the throne of God. ³⁵ Don't swear by the earth, because it's God's footstool. Don't swear by Jerusalem, because it's the city of the great King. ³⁶ Don't even swear by your head, because you're not able to make a single hair white or black. ³⁷ Simply say yes or no—more than this comes from the evil one.

³⁸ You've heard that the law said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.'^{*} ³⁹ But I tell you, don't resist someone who is evil. If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn the other cheek to them as well. ⁴⁰ If someone wants to sue you in court and takes your shirt, give them your coat too.[†] ⁴¹ If someone demands that you go one mile, go with them two.[‡] ⁴² Give to those who ask you, and don't turn away those who want to borrow from you. ⁴³ You've heard that the law said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'[§] ⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so you may become children of your heavenly Father. For his sun shines on both the good and the bad; and he makes the rain fall on both those who do right and those who do wrong. ⁴⁶ For if you only love those who love

[§] 5:22 Probably the Sanhedrin council. * 5:22 The word here is literally, "Gehenna," sometimes translated "hell" or "hellfire." Gehenna was the place outside of Jerusalem where fires were lit to dispose of rubbish by burning. However, "hell" is a concept that is derived from Nordic and Anglo-Saxon mythology and does not parallel the idea here. † 5:27 Quoting Exodus 20:14 or Deuteronomy 5:18. ‡ 5:31 Quoting Deuteronomy 24:1. § 5:33 Quoting Numbers 30:2. * 5:38 Quoting Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21. † 5:40 The coat was a much more valuable article of clothing. ‡ 5:41 Probably referring to a Roman soldier demanding his belongings be carried for him. § 5:43 Quoting Leviticus 19:18.

you, what reward do you have? Don't even the tax-collectors do that? ⁴⁷ If you only speak kindly to your family, what more are you doing than anyone else? Even the heathen* do that! ⁴⁸ Grow up and become completely trustworthy,† just as your heavenly Father is trustworthy.

6

¹ Make sure not to do your good deeds in front of people, just so they can be seen. Otherwise you won't have any reward from your Father in heaven. ² When you give to the poor, don't be like the hypocrites* who blow their own trumpets to announce what they're doing in the synagogues and in the streets so that people will praise them. I tell you the truth: they already have their reward. ³ When you give to the poor, don't let your left hand know what your right hand's doing. ⁴ That way what you give will be in secret, and your Father who sees what happens in secret will reward you.

⁵ When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand up and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that people can see them. I promise you, they already have their reward. ⁶ But you, when you pray, go indoors and close the door, and pray to your Father in private, and your Father who sees what happens in private will reward you. ⁷ When you pray, don't babble on meaninglessly like the foreigners do, who think they will be heard because of all the words they repeat. ⁸ Don't be like them, for your Father knows what you need even before you ask him. ⁹ So pray like this:

¹⁰ Our heavenly Father, may your name be honored. May your kingdom come! May your will be carried out in earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Please give to us today the food we need. ¹² Forgive our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us. ¹³ Don't let us be tempted to do wrong,† and save us from the evil one.

¹⁴ For if you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you don't forgive those who sin against you, then your heavenly Father won't forgive your sins.

¹⁶ When you fast, don't be like the hypocrites who put on sad faces and make themselves look terrible so that everyone can see they're fasting. I tell you the truth, they already have their reward. ¹⁷ Instead, when you fast, wash your face and look smart, ¹⁸ so that people won't see you're fasting, and your unseen Father who sees what happens in private will reward you.

¹⁹ Don't pile up wealth here on earth where moths and rust ruin it, and where thieves break in and steal it. ²⁰ Instead, you should store up your wealth in heaven, where moths and rust don't ruin it, and where thieves don't break in and steal it. ²¹ For what you value the most shows who you really are.

* **5:47** Literally, "nations," or "Gentiles." A common term used in the New Testament to identify non-Jews, those regarded as not following the true God. † **5:48** Literally, "perfect, complete, undivided, whole, mature." The idea here is of a way of life totally dedicated to God rather than focusing on some abstract concept of perfection. The focus is on spiritual maturity which translates into being someone dependable, someone who can always be trusted. * **6:2** A word taken from the Greek which literally means "play-acting." † **6:13** Or "Please help us not to give in to temptation."

²² The eye is like a lamp that lights the body. So if your eye is healthy,[‡] then your whole body will have light. ²³ But if your eye is evil, then your whole body will be in the dark. If the light in you is darkness, how dark is that! ²⁴ No one can serve two masters. Either you'll hate one and love the other, or you'll be devoted to one and despise the other. You can't serve both God and Money.[§]

²⁵ That's why I'm telling you not to worry about your life. Don't worry about what to eat, or what to drink, or what clothes to put on. Isn't life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds*—they don't sow or reap or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth more than they are? ²⁷ Who of you by worrying can add a minute to your life? ²⁸ And why are you worried about clothes? Look at the beautiful flowers in the field. See how they grow: they don't work hard, they don't spin thread. ²⁹ But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory was dressed like one of these flowers. ³⁰ So if God decorates the fields like this, grass which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, won't he do much more for you, you people who trust so little? ³¹ So don't worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² These are all the things that the heathen chase after, but your heavenly Father knows everything you need. ³³ Seek his kingdom first, and his way of living right, and everything will be given to you. ³⁴ So don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow can worry about itself. There's already enough evil in every day.

7

¹ Don't judge others, so that you won't be judged. ² For whatever standard you use to judge others will be used to judge you, and whatever measurement you use to measure others will be used to measure you. ³ Why do you see the speck that's in your brother's eye? Don't you notice the plank that's in your own eye? ⁴ How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take out that speck from your eye' when you have a plank in your own eye? ⁵ You're being hypocritical! First get rid of the plank that's in your own eye. Then you'll be able to see clearly to take out the speck from your brother's eye.

⁶ Don't give dogs what's holy. Don't throw your pearls to pigs. That way the pigs won't trample them underfoot, and the dogs won't turn and attack you.

⁷ Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.* ⁸ Everyone who asks, receives; everyone who seeks, finds; and everyone who knocks has the door opened for them. ⁹ Would any of you give your son a stone if he asked for bread? ¹⁰ Or if he asked for fish, would you give him a snake? ¹¹ So if even you who are evil know to give good things to your children,

[‡] **6:22** Or "good, innocent." [§] **6:24** Literally, "Mammon," a transliteration from the Aramaic word for the Syrian god of money and wealth. * **6:26** Literally, "birds of the air;" referring to wild birds rather than domesticated birds. * **7:7** In the original these are present imperatives, and could be translated "Keep on asking" etc.

how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him.

¹² Treat others the way you want them to treat you. This sums up the law and the prophets. ¹³ Enter by the narrow entrance. For the entrance is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many travel that way. ¹⁴ But the entrance is narrow, and the way is difficult that leads to life, and only a few find it.

¹⁵ Watch out for false prophets who come wearing sheep's clothing, but who on the inside are vicious wolves. ¹⁶ You can recognize them by their fruits.† Do people harvest grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ So every good tree produces good fruit, while a bad tree produces bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that doesn't produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ So you'll recognize them by their fruits.

²¹ Not everyone who calls me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven—only those who do the will of my Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to me at the Day of Judgment, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name and drive out demons in your name, and perform many miracles in your name?' ²³ Then I will tell them, 'I never knew you. Leave me, you people who practice wickedness!'[‡] ²⁴ Everyone that hears the words I say, and follows them, is like a wise man who built his house on solid rock. ²⁵ The rain poured down, and the floods rose, and the winds blew hard against the house, but it didn't fall down, because its foundations were on solid rock. ²⁶ Everyone that hears the words I say, and doesn't follow them, is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ The rain poured down, and the floods rose, and the winds blew hard against the house, and it fell down—it totally collapsed."

²⁸ When Jesus finished explaining these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, ²⁹ for he taught like someone with authority, and not like their religious teachers.

8

¹ Large crowds followed Jesus once he'd come down from the mountain. ² A leper approached him and bowed down, worshiping him, and said, "Lord, if you're willing, please heal me." ³ Jesus reached out and touched him with his hand. "I am willing," he said. "Be healed!" Immediately he was healed from his leprosy.

⁴ "Make sure you don't tell anyone," Jesus told him. "Go and show yourself to the priest and give the offering which Moses required as public proof."^{*}

⁵ When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came up to him, begging for help, ⁶ "Lord, my servant is at home, lying down, unable to move. He's in terrible agony."

⁷ "I will come and heal him," Jesus replied.

† **7:16** In other words, you can recognize them by the results of what they do. ‡ **7:23** See Psalms 6:8. * **8:4** Proof that he had been healed and was ceremonially clean. See Leviticus 14.

⁸ The centurion answered, "Lord, I don't merit a visit to my home. Just say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹ For I am myself under the authority of superiors, while I also have soldiers under my command. I command one, 'Go!' and he goes. I command another, 'Come!' and he comes. I tell my servant, 'Do this!' and he does it."

¹⁰ When Jesus heard what he said, he was astonished. He told those who were following him, "I tell you the truth, I haven't found this kind of trust anywhere in Israel. ¹¹ I tell you that many will come from the east and the west, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. ¹² But the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown out into utter darkness where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth."

¹³ Then Jesus told the centurion, "Go home. Because you trusted that it would happen, what you asked for has been done." The servant was healed right away.

¹⁴ When Jesus arrived at Peter's house, he saw that Peter's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever. ¹⁵ He touched her hand and the fever left her. She got up and began making him a meal. ¹⁶ When evening came they brought many who were demon-possessed to Jesus. He made the spirits leave at his command, and he healed all those who were sick. ¹⁷ This fulfilled what the prophet Isaiah said: "He healed our diseases, and freed us from our illnesses."[†]

¹⁸ When Jesus saw the crowds around him, he gave instructions that they[‡] should go to the other side of the lake. ¹⁹ One of the religious teachers approached him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go!"

²⁰ "Foxes have their dens, and wild birds have their nests, but the Son of man has nowhere he can lie down and rest,"[§] Jesus told him.

²¹ Another disciple said to Jesus, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

²² "Follow me. Leave the dead to bury their own dead," Jesus replied.

²³ Then Jesus got into a boat and his disciples went with him. ²⁴ A violent storm suddenly blew up, and waves crashed over the boat, but Jesus went on sleeping. ²⁵ The disciples went over to him and woke him up. "Save us, Lord! We're going to drown!" they shouted.

²⁶ "Why are you so afraid? Why do you trust so little?" he asked them. Then he got up, and commanded the winds and the waves to stop. Everything was absolutely calm. ²⁷ The disciples were astonished, and said, "Who is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

²⁸ When he arrived on the other side, in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men came out of the graveyard to meet him. They were so dangerous that nobody dared to travel that way. ²⁹ They shouted out, "What have you got to do with us, you Son of God? Have you come to torture us before our time?"

³⁰ In the distance a large herd of pigs was feeding. ³¹ The demons pleaded with him, "If you're going to drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs."

[†] **8:17** Quoting Isaiah 53:4. Literally, "lay down his head."

[‡] **8:18** "They" meaning Jesus and the disciples.

§ 8:20

³² “Go!” said Jesus. The demons left the men and went into the pigs. The whole herd ran down the steep hillside into the sea and drowned. ³³ The pig herders ran away. They went to the town and told the people there everything that had taken place, and what had happened to the demon-possessed men. ³⁴ The whole town came out to meet Jesus. When they found him, they begged him to leave their district.

9

¹ So Jesus took a boat back across the lake to the town where he lived. ² There they brought to him a paralyzed man lying on a mat. When Jesus saw how they trusted him, he told the paralyzed man, “My friend,* cheer up! Your sins are forgiven.”

³ In response some of the religious teachers said to themselves, “He’s speaking blasphemy!”

⁴ But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He asked them, “Why are you thinking evil thoughts in your minds? ⁵ What is easier to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or ‘Get up and walk?’ ⁶ But to convince you that the Son of man does have the authority to forgive sins...” he said to the paralyzed man, “Get up, pick up your mat, and go home!” ⁷ The man got up and went home. ⁸ When the crowds saw what had happened, they were scared. Then they praised God that he had given human beings such power.

⁹ As Jesus moved on from there he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth. Jesus called to him, “Follow me!” He got up, and followed Jesus. ¹⁰ While Jesus was eating at Matthew’s home, many tax-collectors and sinners came and sat down at the table with Jesus and his disciples. ¹¹ When the Pharisees saw this they asked Jesus’ disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax-collectors and sinners?”

¹² When Jesus heard the question, he replied, “Those who are well don’t need a doctor, but sick people do. ¹³ Go and discover what this means: ‘I want mercy, not sacrifice. For I didn’t come to call those who do what’s right—I came to call sinners.’”†

¹⁴ Then the disciples of John came and asked, “Why is that we and the Pharisees fast frequently, but your disciples don’t?”

¹⁵ “Do wedding guests mourn while the bridegroom is with them?” Jesus responded. “But the time is coming when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and then they will fast. ¹⁶ No one puts a new patch on old clothes, otherwise it will shrink and make the tear worse. ¹⁷ No one puts new wine in old wineskins either, otherwise the wineskins will burst, spilling the wine and ruining the wineskins. No, new wine is put into new wineskins, and both last.”

¹⁸ While he was telling them this, one of the leading officials came and bowed before him. “My daughter has just died,” the man told Jesus. “But if you come and place your hand on her, I know she will come back to life.”

¹⁹ Jesus and his disciples got up and followed him. ²⁰ At that moment a woman who had been sick with bleeding for twelve years came up

* **9:2** Literally, “child.” † **9:13** Quoting Hosea 6:6.

behind him and touched the hem of his cloak. ²¹ She had told herself, "If I can just touch his cloak, I'll be healed."

²² Jesus turned and saw her. "Be happy, for your trust in me has healed you," he told her.† The woman was immediately healed.

²³ Jesus arrived at the official's house. He saw the flute-players and the crowd that was weeping loudly. ²⁴ "Please leave," he told them, "For the girl isn't dead, she's just asleep." But they laughed and made fun of him. ²⁵ But once the crowd had been sent out, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. ²⁶ News of what happened spread throughout that region.

²⁷ As Jesus continued on from there, two blind men followed him, shouting, "Son of David, please have mercy on us!" ²⁸ When Jesus arrived at the house where he was staying, the blind men came in too.

"Are you convinced that I'm able to do this?" he asked them.

"Yes, Lord," they replied.

²⁹ Then Jesus touched their eyes, and said, "Because of your trust in me it will happen!" ³⁰ And they could see. Then Jesus warned them, "Make sure nobody knows about this." ³¹ But they went and spread the word about Jesus everywhere.

³² As Jesus and his disciples were leaving, a man was brought to him who was dumb and demon-possessed. ³³ Once the demon had been thrown out of him, the dumb man spoke, and the crowds were amazed. "Nothing ever happened like this before in Israel," they said. ³⁴ But the Pharisees remarked, "He throws out demons using the power of the chief of demons."

³⁵ Jesus went all over, visiting the towns and villages. He taught in their synagogues, telling them about the good news of the kingdom, and he healed all kinds of sicknesses and diseases. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, Jesus was deeply moved with compassion for them, because they were troubled and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ He told his disciples, "The harvest is large, but there are only a few workers. ³⁸ Pray to the Lord of the harvest, and ask him to send more workers for his harvest."

10

¹ Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them power to throw out evil spirits, and to heal all kinds of diseases and sicknesses.

² These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, (also called Peter), Andrew his brother, James the son of Zebedee, John his brother, ³ Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew the tax-collector, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, ⁴ Simon the revolutionary, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus.

⁵ These Twelve Jesus sent out, telling them, "Don't go to the foreigners, or to any Samaritan city. ⁶ You are to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷ Wherever you go, tell the people, 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' ⁸ Heal those who are sick. Resurrect the dead. Cure the lepers. Drive out demons. You received freely, so give freely! ⁹ Don't carry any gold, silver, or copper coins in your pockets, ¹⁰ or a

† 9:22 Jesus calls her "daughter," but such a form of address is not usual in modern English.

bag for your journey, or two cloaks, or sandals, or a walking stick, for a worker deserves to be supported.* ¹¹ Wherever you go, whatever town or village, ask for someone who lives according to good principles, and remain there until you leave. ¹² When you enter the house, give it your blessing. ¹³ If the home deserves it, let your peace[†] rest on it, but if it doesn't deserve it, let your peace return to you.

¹⁴ If someone doesn't welcome you, and refuses to listen to what you have to say, then leave that house or that town, shaking its dust off your feet as you go. ¹⁵ I tell you the truth, it will be better for Sodom and Gomorrah at the Day of Judgment than for that town!

¹⁶ Look, I'm sending you out like sheep among wolves. So be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. ¹⁷ Watch out for those who will hand you over to be tried by town councils[‡] and will whip you in their synagogues. ¹⁸ You will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, to witness to them and to the foreigners. ¹⁹ But when they put you on trial, don't worry about how you should speak or what you should say, because you'll be told what to say at the right time. ²⁰ For it isn't you who will speak but the spirit of the Father will speak through you. ²¹ Brother will betray brother and have him killed, and a father will do the same to his child. Children will rebel against their parents, and have them put to death. ²² Everyone will hate you because you follow me, but those who endure until the end will be saved.

²³ When you're persecuted in one town, run away to the next. I'm telling the truth: you won't finish going to the towns of Israel before the Son of man comes. ²⁴ Disciples are not more important than their teacher; servants are not more important than their master. ²⁵ Disciples should be satisfied to become like their teacher, and servants like their master. If the head of the house has been called the head demon Beelzebul,[§] then the members of his household will be demonized even more! ²⁶ So don't be frightened of them, for there's nothing covered that won't be exposed, and nothing hidden that won't be made known. ²⁷ What I tell you here in the dark, declare when it's light, and what you hear whispered in your ear, shout from the rooftops. ²⁸ Don't be afraid of those who can kill you physically, but can't kill you spiritually. Instead, be afraid of the one who can destroy you physically and spiritually in the fires of destruction.* ²⁹ Aren't two sparrows sold for just one penny? But not a single one of them falls to the ground without your Father knowing about it. ³⁰ Even the hairs on your head have all been counted. ³¹ So don't worry—you're worth more than many sparrows!

³² Anyone who publicly declares their commitment[†] to me, I will also declare my commitment to them before my Father in heaven. ³³ But anyone who publicly denies me, I will also deny before my Father in heaven. ³⁴ Don't think I've come to bring peace on earth. I haven't come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ I've come 'to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against

* **10:10** Or "fed." † **10:13** "Peace," meaning blessing. ‡ **10:17** Literally, "sanhedrins," local religious courts. § **10:25** Beelzebul, referring to Satan. * **10:28** Literally, "the fires of Gehenna." See note under 5:22. † **10:32** Literally, "confess."

her mother-in-law. ³⁶ Your enemies will be those of your own family! ‡
³⁷ If you love your father or mother more than me you don't deserve to be mine, and if you love your son or daughter more than me you don't deserve to be mine. ³⁸ If you don't pick up your cross and follow me you don't deserve to be mine. ³⁹ If you try to save your life, you will lose it, § but if you lose your life because of me you will save it. ⁴⁰ Those who welcome you welcome me, and those who welcome me welcome the one that sent me. ⁴¹ Those who welcome a prophet because that's what they are will receive the same reward as a prophet. Those who welcome someone who does right will receive the same reward as someone who does right. ⁴² I tell you the truth, those who give a drink of cool water to the least important of my disciples will definitely not miss out on their reward."

11

¹ When Jesus had finished giving instructions to his twelve disciples, he left to go and teach and speak publicly in the nearby towns. ² While John was in prison he heard what the Messiah was doing, so he sent his disciples ³ to ask on his behalf, "Are you the one we were expecting to come, or should we continue to look for someone else?"

⁴ Jesus answered them, "Go back and tell John what you hear and what you see. ⁵ The blind can see, the crippled can walk, the lepers are healed, the deaf can hear, the dead are resurrected, and the poor hear the good news. ⁶ Blessed are those who don't reject me!"

⁷ As they left, Jesus began to talk to the crowds about John. "What were you expecting to see when you went out into the desert? A reed tossed about by the wind? ⁸ So what did you go to see? A man dressed in fancy clothes? People dressed like that live in kings' palaces. ⁹ So what did you go to see then? A prophet? Yes, and I tell you he is much more than a prophet! ¹⁰ He's the one this Scripture was written about: 'I'm sending my messenger on ahead of you. He will prepare your way for you.'* ¹¹ I tell you the truth, that among humanity† there's no one greater than John the Baptist, but even the least important in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is. ¹² From the time of John the Baptist up till now the kingdom of heaven continues to be under attack and violent people are trying to seize it by force. ¹³ For all the prophets and the law‡ spoke for God until John came. ¹⁴ If you're prepared to believe it, he is Elijah, the one who was expected to come.§ ¹⁵ Anybody with ears should be listening!

¹⁶ What shall I compare this generation to? It's like children sitting in the market places shouting to each other, ¹⁷ 'We played the flute for you and you didn't dance; we sang sad songs and you didn't cry.' ¹⁸ John didn't come feasting and drinking, so people say, 'He's devil-possessed!' ¹⁹ On the other hand the Son of man came and did feast and drink, and people say, 'Look, he's greedy and drinks too much;

‡ **10:36** Referencing Micah 7:6. § **10:39** In other words, if you try to hold on to your life by your own human effort, you will not succeed. * **11:10** Quoting Malachi 3:1. † **11:11** Literally, "among those who are born of women." ‡ **11:13** Referring to the message of the

Old Testament. § **11:14** See Malachi 4:5.

he's a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is shown to be right by what it does..."

²⁰ Then he began to reprimand the towns where he'd done most of his miracles because they had not repented. ²¹ "Shame on you, Korazin! Shame on you, Bethsaida! If the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which happened among you, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes long ago. ²² But I tell you that on the Day of Judgment it will be better for Tyre and Sidon than it will for you! ²³ And what about you, Capernaum? Will you be exalted to heaven? No, you'll go down to Hades! If the miracles had been performed in Sodom which happened among you, Sodom would still be here today. ²⁴ But I tell you that on the Day of Judgment it will be better for Sodom than it will for you!"

²⁵ Then Jesus prayed, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for you've hidden these things from the clever and sophisticated. Instead you've revealed them to ordinary people.* ²⁶ Yes, Father, you were pleased to do this! ²⁷ Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father, and no one really understands the Son, except the Father, and no one really understands the Father, except the Son, and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. ²⁸ Come to me, all of you who struggle and who are burdened down. I will give you rest. ²⁹ Accept my yoke, and learn from me. For I am kind and I have a humble heart, and in me you will find the rest you need. ³⁰ For my yoke is gentle, and my burden is light."

12

¹ Around that time Jesus was walking through fields of grain on the Sabbath day. His disciples were hungry so they started to pick ears of grain and eat them. ² When the Pharisees saw this they said to Jesus, "Look at your disciples—they're doing what isn't allowed on the Sabbath!"

³ But Jesus told them, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his men were hungry? ⁴ He went into the house of God, and he and his men ate the sacred bread that they weren't allowed to eat since it's only for the priests. ⁵ Haven't you read in the law that on the Sabbath day the priests in the Temple break the Sabbath but are not considered guilty? ⁶ However, I tell you that someone is here who is greater than the Temple! ⁷ If you'd known the meaning of this Scripture, 'I want mercy, and not sacrifice,'* you wouldn't have condemned an innocent man. ⁸ For the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath."

⁹ Then Jesus left and went into their synagogue. ¹⁰ A man was there with a crippled hand. "Does the law allow healing on the Sabbath?" they asked him, looking for a reason to accuse him.

¹¹ "Suppose you have a sheep and it falls into a hole in the ground on the Sabbath. Don't you grab hold of it and pull it out?" Jesus asked them. ¹² "Don't you think a human being is worth much more than a sheep? So yes, you are allowed to do good on the Sabbath." ¹³ Then

* **11:25** Literally, "infants." * **12:7** Quoting Hosea 6:6.

he said to the man, "Hold out your hand." The man held out his hand, and it was healed, just as healthy as the other hand.

¹⁴ But the Pharisees went out and plotted how to kill Jesus. ¹⁵ Knowing this, Jesus left, with large crowds following him. He healed all of them, ¹⁶ but instructed them not to tell people who he was. ¹⁷ This fulfilled what Isaiah the prophet said:

¹⁸ "This is my servant whom I've chosen,
The one I love, who pleases me.

I will put my Spirit on him,
And he will tell the foreigners what's right.

¹⁹ He won't argue, he won't shout out,
And nobody will hear his voice in the streets.

²⁰ He won't break a damaged reed,
And he won't extinguish a smoking wick,
Until he has proved that his judgment is right,[†]

²¹ And foreigners will put their hope in him."[‡]

²² Then a man was brought to Jesus who was demon-possessed and blind and dumb. Jesus healed him, so that the dumb man could speak and see. ²³ All the crowds were amazed, and asked, "Could this really be the son of David?"[§]

²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard this, they replied, "This man can only throw out demons through the power of Beelzebul, the chief of demons!"

²⁵ Knowing what they were thinking, Jesus told them, "Any kingdom that is divided against itself will be destroyed. No town or household that is divided against itself can stand. ²⁶ If Satan drives out Satan, then he's divided against himself—so how could his kingdom stand? ²⁷ If I'm throwing out demons in the name of Beelzebul, in whose name are your people throwing out demons? Your own people prove you're wrong! ²⁸ But if I'm throwing out demons through the power of the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you!"

²⁹ Can you enter a strong man's house and take his belongings unless you tie him up first? If you do that then you can take everything in his house. ³⁰ Those who are not with me are against me, and those who do not gather together with me do the opposite: they are scattering. ³¹ That's why I'm telling you that every sin and blasphemy you commit will be forgiven, except blasphemy against the Spirit which won't be forgiven. ³² Those who say something against the Son of man will be forgiven, but those who say something against the Holy Spirit won't be forgiven, neither in this life nor the next. ³³ Either decide that the tree is good, and its fruit is good, or decide that the tree is bad and its fruit is bad—for the tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴ You viper's brood, how can you who are evil say anything good? For your mouth simply says what your mind is busy thinking about. ³⁵ A good person brings out good from their store of good things, and an evil person brings out evil from their store of evil things. ³⁶ I tell you, people will have to account

[†] 12:20 Or "has brought victory to justice." [‡] 12:21 Literally, "hope in his name." These verses are a quote from Isaiah 42:1-4. [§] 12:23 Meaning the Messiah who was expected to come.

for every careless thing they say on the Day of Judgment. ³⁷ For what you say will either vindicate you or condemn you.”

³⁸ Then some of the religious teachers and Pharisees came to him and said, “Teacher, we want you to show us a miraculous sign.”

³⁹ “Evil people who don’t trust in God are the ones who look for a miraculous sign. The only sign they will be given is the sign of the prophet Jonah,” Jesus told them. ⁴⁰ “In the same way Jonah was in the belly of a huge fish for three days and three nights, the Son of man will lie in the earth for three days and three nights. ⁴¹ The people of Nineveh will rise in the judgment together with this generation and they will condemn it because they repented in response to Jonah’s message—and as you see, there’s someone greater than Jonah here! ⁴² The Queen of the South will be raised in the judgment together with this generation and will condemn it because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon—and as you see, there’s someone greater than Solomon here! ⁴³ When an evil spirit leaves someone, it wanders through deserted places looking for rest, and finds nowhere to stay. ⁴⁴ So it says, ‘I’ll go back to the place I left,’ and when it returns it finds the place empty, all clean and tidy. ⁴⁵ Then it goes and brings back seven other spirits even more evil than it is, and it enters and lives there. So the person ends up worse than they were at the beginning. That’s the way it will be with this evil generation.”

⁴⁶ While he was speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers arrived and stood outside, wanting to talk to him. ⁴⁷ Someone came and told him, “Look, your mother and brothers are outside, wanting to talk to you.”

⁴⁸ “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” Jesus asked. ⁴⁹ He pointed at his disciples, and said, “Look, they are my mother and my brothers! ⁵⁰ For those who do the will of my heavenly Father, they are my brother, sister, and mother!”

13

¹ Later that day Jesus left the house, and sat down to teach* beside the lake. ² So many people gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down there to teach, while all the crowds stood on the beach. ³ He explained many things to them, using stories as illustrations.†

“The sower went out to sow,” he began. ⁴ “As he was sowing, some of the seeds fell on the path. The birds came and ate them up. ⁵ Other seeds fell on stony ground where there wasn’t much earth where they sprouted quickly. ⁶ The sun rose and scorched them and they withered because they had no roots. ⁷ Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked them. ⁸ Still other seeds fell on good soil. They produced a harvest—some one hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times what had been planted. ⁹ Anybody who has ears should be listening!”

¹⁰ The disciples came to Jesus and asked him, “Why do you use illustrations when you speak to the people?”

* **13:1** Implied. The religious teachers sat down when they wanted to instruct their disciples.

† **13:3** “Stories as illustrations,” literally, “parables.”

11 "You're privileged to have revealed to you the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but they're not given such insights," Jesus replied. 12 "Those who already have[‡] will have more given to them, more than enough. But those who don't have, whatever they have will be taken away from them. 13 That's why I speak to them in illustrations. For even though they see, they do not see; and even though they hear, they do not hear; nor do they understand. §

14 The prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled in them: 'Even though you hear, you won't understand, and even though you see, you won't perceive. 15 They have a hard-hearted attitude, they don't want to listen, and they've closed their eyes. If they didn't they might be able to see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand in their minds. Then they could return to me and I would heal them.'*

16 Your eyes are blessed, for they see. Your ears are blessed too, for they hear. 17 I'm telling you, many prophets and good people longed to see what you're seeing, but didn't see it. They longed to hear what you're hearing, but didn't hear it.

18 So listen to the story of the sower. 19 When people hear the message about the kingdom and don't understand it, the evil one comes along and rips out what was sown in them. This is what happens to the seeds sown on the path. 20 The seeds sown on stony ground are people who hear the message and happily accept it straight away. 21 They last for a while, but because they don't have roots, when problems and troubles come, they quickly fall away. 22 The seeds sown among thorns are people who hear the message, but then life's worries and the temptation of money choke the message so that they become fruitless. 23 The seeds sown on good soil are people who hear the message, and understand it, and who produce a good harvest—some one hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times what was sown."

24 Then he told them another illustrated story: "The kingdom of heaven is like a farmer who sowed good seeds in his field. 25 But while his workers were sleeping, an enemy came and sowed weed seeds[†] on top of the wheat. Then they left. 26 So when the wheat grew and produced ears of grain, the weeds also grew up. 27 The farmer's workers came and asked him, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seeds in your field? Where did the weeds come from?'

28 'Some enemy has done this,' he replied. 'Do you want us to go and pull up the weeds?' they asked him. 29 'No,' he answered, 'as you pull up the weeds, you might uproot the wheat too. 30 Let them both grow until harvest, and then at harvest-time I'll tell the reapers to first gather the weeds, tie them up into bundles and burn them, and then gather the wheat and store it in my barn.' "

31 He gave them another illustration: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a farmer sowed in his field. 32 Even though it's the tiniest of seeds it grows much bigger than other plants. In fact it grows into a tree big enough for birds to roost in its branches."

‡ **13:12** Probably meaning "have understanding." § **13:13** Jesus was referencing the Old Testament here. It could be any of these: Deuteronomy 29:4, Isaiah 42:20, Jeremiah 5:21, Ezekiel 12:2. * **13:15** Quoting Isaiah 6:9-10. † **13:25** Actually "darnel," or "false wheat," a weed that looked similar to wheat.

³³ He told them another illustrated story: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman mixed with a large quantity[‡] of flour, until all the dough was raised.” ³⁴ Jesus explained all these things to the crowds using illustrated stories—in fact he didn’t speak to them without using stories. ³⁵ This fulfilled the prophet’s words: “I will speak using stories, and I will explain things hidden from the creation of the world.”[§]

³⁶ Then he left the crowds and went into a house. His disciples came over to him, and asked him, “Please explain to us the story about the weeds in the field.”

³⁷ “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of man,” Jesus explained. ³⁸ “The field is the world. The good seeds are the children of the kingdom. The weed seeds are the children of the evil one. ³⁹ The enemy that sowed the weed seeds is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world. The reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are harvested and burned so it will be at the end of the world. ⁴¹ The Son of man will send out his angels, and they will gather up every sinful thing and everyone who does evil, ⁴² and will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. ⁴³ Then those who live right will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father.* Anybody with ears should be listening!

⁴⁴ The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. A man found it, reburied it, and then full of joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. ⁴⁵ The kingdom of heaven is also like a trader looking for good pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found the most expensive pearl ever he went and sold all he had and bought it. ⁴⁷ Once more, the kingdom of heaven is like a fishing net thrown into the sea that caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸ When it was full it was dragged ashore. The good fish were put into baskets while the bad ones were thrown away.

⁴⁹ That’s the way it will be when the end of the world comes. The angels will go out and separate the evil people from the good, ⁵⁰ and throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

⁵¹ Now do you understand everything?”

“Yes,” they replied.

⁵² “Every religious teacher who’s learned about the kingdom of heaven is like a house-owner who brings out from his storeroom both new and old treasures,” Jesus said.

⁵³ After Jesus finished telling these stories, he left. ⁵⁴ He went back to his home town[†] and taught in the synagogue there. People were amazed, and asked, “Where does he get his wisdom and miracles from? ⁵⁵ Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother’s name Mary, and his brothers James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? ⁵⁶ Don’t his sisters live here among us? So where does he get all this from?” ⁵⁷ And so they refused to believe in him.

“A prophet is honored everywhere except in his homeland and in his family,” Jesus told them. ⁵⁸ Since they failed to trust in him, he did not do many miracles there.

[‡] **13:33** Approximately 50 pounds, or 23 kilos. [§] **13:35** Quoting Psalms 78:2. * **13:43** See Daniel 12:3. [†] **13:54** Nazareth.

14

¹ At that time Herod the tetrarch* heard what Jesus was doing ² and he told his servants, "He must be John the Baptist resurrected from the dead, and that's why he has such powers!" ³ Herod had detained John, and had him put in chains and imprisoned on account of Herodias, the wife of Philip, his brother. ⁴ For John had told him, "It's not legal for you to marry her." ⁵ Herod wanted to kill John but he was afraid of the people's reaction for they considered John a prophet.

⁶ However, on Herod's birthday the daughter† of Herodias danced for the party, and Herod was delighted with her. ⁷ So he promised with an oath to give her whatever she wanted. ⁸ Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a plate the head of John the Baptist." ⁹ Then the king regretted the promise he had made, but because of the oaths he'd made in front of his dinner guests, he gave the order to do it. ¹⁰ The order was passed on and John was beheaded in prison. ¹¹ John's head was brought on a plate and given to the girl, who took it to her mother. ¹² John's disciples came and took the body, and buried him. Then they went and told Jesus.

¹³ When Jesus heard the news he went away by boat to a quiet place to be alone, but when the crowds learned where he was, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When Jesus got out of the boat and saw the huge crowds, he was full of sympathy for them, and healed their sick. ¹⁵ As evening came the disciples went up to him and said, "This place is miles from anywhere and it's getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves."

¹⁶ But Jesus told them, "They don't need to leave. You give them something to eat!"

¹⁷ "All we have here are five loaves and a couple of fish," they replied.

¹⁸ "Bring them to me," said Jesus. ¹⁹ He told the crowds to sit down on the grass. Then he took the five loaves and the two fish, looked up to heaven and blessed them. After that he broke the loaves into pieces and gave the bread to the disciples, and the disciples gave it to the crowds. ²⁰ Everybody ate until they were full. Then they collected up the leftovers which filled twelve baskets. ²¹ Some five thousand men ate the food, not counting women and children.

²² Right after this he made the disciples get into the boat and go back to the other side of the lake while he sent the crowds on their way. ²³ After he'd sent the crowds away, he went up into the mountains to pray. Evening came and he was there all alone. ²⁴ By now the boat was a long way out from land, being pounded by the waves because the wind was blowing against it. ²⁵ About 3 a.m.‡ Jesus caught up with them, walking on the sea. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified. They screamed out in fear, "It's a ghost!"

²⁷ But immediately Jesus said to them, "Don't worry, it's me! Don't be afraid!"

²⁸ "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come over to you, walking on the water," Peter replied.

* **14:1** "Tetrarch," meaning a ruler of a fourth part. In this case it was the region of Galilee.

† **14:6** Usually identified as Salome. ‡ **14:25** Literally, "the fourth watch of the night."

29 “Come on then,” said Jesus. Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water towards Jesus. 30 But when he saw how strong the wind was, he became scared, and started to sink. “Lord! Save me!” he cried out. 31 Immediately Jesus reached out and grabbed hold of him, and said, “You have such little trust in me. Why did you doubt?” 32 When they got into the boat, the wind died down, 33 and those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “You really are the Son of God!”

34 After crossing the lake they arrived at Gennesaret. 35 When the people there realized Jesus was there, they let everyone in the whole area know. They brought all who were sick to him, 36 and pleaded with him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak. Everyone that touched him was healed.

15

1 Then some Pharisees and religious teachers from Jerusalem came to Jesus and asked him, 2 “Why do your disciples break the tradition of our forefathers by not washing their hands before they eat a meal?”

3 “Why do you break God's commandment because of your tradition?” Jesus replied. 4 “For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’* and ‘Those who curse their father or mother should be put to death.’† 5 But you say that if someone tells their father or mother, ‘Whatever you might have expected to get from me is now a gift to God,’ then 6 they don't have to honor their father. In this way you've annulled God's word for the sake of your tradition. 7 You hypocrites! How well Isaiah described you when he prophesied: 8 ‘These people say they honor me but in their minds they don't care about me.‡ 9 Their worship of me is pointless. What they teach are just man-made requirements.’”§

10 He called the crowd over and told them, “Listen, and understand this: 11 it's not what goes into you through your mouth that defiles you. It's what comes out of your mouth that defiles you.”

12 Then Jesus' disciples came to him and said, “You do realize that the Pharisees were offended by what you said.”

13 “Every plant my heavenly Father didn't plant will be uprooted,” Jesus replied. 14 “Forget about them—they are blind guides.* If a blind man leads another blind man, then they'll both fall into a ditch.”

15 Then Peter asked, “Please tell us what you mean by this illustration.”

16 “Haven't you understood this yet?” replied Jesus. 17 “Don't you see that whatever goes in through the mouth then passes through the stomach, and then leaves the body as waste?† 18 But what comes out through the mouth comes from the mind, and that's what defiles you. 19 For what comes from the mind are evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, and blasphemy 20 and those are what defile you. Eating with unwashed hands doesn't defile you.”

* 15:4 Quoting Exodus 20:12 or Deuteronomy 5:16. † 15:4 Quoting Exodus 21:17 or Leviticus 20:9. ‡ 15:8 Or “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are a long way from me.” § 15:9 Quoting Isaiah 29:13. * 15:14 Referring to the Pharisees. † 15:17 Literally, “discharged into the sewer.”

²¹ Jesus left and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²² A Canaanite woman from that area came, shouting out, "Lord, son of David! Please have mercy on me, because my daughter is suffering badly because she's possessed by a demon!" ²³ But Jesus didn't reply at all. His disciples came to him and told him, "Tell her to stop following us. All her shouting is really annoying!"

²⁴ "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," Jesus said to the woman. ²⁵ But the woman came and kneeled before him, and said, "Lord, please help me!"

²⁶ "It's not right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs,‡" Jesus told her.

²⁷ "Yes, Lord, but even dogs are allowed to eat crumbs that fall from their master's table," she replied.

²⁸ "You have great trust in me," Jesus answered. "Your wish is granted!" And her daughter was healed immediately.

²⁹ Jesus returned, passing by the Sea of Galilee. He went into the mountains nearby where he sat down. ³⁰ Huge crowds came to him, bringing those who were lame, blind, crippled, dumb, and many others who were sick. They laid them on the ground at his feet, and he healed them. ³¹ The crowd was astounded at what they saw happen: the deaf could speak, the crippled were healed, the lame could walk, and the blind could see. They praised the God of Israel.

³² Jesus called his disciples over and told them, "I feel really sorry for all these people, because they've been with me now for three days, and they have nothing to eat. I don't want to send them away hungry, in case they faint on their way home."

³³ "Where could we find enough bread here in this desert to feed such a huge crowd?" the disciples responded.

³⁴ "How many loaves of bread do you have?" Jesus asked.

"Seven, and a few small fish," they replied.

³⁵ Jesus told the crowd to sit down on the ground. ³⁶ He took the seven loaves and the fish, and after blessing the food he broke it into pieces and gave it to the disciples, and the disciples gave it to the crowds. ³⁷ Everybody ate until they were full, and then they collected the leftovers, filling seven baskets. ³⁸ Four thousand men ate the food, not counting women and children. ³⁹ Then he sent the crowds away, got into a boat, and went to the Magadan region.

16

¹ The Pharisees and Sadducees came to test* Jesus, demanding that he show them a sign from heaven.

² Jesus replied, "In the evening you say, 'It'll be a fine day tomorrow, because the sky is red,' ³ while in the morning you say, 'It'll be bad weather today, because the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to predict the weather by what the sky looks like, but you can't recognize the signs of the times! ⁴ Evil people who don't trust in God are the

‡ **15:26** The word used for dogs indicates pet dogs, or puppies. * **16:1** Since the test was in an attempt to discredit Jesus, this could also be translated "came to trap Jesus."

ones who look for a miraculous sign, and no sign will be given to them except the sign of Jonah." He left them and went away.

⁵ Going to the other side of the lake, the disciples forgot to bring bread with them. ⁶ "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees," Jesus told them.

⁷ The disciples started arguing among themselves. "He's saying that[†] because we didn't bring any bread," they concluded. ⁸ Jesus knew what they were saying and said, "You have so little trust in me! Why are you arguing among yourselves about not having any bread? ⁹ Haven't you worked it out yet? Don't you remember the five loaves that fed five thousand? How many baskets of leftovers did you collect? ¹⁰ And what about the seven loaves that fed the four thousand? How many baskets of leftovers did you collect? ¹¹ Haven't you worked it out yet that I wasn't talking to you about bread? Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees!" ¹² Then they realized that he wasn't warning them to watch out for bread yeast, but about the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

¹³ When Jesus arrived in the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of man is?"

¹⁴ "Some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets," they replied.

¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked them. "Who do you say I am?"

¹⁶ "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God," Simon Peter replied.

¹⁷ "You are truly blessed, Simon son of John," Jesus told him. "For this wasn't revealed to you by human flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ I also tell you that you are Peter,[‡] and on this rock I will build my church and the powers of death[§] won't overcome it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you ban on earth will be banned in heaven, and whatever you allow on earth will be allowed in heaven." ²⁰ Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he would have to go Jerusalem, and that he would suffer terribly at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and religious teachers; and that he would be killed, but he would rise again on the third day.

²² Peter took Jesus aside and started to tell him he shouldn't talk like that. "God forbid, Lord, that this would ever happen to you!" he said.

²³ Jesus turned to Peter, and told him, "Get away from me, Satan! You are a trap to trip me up,^{*} because you're thinking in a human way, and not as God thinks!"

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, "If you want to be a follower of mine, you must deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me. ²⁵ For if you want to save your life you will lose it, and if you lose your life for my sake you will save it. ²⁶ What benefit is it for you to gain the whole world, yet lose your life? What would you give in exchange for your life? ²⁷ For the Son of man is going to come in his Father's

[†] **16:7** Implied. [‡] **16:18** Peter means "a stone," in contrast to the word for solid rock also used in this verse. [§] **16:18** Literally, "gates of Hades." ^{*} **16:23** Literally, a "stumbling block" or a "snare."

glory, together with his angels. Then he will give everyone what they deserve according to what they've done. ²⁸ I tell you the truth, there are some standing here who won't die[†] before they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

17

¹ Six days later Jesus took Peter, James and his brother John, with him and they went up a high mountain to be by themselves. ² He was transformed in front of them. His face shone like the sun. His clothes turned white as light. ³ Then suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared before them, talking together with Jesus.

⁴ Peter spoke up, saying to Jesus, "Lord, it's really good to be here. If you want I'll make three shelters—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

⁵ While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them. A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my son whom I love, who pleases me. Listen to him." ⁶ When they heard this, the disciples fell down on their faces, absolutely terrified. ⁷ Jesus went over to them and touched them. "Get up," he told them. "Don't be afraid." ⁸ When they looked up they didn't see anybody there except Jesus.

⁹ As they descended the mountain Jesus gave them strict instructions. "Don't tell anybody what you saw until the Son of man has risen from the dead," he told them.

¹⁰ "So why do the religious teachers say that Elijah has to come first?" his disciples asked.

¹¹ "It's true that Elijah comes to put everything in place," Jesus replied, ¹² "but I tell you that Elijah has already come and yet people didn't recognize who he was. They did whatever they felt like to him. In the same way the Son of man will also suffer at their hands." ¹³ Then the disciples realized that Jesus was referring to John the Baptist.

¹⁴ When they approached the crowd, a man came to Jesus, and kneeled before him. ¹⁵ "Lord, please have mercy on my son," he said. "He loses his mind* and suffers such terrible fits that he often falls in the fire or into water. ¹⁶ I brought him to your disciples but they couldn't heal him."

¹⁷ "You people[†] refuse to trust me, and are so corrupt!" Jesus responded. "How long do I have to remain here with you? How long do I have to put up with you? Bring him here to me!" ¹⁸ Jesus confronted the demon and it left the boy, and he was healed straight away.

¹⁹ Later the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked him, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

²⁰ "Because you don't trust enough," Jesus told them. "I tell you, even if your trust was as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible for you." ²¹ ‡

[†] 16:28 Literally, "taste death." * 17:15 Literally, "moonstruck." This parallels the English term "lunatic" from the Latin "lunaticus." † 17:17 Literally, "generation." ‡ 17:21 Verse 21 is not in the earliest manuscripts.

22 As they were walking together through Galilee, Jesus told them, "The Son of man is going to be betrayed and people will have power[§] over him. 23 They will kill him, but on the third day he will rise again." The disciples were filled with sadness.

24 When they arrived at Capernaum, those who were in charge of collecting the half-shekel Temple tax came to Peter and asked him, "Your teacher does pay the half-shekel tax, doesn't he?"

25 "Yes, of course," Peter replied.

When he returned to where they were staying, Jesus anticipated the issue. "What do you think, Simon?" Jesus asked him. "Do the kings of this world collect their taxes and duties from their own sons or from others?"

26 "From others," Peter replied. So Jesus told him, "In that case the sons are exempt. 27 But to avoid giving offense to anyone, go to the lake, and throw out a fishing line with a hook. Pull in the first fish you catch, and when you open its mouth there you'll find a *stater* coin.* Take the coin and give it to them for both me and you."

18

1 Around that time the disciples came to Jesus, and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

2 Jesus called over a small child. He had the child stand in front of them. 3 "I tell you the truth, unless you change the way you think and become like little children, you won't ever enter the kingdom of heaven," he told them. 4 "But whoever humbles themselves and becomes like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 Whoever accepts a little child like this in my name accepts me. 6 But anyone who makes one of these little ones who trust in me sin, it would be better for them to have a large millstone* tied around their neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea.

7 What a disaster is coming on the world for all its temptations to sin! Temptations will surely come, but it will be a disaster for the person through whom the temptation comes! 8 If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It's better for you to enter eternal life crippled or lame rather than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into eternal fire. 9 If your eye causes you to sin, pull it out and throw it away. It's better for you to enter eternal life with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into the fire of judgment. 10 Make sure you don't look down on these little ones. I tell you that in heaven their angels are always with[†] my heavenly Father. 11 ‡ 12 What do you think about this? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them gets lost, won't he leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go in search of the one that's lost? 13 And if he finds it, I tell you he really rejoices over that sheep more than the ninety-nine that

§ 17:22 Literally, "betrayed into the hands of men." * 17:27 Worth one shekel. The Temple tax of the time was half a shekel per person. * 18:6 Literally, "a donkey millstone," referring to the massive millstone turned by a donkey, rather than a small millstone turned by hand.

† 18:10 Literally, "see the face of." ‡ 18:11 Verse 11 is not in the earliest manuscripts.

didn't get lost. ¹⁴ In the same way my heavenly Father does not want any of these little ones to be lost.

¹⁵ If a brother[§] sins against you, go and point out the wrong to him, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you've won your brother over. ¹⁶ But if he doesn't listen, then take one or two more people with you, so that by two or three witnesses the truth can be confirmed.* ¹⁷ If, however, he refuses to listen to them, then tell the church. If he refuses to listen to the church as well, then treat him as a foreigner[†] and a tax-collector. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, whatever you ban on earth will be banned in heaven, and whatever you allow on earth will be allowed in heaven.

¹⁹ I also tell you that if two of you agree here on earth about something you're praying for, then my heavenly Father will do it for you. ²⁰ For where two or three gather together in my name, I'm there with them."

²¹ Peter came to Jesus and asked him, "How many times should I forgive my brother for sinning against me? Seven times?"

²² "No, not seven times. I would say seventy times seven!" Jesus told him. ²³ "This is why the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with those servants who owed him money. ²⁴ As he began to settle accounts, one servant was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.‡ ²⁵ Since he didn't have the money to pay, his master ordered him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all his possessions, so that the debt could be paid back. ²⁶ The servant fell down on his knees and said to his master, 'Please be patient with me! I will pay everything back!' ²⁷ The master took pity on the servant, released him, and canceled the debt. ²⁸ But when that same servant went out he found one of his fellow-servants who owed him just a hundred denarii.§ He grabbed him by the neck and choked him, saying, 'Pay me back what you owe me!' ²⁹ His fellow-servant threw himself down at the man's feet and begged him, 'Please be patient with me! I will pay you back!' ³⁰ But the man refused, and went and threw his fellow-servant into prison until he paid back what he owed.

³¹ When the other servants saw what took place they were shocked and upset. They went and told their master everything that had happened. ³² Then the master called the man back in and told him, 'You evil servant! I forgave you all your debt because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn't you have been merciful to your fellow-servant as well, just as I was merciful to you?' ³⁴ His master became angry and handed him over to the jailors until he had repaid all the debt. ³⁵ This is what my heavenly Father will do to every one of you unless you sincerely* forgive your brothers."

§ 18:15 Or "fellow believer." * 18:16 See Deuteronomy 19:15. † 18:17 Literally, a "Gentile," a non-believer. ‡ 18:24 An astronomical amount. § 18:28 A denarius was a small coin. The contrast is between the huge amount forgiven the first servant and the very small amount owed to him by the second servant. * 18:35 Literally, "from your heart."

19

1 When Jesus finished speaking he left Galilee and went to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan River. 2 Large crowds followed him, and he healed those who were sick there.

3 Some Pharisees came to test him. "Is a man allowed to divorce his wife for any reason?" they asked.

4 Jesus replied, "Haven't you read that God who created people in the beginning made them male and female?" 5 He said, "This is the reason a man will leave his father and mother, and join with his wife, and the two shall become one.† 6 Now they're no longer two, but one. What God has joined together no one should separate."

7 "Then why did Moses give a law that a man could divorce his wife by giving her a written certificate of divorce, and sending her away?"‡ they asked.

8 "Because of your hard-hearted attitude Moses permitted you to divorce your wives, but it wasn't like that in the beginning," Jesus replied. 9 "I tell you, anyone who divorces his wife except on the grounds of sexual immorality and then marries another woman, commits adultery."

10 "If that's the situation between husband and wife, it's better not to marry!" his disciples told him.

11 "Not everyone can accept this instruction,§ only those it's given to," Jesus told them. 12 "Some are born as eunuchs, some are made eunuchs by men, and some choose to be eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Those who can accept this should accept it."

13 The people brought little children to him so he could bless them and pray for them. But the disciples told them not to.

14 But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me. Don't stop them. The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who are like them!" 15 He placed his hands on them to bless them, and then he left.

16 A man came to Jesus and asked him, "Teacher, what good things must I do to gain eternal life?"

17 "Why do you ask me what is good?" Jesus replied. "There's only one who is good. But if you want to have eternal life,* then keep the commandments."

18 "Which ones?" the man asked him.

"Don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't give false testimony, 19 honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself,†" replied Jesus.

20 "I've kept all these commandments," the young man said. "What else do I need to do?"

21 Jesus told him, "If you want to be perfect,‡ then go and sell your possessions, give the money to the poor, and you'll have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me."

22 When the young man heard Jesus' answer he went away very sad, because he had many possessions.

* 19:4 See Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 5:2. † 19:5 Literally, "one flesh." Quoting Genesis 2:24.
 ‡ 19:7 See Deuteronomy 24:1. § 19:11 Literally, "word." * 19:17 Literally, "enter life."
 † 19:19 Quoting Exodus 20:12-16; Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 5:16-20. ‡ 19:21 "Perfect" here has the idea of something fulfilled or complete.

²³ "I tell you the truth," Jesus said to his disciples, "rich people find it hard to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ I also tell you this: It's easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."

²⁵ When the disciples heard this, they were very surprised, and asked, "So who can be saved?"

²⁶ Jesus looked at them and said, "From a human point of view it's impossible, but all things are possible with God."

²⁷ Peter answered him, "Look, we've left everything and followed you. What reward will we have?"

²⁸ Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth: when everything is remade and the Son of man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ All those who because of me have left their homes, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, and fields, will receive back a hundred times more, and will receive eternal life. ³⁰ For many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

20

¹ For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ² He agreed to pay the workers one denarius for the day, and sent them to work in his vineyard. ³ Around 9 a.m. he went out and saw others without work standing in the marketplace.

⁴ 'Go and work in the vineyard too, and I'll pay you what's right,' he told them. So they went to work. ⁵ Around noon and 3 p.m. he went out and did the same thing. ⁶ At 5 p.m. he went out and found others standing there. 'Why are you standing around all day doing nothing?' he asked them. ⁷ 'Because nobody has hired us,' they replied. 'Go and work in the vineyard too,' he told them.

⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard told his manager, 'Call the workers in, and pay them their wages. Begin with the workers hired last and then move on to those hired first.' ⁹ When those who were hired at 5 p.m. came in, they each received one denarius. ¹⁰ So when those who were hired first came in, they thought they would get more, but they also received one denarius. ¹¹ When they received their pay, they complained to the owner. ¹² 'Those who were hired last only worked for an hour, and you've paid them the same as us who worked the whole day in the burning heat,' they grumbled.

¹³ The owner answered one of them, 'My friend, I haven't treated you unfairly. Didn't you agree with me to work for one denarius? ¹⁴ Take your pay and go. I want to pay those who were hired last the same as I paid you. ¹⁵ Can't I choose to do what I want with my own money? Why should you give me evil looks because I want to do good?' ¹⁶ In this way the last shall be first and the first shall be last."

¹⁷ On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus took the twelve disciples aside as they walked along and told them, ¹⁸ "Look, we're going to Jerusalem, and the Son of man will be betrayed to the chief priests and religious teachers. They will condemn him to death ¹⁹ and hand him over to the

foreigners* to mock him, whip him, and crucify him. But on the third day he will be raised from the dead."

²⁰ Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came with her two sons to Jesus. She knelt down before him to make a request.

²¹ "What is it you are asking me for?" Jesus said to her.

"Please appoint my sons to sit beside you in your kingdom, one on your right and the other on your left," she asked.

²² "You don't know what you're asking," Jesus told them. "Are you able to drink the cup† I'm about to drink?"

"Yes, we are able to do that," they told him.

²³ "You will certainly drink from my cup," he said to them, "but the privilege to sit on my right or on my left isn't mine to give. My Father is the one who has decided who that will be.‡"

²⁴ When the other ten disciples heard what they had asked, they were annoyed with the two brothers. ²⁵ Jesus called them together and told them, "You know that foreign rulers lord it over their subjects, and powerful leaders oppress them. ²⁶ It shall not be like that for you. Whoever among you wants to be the most important will be your servant. ²⁷ Whoever among you wants to be first will be like a slave. ²⁸ In the same way the Son of man didn't come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

²⁹ As they left Jericho, a huge crowd followed Jesus. ³⁰ Two blind men were sitting at the side of the road. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they called out, "Have mercy on us, Lord, son of David!"

³¹ The crowd told them to be quiet, but they shouted even louder, "Have mercy on us, Lord, son of David!"

³² Jesus stopped. He called them over, asking, "What do you want me to do for you?"

³³ "Lord, please make us able to see," they replied.

³⁴ Jesus had pity on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they could see, and they followed him.

21

¹ Jesus and his disciples went to Jerusalem. As they were getting close, they came to the village of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two disciples on ahead, ² telling them, "Go into the village. Right there you'll find a donkey tied up with a colt. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone asks you what you're doing, just tell them, 'The Lord needs them,' and they will send them right away."

⁴ This was to fulfill what the prophet said: ⁵ "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Look, your King is coming to you. He is humble, and rides a donkey, and a colt, the offspring of a donkey.' "*

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed. ⁷ They brought back the donkey and the colt. They placed their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸ Many people in the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and laid them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed

* **20:19** Here referring to the Romans. † **20:22** Meaning the cup of suffering. ‡ **20:23** Or "it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." * **21:5** Referencing Isaiah 62:11 and Zechariah 9:9.

were all shouting, "Hosanna† to the son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

¹⁰ When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, the whole city was in an uproar. "Who is this?" they were asking.

¹¹ "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee," the crowds replied.

¹² Jesus went into the Temple, and threw out all the people buying and selling. He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the chairs of the dove-sellers. ¹³ He told them, "Scripture says, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,'‡ but you've turned it into a den of thieves."

¹⁴ The blind and the lame came to Jesus in the Temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵ But when the chief priests and religious teachers saw the wonderful miracles he did, and the children shouting in the Temple, "Hosanna to the son of David," they were offended.

"Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him.

¹⁶ "Yes," Jesus replied. "Haven't you ever read the Scripture that says, 'You arranged for children and infants to give you perfect praise?'"§
¹⁷ Jesus left them and went out of the city to stay at Bethany.

¹⁸ The next morning as he walked back into the city, he was hungry. ¹⁹ He saw a fig tree at the side of the road, so he went over to it but didn't find any fruit, only leaves.

He told the fig tree, "May you never ever produce fruit again!" Immediately the fig tree withered.

²⁰ The disciples were amazed to see this. "How did the fig tree wither so suddenly?" they asked.

²¹ "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "If you really trust in God, and don't doubt him, you could not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even more. If you said to this mountain, 'Get up and throw yourself into the sea,' it would happen! ²² You will receive everything you ask for in prayer, as long as you trust in God."

²³ Jesus went into the Temple. The chief priests and the ruling elders of the people came to him while he was teaching and asked, "By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority?"

²⁴ "I too will ask you a question," Jesus replied. "If you give me the answer, I will tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ Where did the baptism of John come from? Was it from heaven, or was it from human beings?"

They argued with each other. "If we say 'it was from heaven,' then he'll ask us why we didn't believe him. ²⁶ But if we say, 'it was from human beings,' then the crowd will turn against us,* because they all consider John to be a prophet." ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."

"Then I won't tell you by what authority I'm doing these things," Jesus replied. ²⁸ "But what do you think about this illustration? Once there was a man who had two sons. He went to the first son, and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' ²⁹ The son answered,

† **21:9** An Aramaic word meaning "please save us," used as an exclamation of praise. ‡ **21:13** Quoting Isaiah 56:7. § **21:16** Quoting Psalms 8:2. * **21:26** Literally, "we fear the crowd."

'I won't,' but afterwards he was sorry for what he said and he did go. ³⁰ The man went to the second son, and told him the same thing. He replied, 'I'll go,' but he didn't. ³¹ Which of the two sons did what his father wanted?"

"The first," they answered.

"I tell you the truth: tax-collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you," Jesus told them. ³² "John came to show you the way to live right with God, and you didn't believe him, but the tax-collectors and prostitutes did believe him. Later, when you saw what happened, you still didn't repent and believe him.

³³ Here's another illustration. There once was a man, a landowner, who planted a vineyard. He put a fence around it, made a winepress, and built a watchtower. He rented it to some tenant farmers, and then left to go to a different country. ³⁴ At harvest time, he sent his servants to the farmers to collect the fruit that belonged to him. ³⁵ But the farmers attacked his servants. They beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶ So he sent more servants, but the farmers did the same things to them. ³⁷ So then he sent his son. 'They will respect my son,' he told himself. ³⁸ But the farmers, when they saw the son, said to each other, 'Here's the heir! Come on! Let's kill him so we can take his inheritance!' ³⁹ They grabbed him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰ When the vineyard owner returns, what will he do to those farmers?"

⁴¹ The chief priests and elders said to Jesus, "He will put to death those wicked men in the most awful way, and rent out the vineyard to other farmers who will be sure to give him his fruit at harvest time."

⁴² "So haven't you read this in the Scriptures?" Jesus asked them. "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. The Lord has done this, and it is wonderful in our eyes.' ⁴³ That's why I'm telling you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you. It will be given to a people who produce the right kind of fruit. ⁴⁴ Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken, but it will completely crush anyone it falls upon."

⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his illustrations, they realized he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶ They wanted him arrested, but they were afraid of what the people would do because the people believed he was a prophet.

22

¹ Jesus spoke to them using more illustrated stories. ² "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who organized a wedding celebration for his son," Jesus explained. ³ "He sent out his servants to everyone who was invited to the wedding to tell them to come, but they refused. ⁴ So he sent out more servants, with the instructions, 'Tell those who are invited that I've prepared the wedding banquet. The bulls and fattened calves have been killed—everything's ready. So come to the wedding!'

⁵ But they ignored the invitation and left. One went to his fields; another to take care of his business. ⁶ The rest grabbed the king's servants, mistreated them, and killed them. ⁷ The king became furious.

He sent his soldiers to destroy those murderers and burn down their town.

⁸ Then the king said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those who were invited didn’t deserve to attend. ⁹ Go into the streets and invite everyone you find to come to the wedding.’ ¹⁰ So the servants went out into the streets and brought back everyone they could find, both the good and the bad. The wedding hall was full.

¹¹ But when the king came in to meet the guests, he noticed a man who didn’t have a wedding robe on. ¹² He asked him, ‘My friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ The man had nothing to say. ¹³ Then the king told his servants, ‘Bind his hands and feet, and throw him out into the dark, where there’ll be crying and grinding of teeth.’ ¹⁴ For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees left and met together to plot how they could trap him by what he said. ¹⁶ They sent their disciples to him, together with some of Herod’s supporters.

“Teacher, we know you are a honest man, and that you teach God’s way is the truth,” they began. “You don’t allow yourself to be influenced by anyone, and you don’t care about rank or status. ¹⁷ So let us know your opinion. Is it right to pay Caesar’s taxes, or not?”

¹⁸ Jesus knew their motives were evil. He asked them, “Why are you trying to trap me, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show me the coin that is used to pay the tax.” They brought a denarius coin* to him. ²⁰ “Whose image and whose title is inscribed here?” he asked them.

²¹ “Caesar’s,” they replied.

“You should give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God,” he told them. ²² When they heard Jesus’ answer they were stunned. They went away and left him.

²³ Later the same day some Sadducees came to see him. (They are the ones who say there’s no resurrection.) ²⁴ They asked him, “Teacher, Moses said that if a married† man dies without having children, his brother should marry his widow and have children on behalf of his brother.‡ ²⁵ Well, once there were seven brothers here with us. The first married, and died, and since he had no children he left his widow to his brother. ²⁶ The same thing happened to the second and third husband, right up to the seventh. ²⁷ In the end the woman died too. ²⁸ So when the resurrection takes place, whose wife of the seven brothers will she be, for she married all of them?”

²⁹ Jesus replied, “Your mistake is you don’t know Scripture or what God can do. ³⁰ For in the resurrection people don’t marry, and they aren’t given in marriage either—they’re like the angels in heaven. ³¹ As for the resurrection of the dead—haven’t you read what God said to you, ³² ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He’s not the God of the dead, but of the living.”§ ³³ When the crowds heard what he said, they were amazed at his teaching.

³⁴ When the Pharisees heard that he’d left the Sadducees speechless, they got together and went to ask some more questions. ³⁵ One of

* **22:19** A silver Roman coin used for paying the tax imposed by the Romans. † **22:24** Implied. ‡ **22:24** See Deuteronomy 25:5-6. § **22:32** Quoting Exodus 3:6.

them, who was a legal expert, asked him a question to try to trap him: ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?”

³⁷ Jesus told them, “ ‘Love the Lord your God in all you think, in all you feel, and in all you do.’^{*} ³⁸ This is the greatest commandment, the first commandment. ³⁹ The second is just like it, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’[†] ⁴⁰ All biblical law and the writings of the prophets depend on these two commandments.”

⁴¹ While the Pharisees were gathered there, Jesus asked them a question. ⁴² “What do you think about the Messiah?” he asked. “Whose son is he?”

“The son of David,” they replied.

⁴³ “But how can David under inspiration call him ‘Lord’?” Jesus asked them. “He says, ⁴⁴ ‘The Lord said to my Lord, sit down at my right hand until I defeat all your enemies.’[‡] ⁴⁵ If David called him Lord, how can he be his son?” ⁴⁶ Nobody could answer him, and from then on nobody dared to ask him any more questions.

23

¹ Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and his disciples: ² “The religious teachers and the Pharisees are responsible as interpreters of the law of Moses,^{*} ³ so obey them and do everything they tell you. But don't follow what they do, because they don't practice what they preach. ⁴ They tie up heavy burdens, and place them on people's shoulders, but they themselves don't lift a finger to help them. ⁵ Everything they do is to make sure they get noticed. They make themselves large prayer boxes[†] to wear and long tassels on their clothes.[‡] ⁶ They love to have the places of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues. ⁷ They love to be greeted with respect in the market places, and for people to call them, ‘Rabbi.’[§]

⁸ Don't let people call you ‘Rabbi.’ Only one is your Master Teacher, and you are all brothers. ⁹ Don't call anyone by the title ‘Father’ here on earth. Only one is your Father, who is in heaven. ¹⁰ Don't let people call you ‘Teacher.’ Only one is your Teacher, the Messiah. ¹¹ The greatest among you will be your servant. ¹² Those who make themselves great will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be made great.

¹³ But what a disaster is coming on you, religious teachers and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You slam shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves don't go in, yet you don't let anyone in who is trying to enter. ¹⁴ ^{*} ¹⁵ What a disaster is coming on you, religious teachers and Pharisees, you hypocrites! For you travel over land and sea to make a single convert, and when you do, you

^{*} **22:37** Quoting Deuteronomy 6:5. [†] **22:39** Quoting Leviticus 19:18. [‡] **22:44** Literally, “place all your enemies under your feet.” Quoting Psalms 110:1. ^{*} **23:2** Literally, “sit in Moses' seat.” [†] **23:5** Or “phylacteries.” These were leather boxes tied to the forehead and arms containing written texts: Exodus 13:1-6 and Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Deuteronomy 11:13-21.

[‡] **23:5** These tassels were to show their devotion to God. See Numbers 15:37-41. [§] **23:7** This is a Hebrew word meaning “my great one,” and was used as a term of respect for religious teachers. ^{*} **23:14** Verse 14 is not in the most reliable early manuscripts.

make him twice a son of darkness[†] as you are yourselves. ¹⁶ What a disaster is coming on those of you who say, 'If you swear by the Temple that doesn't count, but if you swear by the gold of the Temple, then you have to keep your oath.' How foolish and blind you are! ¹⁷ What is greater—the gold, or the Temple that makes the gold holy? ¹⁸ You say, 'If you swear on the altar that doesn't count, but if you swear on the sacrifice that's on the altar, then you have to keep your oath.' ¹⁹ How blind you are! What is greater—the sacrifice, or the altar that makes the sacrifice holy? ²⁰ If you swear by the altar, you swear by it and by everything that's on it. ²¹ If you swear by the Temple you swear by it and by the one who lives there. ²² If you swear by heaven you swear by the throne of God and the one who sits there.

²³ What a disaster is coming on you, religious teachers and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You pay a tithe of mint, aniseed, and cumin, but you neglect the vital aspects of the law—doing good, showing mercy, exercising trust. Yes, you should pay your tithe, but don't forget these other things. ²⁴ You blind guides—you strain what you drink to keep out a fly but then you swallow a camel!

²⁵ What a disaster is coming on you, religious teachers and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside you're full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ You blind Pharisees! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, so that the outside will also be clean.

²⁷ What a disaster is coming on you, religious teachers and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like white-washed tombs, looking good on the outside, but on the inside full of skeletons and all kinds of rotteness.[‡] ²⁸ You're just the same. On the outside you look like good people to others, but on the inside you're full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

²⁹ What a disaster is coming on you, religious teachers and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs as memorials to the prophets, and decorate the tombs of the good, ³⁰ and you say, 'If we had lived in the times of our ancestors we would not have joined them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' ³¹ But by saying this you testify against yourselves, proving that you belong to those who murdered the prophets! ³² So get on with it—finish it all off using your forefathers' methods! ³³ You snakes, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the judgment of condemnation?[§]

³⁴ That's why I'm sending you prophets, wise men, and teachers. Some of them you will kill, some of them you will crucify, and some of them you will flog in your synagogues, hunting them from town to town. ³⁵ As a result, you will be held accountable for the blood of all the good people that has been poured out on the land—from the blood of Abel, who did what was right, to the blood of Zachariah son of Barachiah, whom you killed between the Temple and the altar.

³⁶ I'm telling you, the consequences of all this will fall on this generation. ³⁷ Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! So often I wanted to gather your

[†] **23:15** Literally, "Gehenna" (see under 5:22). The emphasis here is the destiny of the wicked.

[‡] **23:27** Literally, "uncleanness." [§] **23:33** Literally, "Gehenna" (see under 5:22). Referring to the end-time judgment.

children as a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings—but you wouldn't let me. ³⁸ Now look—your house* is left abandoned, totally empty. ³⁹ I tell you this: you won't see me again until you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.' "†

24

¹ As Jesus was leaving the Temple his disciples came to him, pointing proudly to the Temple buildings. ² But Jesus replied, "You see all these buildings? I tell you the truth: there won't be one stone left upon another. Every last one will come crashing down!"

³ As Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him in private, and asked, "Please tell us when this will happen. What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the world?"

⁴ "Make sure no one misleads you," Jesus replied. ⁵ "Many will come claiming to be me, saying, 'I'm the Messiah,' and they will deceive many people. ⁶ You'll hear about wars, and rumors about wars, but don't be anxious. These things have to happen, but this isn't the end. ⁷ Nations will attack other nations, and kingdoms will fight against other kingdoms. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places, ⁸ but all these things are just the beginnings of birth pains.

⁹ Then they will arrest you, they will persecute you, and they will kill you. All people will hate you because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many believers will give up believing. They will betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹ Many false prophets will come and deceive many people. ¹² The increasing evil will lead the love of many to grow cold, ¹³ but those who hold out to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ The good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed around the whole world so everyone will be able to hear it, and then the end will come. ¹⁵ So when you see the 'idolatry that defiles'* standing in the holy place that the prophet Daniel spoke about (those who read this please consider carefully), ¹⁶ then the people living in Judea should run away to the mountains. ¹⁷ Anyone who is on the housetop must not go down and fetch what's in the house. ¹⁸ Anyone who is out in the fields must not go back to get a coat. ¹⁹ How awful it will be for those who are pregnant, and those who are nursing babies at that time! ²⁰ Pray that you don't have to run away in winter, or on the Sabbath day. ²¹ For at that time there will be terrible persecution—more terrible than anything that has happened from the beginning of the world up till now, and won't ever happen again. ²² Unless those days are cut short, nobody will be saved, but for the sake of the chosen those days will be cut short.

²³ So if anyone tells you, 'Look, here's the Messiah,' or, 'There he is,' don't believe it. ²⁴ For false messiahs will appear, and false prophets too, and they will perform incredible signs and miracles in order to deceive the chosen, if that were possible. ²⁵ Notice that I've told you this before it even happens. ²⁶ So if they tell you, 'Look, he's out in the desert,' don't go looking there; or if they say, 'Look, he's secretly here,'

* **23:38** The word house may refer to the Temple. † **23:39** Quoting Psalms 118:26. * **24:15** Or "desolating sacrilege," referring back to Daniel 9:27, Daniel 11:31, Daniel 12:11.

don't believe it. ²⁷ For the coming of the Son of man will be like the lightning that flashes brightly from east to west. ²⁸ 'Vultures gather where the carcass is.'

²⁹ But right after those days of persecution the sun will be darkened, the moon will not shine, the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken. ³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and all the peoples of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and in brilliant glory.† ³¹ With a blast from a trumpet he will send his angels to gather his chosen ones from every place, from one end of heaven and earth to the other.‡

³² Learn an illustration from the fig tree. When its shoots become tender and leaves begin to sprout, you know that summer is coming. ³³ In the same way when you see all these things happening, you know that his coming is near, in fact it's right at the door! ³⁴ I tell you the truth: this generation won't pass away until all these things have happened. ³⁵ Heaven and earth may pass away, but my words won't pass away.

³⁶ But no one knows the day or hour when this will take place, not the angels in heaven, nor the Son. Only the Father knows. ³⁷ When the Son of man comes it will be like it was during the time of Noah. ³⁸ It will be as in the days before the flood, when they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, right up until the day that Noah went into the ark. ³⁹ They didn't realize what was going to happen until the flood came and swept them all away. That's how the coming of the Son of man will be.

⁴⁰ Two men will be working in the fields. One will be taken, the other left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding grain with a mill. One will be taken, the other left. ⁴² So stay alert, because you don't know what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But consider this: if the house-owner knew what time a thief was coming, he would keep watch. He would not allow his house to be broken into and robbed. ⁴⁴ You also need to be ready, because the Son of man is coming at a time when you're not expecting him.

⁴⁵ For who is the trustworthy and thoughtful servant? It's the one his master puts in charge of his household to provide them with food at the proper time. ⁴⁶ How good it will be for that servant to be found doing that when his master returns! ⁴⁷ I tell you the truth: the master will put that servant in charge over everything he has. ⁴⁸ But if he was evil, the servant would say to himself, 'My master is taking a long time,' ⁴⁹ and would start beating the other servants, feasting and drinking with the drunks. ⁵⁰ Then that servant's master will return when the man doesn't expect him, at a time he doesn't know. ⁵¹ He'll cut him to pieces, and treat him in the same way as the hypocrites,§ sending him to a place where there's crying and gnashing of teeth.

† **24:30** See Daniel 7:13-14. ‡ **24:31** Literally, "from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other." § **24:51** Those who claim to follow their Lord but in reality don't.

25

¹ The kingdom of heaven is like ten girls, who took their lamps with them to go and meet the bridegroom. ² Five were foolish, and five were wise. ³ The foolish girls took their lamps but didn't take any oil with them, ⁴ while the wise took jars of oil with them as well as their lamps. ⁵ The bridegroom took a long time and all the girls became drowsy and fell asleep. ⁶ At midnight the shout came, 'Look, the bridegroom's here! Come out and meet him!' ⁷ All the girls got up and trimmed the wicks of their lamps. The foolish girls said to the wise ones, ⁸ 'Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.' But the wise girls replied, ⁹ 'No, because otherwise there won't be enough for both you and for us. Go to the shopkeepers and buy some oil for yourselves.' ¹⁰ While they went to buy oil, the bridegroom arrived, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding, and the door was locked shut. ¹¹ The other girls came later. 'Lord, Lord,' they called, 'Open the door for us!' ¹² But he answered, 'I tell you the truth: I don't know you.' ¹³ So stay alert, for you don't know the day, or the hour.

¹⁴ It's like a man who went away on a trip. He called in his servants and entrusted them with what he owned. ¹⁵ To one of them he gave five talents,* to another he gave two, and to another one, according to their different abilities. Then he left. ¹⁶ Immediately the one with five talents went and invested them in a business, and made another five talents. ¹⁷ In the same way the one with two talents made another two. ¹⁸ But the man who'd received the one talent went off and dug a hole and hid his master's money. ¹⁹ A long time later the master of those servants returned, and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ The one with five talents came and presented the other five talents. 'Master,' he said, 'You gave me five talents. Look, I've made a profit of five talents.' ²¹ His master said to him, 'You've done well—you are a good, faithful servant. You have proved yourself trustworthy over small things, so now I'm placing you in charge over many things. Be happy because I'm really pleased with you!' ²² The one with two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'You gave me two talents. Look, I've made a profit of two talents.' ²³ His master said to him, 'You've done well—you are a good, faithful servant. You have proved trustworthy over small things, so now I'm placing you in charge over many things. Be happy because I'm really pleased with you!'

²⁴ Then the man with one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I know that you're a hard man. You reap where you didn't sow, and you harvest crops that you didn't plant. ²⁵ So since I was afraid of you I went and buried your talent in the ground. Look, you can have back what belongs to you.' ²⁶ But his master answered him, 'You wicked and lazy servant! If you think I reap where I don't sow, and harvest crops I didn't plant, ²⁷ then you should have deposited my silver in the bank so that when I returned I could have had my money with interest. ²⁸ Take the talent away from him, and give it to the one with ten talents. ²⁹ For everyone who has will be given even more; and everyone who doesn't have anything, even what they have will be taken away from them.

* **25:15** Probably referring to talents of silver, a large amount of money.

³⁰ Now throw this useless servant out into the darkness where there'll be crying and gnashing of teeth.'

³¹ But when the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his majestic throne. ³² Everyone will be brought before him. He will separate them from one another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He'll place the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left. ³⁴ Then the king will say to the ones on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, and inherit the kingdom that's been prepared for you from the beginning of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry, and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in. ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you looked after me. I was in prison and you visited me.' ³⁷ Then those who are right will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and fed you, or thirsty and gave you a drink? ³⁸ When did we see you as a stranger and invite you in, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick, or in prison, and visit you?' ⁴⁰ The king will tell them, 'I tell you the truth: whatever you did for one of these of least importance you did for me.'

⁴¹ He'll also say to those on his left, 'Go away from me, you who are doomed, into the eternal[†] fire prepared for the devil and his angels! ⁴² For I was hungry and you didn't give me anything to eat. I was thirsty and you didn't give me a drink. ⁴³ I was a stranger and you didn't invite me in. I was naked and you didn't clothe me. I was sick and in prison and you didn't visit me.' ⁴⁴ Then they will also answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and didn't look after you?' ⁴⁵ Then he will tell them, 'I tell you the truth: whatever you didn't do for one of these of least importance you didn't do for me.' ⁴⁶ They will go away into eternal condemnation, but those who are good will enter eternal life."

26

¹ After Jesus had said all this, he told his disciples, ² "You know that it's Passover in two days time, and the Son of man will be handed over to be crucified."

³ Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the courtyard of Caiaphas, the high priest. ⁴ There they plotted to arrest Jesus on some deceitful pretext* and kill him. ⁵ But they said, "Let's not do this during the festival so that the people don't riot."

⁶ While Jesus was staying at Simon the leper's house in Bethany, ⁷ a woman came over to him carrying an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume. She poured it on Jesus' head while he was sitting eating. But when the disciples saw what she did, they were upset.

⁸ "What a terrible waste!" they objected. ⁹ "This perfume could've been sold for a lot of money and given to the poor!"

¹⁰ Jesus was aware of what was going on and told them, "Why are you upset with this woman? She's done something wonderful for me! ¹¹ You'll always have the poor with you,[†] but you won't always have

[†] **25:41** Eternal in consequence, rather than in duration.

* **26:4** Literally, "with guile."

[†] **26:11** See Deuteronomy 15:11.

me. ¹² By pouring this perfume on my body she's prepared me for burial. ¹³ I tell you the truth: wherever in the world this good news is spread, the story of what this woman has done will also be told in memory of her."

¹⁴ Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and asked them, "How much will you pay me for betraying Jesus to you?" They paid him thirty silver coins. ¹⁶ From then on he looked for an opportunity to betray Jesus.

¹⁷ On the first day of the festival of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked him, "Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal for you to eat?"

¹⁸ Jesus told them, "Go into the city and find this particular man, and tell him that the Teacher says, 'My time is approaching. I'm coming to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" ¹⁹ The disciples did as Jesus told them, and prepared the Passover meal there.

²⁰ When evening came he sat down to eat with the Twelve. ²¹ While they were eating he told them, "I tell you the truth: one of you is going to betray me."

²² They were extremely upset. One after the other they asked him, "Lord, it's not me, is it?"

²³ "The one who's dipped his hand into the dish with me will betray me," Jesus replied. ²⁴ "The Son of man will die just as it was prophesied about him, but what a disaster it will be for the man who betrays the Son of man! It would be better for that man if he'd never been born!"

²⁵ Judas, the one who would betray Jesus, asked "It's not me, is it, Rabbi?"

"You said it," Jesus replied.

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave pieces to the disciples. "Take and eat this for it is my body," said Jesus. ²⁷ Then he picked up the cup, blessed it, and gave it to them. "Drink from it, all of you," he told them. ²⁸ "For this is my blood of the agreement,[‡] poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ However, I tell you, I won't drink this fruit of the vine until the day I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father." ³⁰ After they'd sung a song, they left for the Mount of Olives.

³¹ "All of you will abandon me tonight," Jesus told them. "As Scripture says, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the flock of sheep will be completely scattered.'[§] ³² But after I have risen, I'll go ahead of you to Galilee."

³³ But Peter objected, "Even if everyone else abandons you, I'll never abandon you."

³⁴ "I'm telling you the truth," Jesus told him, "This very night, before the cock crows, you'll deny me three times."

³⁵ "Even if I have to die with you, I'll never deny you!" Peter insisted. And all the disciples said the same thing.

³⁶ Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane. He told them, "Sit down here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him, and he began to suffer agonizing sorrow and distress. ³⁸ Then he said to them, "I am

[‡] 26:28 Or "covenant." [§] 26:31 Quoting Zechariah 13:7.

so overwhelmed with sadness that it's killing me. Wait here and keep watch with me." ³⁹ He went a little farther forward, fell face down, and prayed.

"My Father, please, if it's possible, let this cup of suffering be taken from me," Jesus asked. "Even so, may it not be what I want but what you want."

⁴⁰ He went back to the disciples and found them asleep. He said to Peter, "What, you couldn't stay awake with me for just one hour? ⁴¹ Stay awake and pray, so that you don't fall into temptation. Yes, the spirit is willing, but the body is weak." ⁴² He went away a second time and prayed.

"My Father, if this cup cannot be taken from me without me drinking from it, then your will be done," he said. ⁴³ He went back and found them sleeping, for they just couldn't stay awake.* ⁴⁴ So he left them once more, and went off and prayed a third time, repeating the same things. ⁴⁵ Then he returned to the disciples, and told them, "How can you still be sleeping and resting? Look, the time has come. The Son of man is about to be betrayed into the hands of sinners! ⁴⁶ Get up, let's go! See, the one who's betraying me has arrived."

⁴⁷ As he said this, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived with a large mob armed with swords and clubs sent by the chief priests and elders of the people. ⁴⁸ The betrayer had arranged to give them a signal: "The one that I kiss, that's him—arrest him," he'd told them.

⁴⁹ Judas came up to Jesus immediately, and said, "Hello, Rabbi," and kissed him.

⁵⁰ "My friend, do what you came to do," Jesus said to Judas. So they came and grabbed hold of Jesus, and arrested him.

⁵¹ One of those who was with Jesus reached for his sword and pulled it out. He struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his ear. ⁵² But Jesus told him, "Put your sword away. Everyone who fights with the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³ Don't you think I could ask my Father, and he'd immediately send more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ But then how could the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must be like this?"

⁵⁵ Then Jesus told the mob, "Have you come with swords and clubs to arrest me as if I was some kind of dangerous criminal? Every day I sat in the Temple teaching and you didn't arrest me then. ⁵⁶ But all this is happening to fulfill what the prophets wrote." Then all the disciples abandoned him and ran away.

⁵⁷ Those who'd arrested Jesus took him to the home of Caiaphas, the high priest, where the religious teachers and elders had gathered. ⁵⁸ Peter followed him at a distance, and went into the high priest's courtyard. He sat there with the guards to see how things would end.

⁵⁹ The chief priests and the whole council were trying to find some false evidence against Jesus so they could put him to death. ⁶⁰ But they couldn't find anything, even though many false witnesses came forward. Eventually two came forward ⁶¹ and reported, "This man said, 'I can destroy God's Temple, and rebuild it in three days.'"

* **26:43** Literally, "their eyes were weighed down."

⁶² The high priest stood up and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer? What do you have to say in your defense?" ⁶³ But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to Jesus, "In the name of the living God I place you under oath. Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

⁶⁴ "You said it," Jesus replied. "And I also tell you that in the future you'll see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of the Almighty, and coming on the clouds of heaven."[†]

⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his clothes, and said, "He's speaking blasphemy! Why do we need any witnesses? Look, now you've heard for yourselves his blasphemy! ⁶⁶ What's your verdict?"

"Guilty! He deserves to die!" they answered. ⁶⁷ Then they spat in his face and beat him. Some of them slapped him with their hands, ⁶⁸ and said, "Prophecy to us, you 'Messiah'! Who just hit you?"

⁶⁹ Meanwhile Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant girl came up to him, and said, "You were with Jesus the Galilean too!" ⁷⁰ But he denied it in front of everyone. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

⁷¹ When he went back to the courtyard entrance another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." ⁷² Once again he denied it, saying with an oath, "I don't know him." ⁷³ A little while later the people standing there came up to Peter and said, "You definitely are one of them. Your accent gives you away." ⁷⁴ Then he started to swear: "Curses on me if I'm a liar!‡ I don't know the man!" Immediately the cock crowed.

⁷⁵ Then Peter remembered what Jesus had told him: "Before the cock crows, three times you will deny knowing me." He went outside and wept bitterly.

27

¹ Early in the morning all the chief priests and elders of the people consulted together and decided to have Jesus put to death. ² They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

³ When Judas, the one who'd betrayed Jesus, saw that Jesus had been condemned to death, he regretted what he'd done and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. ⁴ "I've sinned! I've betrayed innocent blood!" he told them.

"What's that got to do with us?" they replied. "That's your problem!" ⁵ Judas threw the silver coins into the sanctuary and left. He went away and hanged himself. ⁶ The chief priests took the silver coins and said, "This is blood money, so it's not lawful to put this in the Temple treasury." ⁷ So they agreed to buy the potter's field as a place to bury foreigners. ⁸ That's why the field is still called today the "Field of Blood." ⁹ This fulfilled the prophecy spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: "They took thirty silver coins—the 'value' of the one who was bought at the price set by some of the children of Israel— ¹⁰ and

[†] **26:64** See Psalms 110:1 and Daniel 7:13. [‡] **26:74** Or "he called down curses on himself."

used them to pay for the potter's field, just as the Lord instructed me to do.”*

¹¹ Jesus was brought before Pilate the governor who asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”

“You said it,” Jesus replied. ¹² But when the chief priests and elders brought charges against him, Jesus did not answer.

¹³ “Don't you hear how many charges they're bringing against you?” Pilate asked him. ¹⁴ But Jesus didn't say anything, not a single word. This greatly surprised the governor.

¹⁵ Now it was the custom of the governor to release to the crowd during the festival whichever prisoner they wanted. ¹⁶ At that time a notorious prisoner was being held, a man named Barabbas. ¹⁷ So Pilate asked the crowds that had gathered, “Who do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus, called the Messiah?” ¹⁸ (He had realized it was because of jealousy that they had handed Jesus over to him to be tried.) ¹⁹ While he was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent a message to him that said, “Don't do anything to this innocent man, for I've suffered terribly today as a result of a dream about him.”

²⁰ But the chief priests and the elders convinced the crowds to ask for Barabbas, and to have Jesus put to death. ²¹ When the governor asked them, “So which of the two do you want me to release to you?” they answered, “Barabbas.”

²² “Then what shall I do with Jesus, the Messiah?” he asked them.

They all shouted out, “Have him crucified!”

²³ “Why? What crime has he committed?” Pilate asked. But they shouted even louder, “Crucify him!”

²⁴ When Pilate saw it was a lost cause, and that a riot was developing, he took some water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. “I'm innocent of this man's blood. It's on your heads!”† he told them. ²⁵ All the people answered, “May his blood be on us, and on our children!” ²⁶ Then he released Barabbas to them, but he had Jesus whipped and sent to be crucified.

²⁷ The governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium‡ and the whole troop surrounded him. ²⁸ They stripped him and put a scarlet cloak on him. ²⁹ They made a crown of thorns and placed it on his head, and put a stick in his right hand. They kneeled down in front of him and mocked him, saying, “We salute you, King of the Jews!” ³⁰ They spat on him, and took the stick and beat him over the head with it. ³¹ When they'd finished mocking him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. ³² On the way they found a man called Simon, from Cyrene, and they forced him to carry Jesus' cross.

³³ When they arrived at Golgotha, meaning “Place of the Skull,” ³⁴ they gave him wine mixed with gall. But having tasted it, he refused to drink it. ³⁵ After they had crucified him, they rolled dice to divide his clothes between them.§ ³⁶ Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. ³⁷ They placed a sign over his head with the charge against

* **27:10** See Zechariah 11:12-13, referencing Jeremiah 32:6-15. † **27:24** Literally, “see to it yourselves.” ‡ **27:27** The military headquarters. § **27:35** See Psalms 22:18.

him. It read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." ³⁸ They crucified two criminals with him, one on the right, and one on the left. ³⁹ Those who passed by shouted insults at him, shaking their heads, ⁴⁰ saying, "You who promised to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days, why don't you save yourself! If you really are the Son of God, then come down from the cross." ⁴¹ The chief priests mocked him in the same way, along with the religious teachers and elders. ⁴² "He saved other people, but he can't save himself!" they said. "If he really is the king of Israel, let him come down from the cross, and then we'll believe him!" ⁴³ He trusts God so confidently—well let God rescue him now if he wants him,* because he claimed 'I am the Son of God.' " ⁴⁴ The criminals who were crucified with him also insulted him in the same way.

⁴⁵ From noon until three o'clock darkness covered the whole country. ⁴⁶ At about three o'clock Jesus shouted out loud, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"[†] ⁴⁷ When some of those standing there heard it, they said, "He's calling for Elijah!" ⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran and grabbed a sponge, soaked it in vinegar, put it on a stick, and gave it to Jesus to drink.[‡] ⁴⁹ But the others said, "Leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah will come and save him."

⁵⁰ Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and breathed his last.[§] ⁵¹ Right then the veil of the Temple was torn apart from top to bottom. The ground shook, the rocks split apart, ⁵² and the graves were opened. Many of those who had lived good lives and had fallen asleep in death were raised to life. ⁵³ After the resurrection of Jesus they went out from the graveyards into the holy city* where many people saw them.

⁵⁴ When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and what happened, they were terrified, and said, "This really was the Son of God!" ⁵⁵ Many women were also watching from a distance, those who had followed Jesus from Galilee and had supported him. ⁵⁶ These included Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

⁵⁷ When evening came, a rich man named Joseph, from Arimathea, (who was also a disciple of Jesus), ⁵⁸ went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate ordered it to be handed over to him. ⁵⁹ Joseph took the body and wrapped it up in a fresh linen cloth, ⁶⁰ and placed it in his own new tomb, cut out of solid rock. He rolled a large stone across the entrance to the tomb, and left. ⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

⁶² The next day,[†] after the Preparation day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went together to see Pilate. ⁶³ They said to him, "Sir, we recall that the imposter said while he was still alive, 'After three days, I'll rise again.' ⁶⁴ Give orders to secure the tomb until the third day. That way his disciples can't come and steal his body and tell people

* **27:43** What makes this even worse is that they were quoting Scripture back at him: Psalms 22:8. † **27:46** Quoting Psalms 22:1. ‡ **27:48** See Psalms 69:21. § **27:50** The expression is a Hebrew one meaning that he died. * **27:53** Referring to Jerusalem. † **27:62** Referring to the Sabbath.

that he was raised from the dead, and the deception in the end will become worse than it was at first.”

⁶⁵ “I’ll give you a guard of soldiers,” Pilate told them. “Now go, and make it as secure as you possibly can.” ⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the entrance stone and posting soldiers as guards.

28

¹ Early Sunday morning, at dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ² All of a sudden there was a tremendous earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and rolled away the stone, and sat on it. ³ His face blazed like lightning, and his clothes were as white as snow. ⁴ The guards shook with fear, falling down as if they were dead.

⁵ The angel told the women, “Don’t be afraid! I know you’re looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He’s not here. He’s risen from the dead, just as he said he would. Come and see where the Lord was lying. ⁷ Now go quickly and tell his disciples that he’s risen from the dead and that he’s going on ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, I promise you!”

⁸ They left the tomb quickly, both afraid and very happy, running to tell his disciples. ⁹ Suddenly Jesus came to meet them, and greeted them. They went over to him, held onto his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t be afraid! Go and tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there.”

¹¹ As they left, some of the guards went into the city and explained to the chief priests everything that had happened. ¹² After the chief priests had met with the elders, and worked out a plan, they bribed the soldiers with a great deal of money.

¹³ “Say that his disciples came during the night and stole him while we were sleeping,” they told the soldiers. ¹⁴ “And if the governor hears about this, we’ll talk to him and you won’t have to worry.”

¹⁵ So the soldiers took the money and did what they were told. This story has been spread among the Jewish people to this very day.

¹⁶ But the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him they worshiped him, though some doubted. ¹⁸ Jesus came to them and told them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ So go and make disciples of people of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach them to follow all the commands I have given you. Remember, I am always with you, to the very end of the world.”

Mark

¹ Here is the beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

² Just as the prophet Isaiah wrote, "I'm sending my messenger ahead of you to prepare your way. ³ A voice is calling in the desert, 'Prepare the Lord's way! Make his paths straight.' ""*

⁴ John came, baptizing in the desert, announcing a baptism of repentance[†] for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ Everybody from the country of Judea and from Jerusalem went to him. They admitted their sins publicly and were baptized in the Jordan River.

⁶ John wore clothes made of camel hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts[‡] and wild honey. ⁷ This is what he had to say: "After me someone is coming who is greater than I am. I'm not worthy to bend down and untie his sandals. ⁸ I baptized you in water but he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit."

⁹ Then Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan River. ¹⁰ As Jesus came out of the water, he saw the heavens split apart and the Spirit like a dove descending upon[§] him. ¹¹ A voice from heaven said, "You are my son, the one I love. I am very pleased with you."

¹² Right after this the Spirit sent him away into the desert ¹³ where he was tempted by Satan for forty days. He was with the wild animals, and angels took care of him.

¹⁴ Later, after John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee, announcing God's good news.

¹⁵ "The time predicted has come," he said. "God's kingdom has arrived!*" Repent and believe in the good news."

¹⁶ As he was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, Jesus saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the water, for they made their living by fishing. ¹⁷ "Come and follow me," he told them, "and I will have you fishing for people." ¹⁸ They left their nets at once and followed him.

¹⁹ He went a little farther and saw James and his brother John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in a boat mending their nets. ²⁰ Immediately he called them to follow him,[†] and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired workers, and followed Jesus.

* **1:3** See Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3. † **1:4** Repentance means a "change of mind," but here also reflects the Old testament prophets' call to return to the Lord as his people and to renounce false religious ideas and evil practices. ‡ **1:6** Most likely locust beans rather than the insect. § **1:10** Or "into." * **1:15** Even "God's rule has been inaugurated!" The kingdom is not to be seen as a territory in the usual sense, but God's kingship and rule being restored through the coming of Jesus. Note also that the verb tense indicates that the kingdom is not merely close, but that it has arrived in the person of Jesus. This adds urgency to the response of repentance. † **1:20** Implied.

²¹ They left for Capernaum, and on Sabbath Jesus went into the synagogue and taught there. ²² The people were amazed at his teaching, for he spoke with authority, unlike the religious teachers.‡

²³ Suddenly, right there in the synagogue, a man with an evil spirit started shouting out, ²⁴ “Jesus of Nazareth, why are you bothering us? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are! You’re God’s Holy One!”

²⁵ Jesus interrupted the evil spirit, telling him, “Be quiet! Come out of him.”

²⁶ The evil spirit screamed, threw the man into convulsions, and came out of him.

²⁷ Everyone was amazed at what happened. “What is this?” they asked each other. “What is this new teaching that has such authority? Even evil spirits do what he tells them!” ²⁸ News about him spread quickly throughout the whole region of Galilee.

²⁹ Then they left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon and Andrew, along with James and John. ³⁰ Simon’s mother-in-law was sick in bed with a fever, so they told Jesus about her. ³¹ He went to her, took her by the hand, and helped her up. The fever immediately left her. Then she made them a meal.

³² After sunset that evening, those who were sick and demon-possessed were brought to Jesus. ³³ The whole of the town gathered outside. ³⁴ He healed many people who had various diseases, and threw out many demons. He did not permit the demons to speak, for they knew who he was.

³⁵ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up and went alone to a quiet place to pray. ³⁶ Simon and the others went to search for him. ³⁷ When they found him, they told him, “Everybody’s looking for you.”

³⁸ But Jesus replied, “We have to go to the other towns around here so that I can tell them the good news as well—for that’s why I came.”

³⁹ So he went all over Galilee, speaking in the synagogues and expelling demons.

⁴⁰ A leper came to him asking for help. The man knelt down before Jesus, saying, “Please, if you’re willing, you can heal me!”

⁴¹ With compassion Jesus reached out and touched the man, and said, “I am willing. Be healed!”

⁴² The leprosy left him immediately, and he was healed. ⁴³ Jesus sent him away with a strong warning. ⁴⁴ “Make sure you don’t tell anybody anything about this,” he told him. “Go to the priest and show yourself to him. Give the offering which is required by the law of Moses for such cleansing, so that people will have proof.”§

⁴⁵ But the healed leper went out and told everyone what had happened. As a result Jesus could not openly go into the cities anymore, but had to stay out in the country where people came to him from everywhere around.

‡ **1:22** “Religious teachers” or “scribes.” These were more than “scribes” in the writing sense. These were men who had authority in interpreting Scripture and spent time instructing people in the requirements of the religious law. § **1:44** See Leviticus 14.

2

¹ A few days later Jesus returned home to Capernaum, and news spread that he was there. ² So many people crowded inside the house that it was packed, even outside the door, as Jesus told them the message.* ³ Four men had brought a man who was paralyzed, ⁴ but they could not get near Jesus because of the crowds. So they went up on the roof and took it apart. After they had made an opening above Jesus, they lowered down the mat with the paralyzed man lying on it.

⁵ When Jesus saw the trust these men had, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

⁶ Some of the religious teachers sitting there thought to themselves, ⁷ "Why is he talking like this? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins? Only God can do that!"

⁸ Jesus knew right away what they were thinking. He said to them, "Why are you thinking like this? ⁹ What's easier: to say to the paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Get up, pick up your mat, and walk'? ¹⁰ But to convince you that the Son of man has the right to forgive sins, ¹¹ I say to you (the paralyzed man), 'Get up, pick up your mat, and go home.' "

¹² He stood up, picked up his mat, and walked out in front of everyone there. They were all amazed, and praised God, saying "We've never ever seen anything like this!"

¹³ Jesus went out beside the sea once more and taught the crowds that came to him. ¹⁴ As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax-collector's booth.

"Follow me," Jesus told him. Levi got up and followed Jesus.

¹⁵ That evening Jesus ate dinner at Levi's house. Many tax collectors and "sinners"† joined Jesus and his disciples for the meal, for there were many of these people that followed Jesus.

¹⁶ When the religious leaders of the Pharisees saw Jesus eating with such people, they asked Jesus' disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

¹⁷ When Jesus heard this, he told them, "It's not healthy people who need a doctor, but those who are sick. I haven't come to invite those who live right, but those who don't—the sinners."

¹⁸ Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting.‡ Some of them came to Jesus, and asked him, "Why is it that John's disciples and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples don't?"

¹⁹ "Do wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?" Jesus asked them. "No. While the bridegroom's with them, they can't fast. ²⁰ But the day is coming when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and then they'll fast. ²¹ No one puts a patch that's not shrunk on old clothes. Otherwise the new piece will shrink away from the old, and make the tear worse. ²² No one puts new wine in old wineskins. Otherwise the wine will burst the wineskins, and both the wine and wineskins will be wasted. No. You put new wine in new wineskins."

* **2:2** Literally, "the word," here used for the first time to mean the message of God's good news. † **2:15** "Sinners" here refers to those who were not seen as so strict in their keeping of the religious law as the religious teachers and the Pharisees. ‡ **2:18** Fasting: choosing not to eat on certain days for religious reasons.

²³ One Sabbath day as Jesus was walking through the grain fields, his disciples started picking heads of grain as they walked along. ²⁴ The Pharisees asked Jesus, "Look, why are they doing what is not permitted on the Sabbath?"

²⁵ "Haven't you ever read what David did when he and his men were hungry and in need?" Jesus asked them. ²⁶ "He went into God's house when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the consecrated bread which no one except the priests are permitted to eat, and gave it to his men too."

²⁷ "The Sabbath was made for your benefit, not for you to benefit the Sabbath," he told them. ²⁸ "So the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

3

¹ Jesus went to the synagogue again. A man was there who had a crippled hand. ² Some of those there were watching Jesus to see if he would heal the man on the Sabbath, because they were looking for a reason to accuse him of breaking the law. ³ Jesus told the man with the crippled hand, "Come and stand here in front of everyone."

⁴ "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath, or to do evil? Should you save life, or should you kill?" he asked them. But they didn't say a word.

⁵ He looked around at them in exasperation, very upset by their hard-hearted attitude. Then he told the man, "Hold out your hand." The man held out his hand, and it was healed. ⁶ The Pharisees left, and immediately began plotting with Herod's party as to how they might kill Jesus.

⁷ Meanwhile Jesus returned to the Sea,* and a large crowd followed him. They were from Galilee, Judea, ⁸ Jerusalem, Idumea, Transjordan, and from the regions of Tyre and Sidon. So many people came to see him because they'd heard all he was doing.

⁹ Jesus told his disciples to have a small boat ready in case the crowd crushed him, ¹⁰ because he had healed so many that all the sick people kept on pressing towards him so they could touch him. ¹¹ Whenever the evil spirits saw him they would fall down in front of him and shout out, "You are the Son of God!" ¹² But he commanded them not to reveal who he was.

¹³ Then Jesus went away to the hill country. He called those he wanted to be with him, and they came to him. ¹⁴ He chose twelve to be with him, and called them apostles. They were to be with him, and he would send them out to announce the good news, ¹⁵ and with the authority to drive out demons. ¹⁶ These are the twelve he chose: Simon (whom he called Peter), ¹⁷ James the son of Zebedee and his brother John (who he called Boanerges, meaning "sons of thunder"), ¹⁸ Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Revolutionary, ¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot (who betrayed him).

²⁰ Jesus went home, but such a large crowd gathered again that he and his disciples didn't even have time to eat. ²¹ When Jesus'

* 3:7 Of Galilee.

family[†] heard about it, they came to take him away, saying, "He's lost his senses!" ²² But the religious leaders from Jerusalem said, "He's possessed by Beelzebub! It's by the ruler of demons that he's driving out demons!"

²³ But Jesus called them over to him. Using illustrations[‡] he asked them, "How can Satan throw out Satan? ²⁴ A kingdom fighting itself can't continue. ²⁵ A household that's divided is doomed. ²⁶ If Satan is divided and fights against himself, he won't last long—he'll soon come to an end. ²⁷ Clearly, if someone breaks into the house of a strong man and tries to take his things, he won't get far in his theft unless he ties up the strong man first."

²⁸ "I tell you the truth: all sins and blasphemies can be forgiven, ²⁹ but if people blaspheme by rejecting the Holy Spirit they can never be forgiven, because they are guilty of an eternal sin." ³⁰ (Jesus said this[§] because they said, "He has an evil spirit.")

³¹ Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. They waited outside and sent him a message, asking him to come out. ³² The crowd that was sitting around him told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside asking for you."

³³ "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" he responded. ³⁴ Looking around at all those sitting there in a circle, he said, "Here is my mother! Here are my brothers! ³⁵ Whoever does what God wants, they are my brother, and sister, and mother."

4

¹ Jesus began teaching beside the Sea again. So many people came to listen to him that he climbed into a boat and sat in it on the water while the crowd listened from the shore. ² He illustrated his teachings using many stories.

³ "Listen," he said. "A sower went out to sow. ⁴ Now as he was scattering the seeds, some fell on the path, and birds came and ate them up. ⁵ Other seeds fell on stony ground where there wasn't much earth. In the shallow soil the plants started growing quickly, but because the soil wasn't deep ⁶ they were scorched when the sun came up. Since they didn't have any real roots, they soon withered. ⁷ Other seeds fell among thorns. The thorns grew up and choked the sprouting seeds, so they produced nothing. ⁸ Other seeds fell on good soil where they sprouted and grew. They produced a harvest of some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred times what was planted. ⁹ If you have ears to hear, listen to what I'm saying."

¹⁰ When he was by himself, his twelve disciples and the others who were with him asked him what the illustrations meant.

¹¹ He told them, "The mystery of God's kingdom has been given to you to understand. But outsiders only have the stories, ¹² so that even though they see, they don't really 'see,' and even though they hear, they don't understand, otherwise they might turn to me and be forgiven."*

[†] **3:21** Literally, "those who were close to him." [‡] **3:23** Or "parables," meaning analogies, comparisons, illustrations. [§] **3:30** Implied. * **4:12** Quoting Isaiah 6:9-10.

13 “Don't you understand this story?” Jesus asked them. “If you can't, how are you going to understand all the other stories?”

14 The sower sows the word.[†] 15 The seeds on the path where the word is sown illustrate those who hear the message, but then Satan immediately comes along and takes away the word that's been sown in them. 16 Likewise the seeds on the rocky ground illustrate those who hear the word, and happily accept it right away. 17 But since they have no real roots, they only last for a while until trouble or persecution comes, and then they quickly fall away. 18 Those sown among the thorns illustrate those who hear the word, 19 but worries of this world, the temptation of wealth, and other distractions choke the growth of the word, and it becomes unproductive. 20 But the seeds sown on good soil illustrate those who hear the word, accept it, and are productive—producing thirty, sixty, and hundred times what was originally sown.

21 Who puts a lamp under a bucket, or beneath a bed?” Jesus asked them. “No, you put a lamp up on a lamp-stand. 22 Everything that is hidden will be revealed, and everything that is secret will be brought out into the open. 23 If you have ears to hear, listen to what I'm saying! 24 Pay attention to what you're hearing,” he told them, “for you will be given according to how much you want to receive, measure for measure. 25 More will be given to those who already have understanding, but those who don't want to know will have what little understanding they have taken from them.

26 God's kingdom is like a man sowing seed in the ground,” Jesus said. 27 “He goes to bed and gets up, day after day, but the man has no knowledge of how the seeds sprout and grow. 28 The earth produces a harvest by itself. First a shoot appears, then the heads of grain, and then the heads of grain ripen. 29 When the grain is ripe, the farmer reaps it with a sickle, because the harvest is ready.[‡]

30 What can we compare God's kingdom to? What illustration shall we use?” he asked. 31 “It's like a mustard seed, the tiniest seed of all. 32 But when it's sown it grows into a plant that's larger than other plants. It has branches big enough that birds can roost in its shade.”

33 Jesus used many of these illustrated stories when he spoke to the people so they would understand as much as they could. 34 In fact, when he spoke publicly, he only used stories; however in private he explained everything to his disciples.

35 Later that day, in the evening, he said to his disciples, “Let's go across to the other side of the Sea.” 36 Leaving the crowd behind, the disciples went with Jesus and got into a boat. Other boats went with them. 37 Soon a terrible storm started blowing, and waves crashed against the boat, filling it with water. 38 Jesus was asleep in the stern, resting his head on a cushion. The disciples woke him up, shouting at him, “Teacher, don't you care that we're about to drown?”

39 Jesus woke up. He told the wind to die down and told the waves, “Be quiet! Be still.” The wind stopped, and the water became

[†] 4:14 Word—or “message,” the Word of God that Jesus came to bring. (See also John 1:1.)

[‡] 4:29 Possibly a reference to Joel 3:13.

completely calm. ⁴⁰ “Why are you so frightened?§ Haven't you learned to trust me?” he asked them.

⁴¹ They were stunned and terrified.* They asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

5

¹ They arrived on the other side of the lake in the region of the Gerasenes. ² When Jesus got out of the boat a man with an evil spirit came from the graveyard to meet him. ³ This man lived among the tombs, and it had been impossible to tie him up any more, even with a chain. ⁴ He had often been tied up with chains and shackles, but he simply tore the chains apart and broke the shackles into pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. ⁵ Day and night he was always shouting out among the tombs and in the hills nearby, cutting himself with sharp stones.

⁶ Seeing Jesus from a distance he ran and kneeled in front of him. ⁷ In a loud voice he cried out, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of Almighty God? Swear by God that you won't torture me!” ⁸ For Jesus had already told the evil spirit to leave the man.

⁹ Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”

“My name is Legion, because we are many!” he replied. ¹⁰ He also repeatedly pleaded with Jesus not to send them a long way away.*

¹¹ A large herd of pigs was feeding on the hillside nearby. ¹² The evil spirits pleaded with him, “Send us into the pigs so we can enter them.” ¹³ Jesus allowed them to do this. The evil spirits left the man and went into the pigs. The whole herd, about two thousand, rushed down the steep cliff into the sea and drowned. ¹⁴ The pig-keepers ran away, and spread the news all over town and in the countryside. People came out to see what had happened. ¹⁵ When they found Jesus they saw the man who had been demon-possessed sitting there, dressed, and in his right mind—the one who had the legion of evil spirits—and they became frightened! ¹⁶ Then those who had seen what had happened to the man who had been demon-possessed and the pigs told the others. ¹⁷ They began pleading with Jesus to leave their district. ¹⁸ As Jesus climbed into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. ¹⁹ But Jesus refused, telling him, “Go home to your own people, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has been merciful to you.”

²⁰ So the man went on his way and began to tell the people of the Ten Cities everything Jesus had done for him, and everyone was amazed.

²¹ Jesus went back again by boat to the other side of the lake where a large crowd gathered around him at the shore. ²² A synagogue leader, a man named Jairus, came to him. When he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet ²³ and pleaded with him, saying, “My little daughter is about to

§ 4:40 The word used is for cowards. * 4:41 Although the aspect of fear is usually brought out in translations, the text indicates that they had been frightened previously. Now they were amazed, in awe at what had happened, though no doubt still terrified. * 5:10 Literally, “out of the region.”

die. Please come and place your hands on her so she may be healed and live.”

²⁴ So Jesus went with him. Everybody followed, crowding and jostling him. ²⁵ A woman was there who had been ill from bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶ She'd suffered considerably under the care of many doctors, and had spent all she had. But nothing helped her—in fact she'd grown worse. ²⁷ She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd, and touched his cloak. ²⁸ She was telling herself, “If I can just touch his cloak, I'll be healed.”

²⁹ The bleeding stopped immediately, and she felt her body healed from her disease. ³⁰ Jesus, sensing at once that power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my cloak?”

³¹ “Look at the crowd jostling you. What do you mean, ‘Who touched me?’ ” the disciples replied.

³² But Jesus went on looking around to see who had done it. ³³ The woman, realizing what had happened to her, came and fell down before him, and told him the whole truth.

³⁴ “My daughter, your trust in me has healed you. Go in peace. You have been completely cured of your disease,” Jesus told her.

³⁵ While he was still speaking some people came from the home of the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “You don't need to bother the Teacher any longer.”

³⁶ But Jesus paid no attention to what they said. He told the synagogue leader, “Don't be afraid, just trust in me.”[†] ³⁷ He wouldn't let anyone go with him except Peter, James, and James' brother John.

³⁸ When they arrived at the synagogue leader's house, Jesus saw all the commotion, with people crying and wailing. ³⁹ He went in and asked them, “Why are you making such a commotion with all this crying? The little girl isn't dead, she's just sleeping.” ⁴⁰ They laughed scornfully at him.

Jesus made everyone leave. Then he went into the room where the little girl was lying, taking with him the child's father and mother, and the three disciples. ⁴¹ Taking the little girl's hand he said, “*Talitha koum*,” which means, “Little girl, get up!”

⁴² The little girl, who was twelve years old, got up immediately and began walking around. They were completely astonished at what had happened. ⁴³ He gave them strict instructions not to let anyone know, and he told them to give the little girl something to eat.

6

¹ Jesus left and went home to Nazareth with his disciples. ² On Sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue, and many of those who were listening were surprised.

“Where does he get these ideas?” they asked. “What's this wisdom he's been given? Where does he get the power to do miracles?” ³ Isn't this the carpenter, Mary's son—the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and

[†] 5:36 “In me,” implied.

Simon? Don't his sisters live here among us?" They were offended and rejected him.*

⁴ "A prophet is treated with respect except in his home town, among his relatives, and within his own family," Jesus told them. ⁵ The result was that Jesus could not do any miracles there, except to heal a few sick people. ⁶ He was amazed at their lack of trust.

Jesus traveled around the villages, teaching as he went. ⁷ He called together the twelve disciples, and began sending them out two by two, giving them authority over evil spirits. ⁸ He told them not to take anything with them except a walking stick—no bread, no bag, and no money in their belts. ⁹ They could wear sandals, but they were not to take an extra shirt.

¹⁰ "When you're invited into a home, stay there until you leave," he told them. ¹¹ "If you're not welcomed and not listened to, then shake the dust from your feet as you leave as a sign you have given up on them.†" ¹² So they went around telling people to repent. ¹³ They drove out many demons, and healed many who were sick by anointing them with oil.

¹⁴ King Herod got to hear about Jesus since he had become well-known. Some said, "This is John the Baptist risen from the dead. That's why he has such miraculous powers." ¹⁵ Others said, "It's Elijah." Still others said, "He's a prophet, like one of the prophets of the past."

¹⁶ But when Herod heard about it, he said, "It's John, the one I beheaded! He's come back from the dead!" ¹⁷ For Herod had given orders to arrest and imprison John because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom Herod had married. ¹⁸ John had been saying to Herod, "It's against the law to marry your brother's wife." ¹⁹ So Herodias had a grudge against John and wanted him killed. But she wasn't able to arrange it ²⁰ because Herod knew John was a holy man who did what was right. Herod protected John and though what John said was very disturbing to him, he was still happy to hear what he had to say.

²¹ Herodias had her opportunity on Herod's birthday. He gave a banquet for the nobles, military officers, and important leaders of Galilee. ²² Herodias' daughter came in and danced for them. Herod and those eating with him were delighted at her performance, so he told the girl, ²³ "Ask me for whatever you like, and I'll give it to you." He confirmed his promise with an oath, "I'll give you up to half my kingdom."

²⁴ She went out and asked her mother, "What should I ask for?"

"The head of John the Baptist," she replied.

²⁵ The girl hurried back in and said to the king, "I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a plate."

²⁶ The king was very upset, but because of the oaths he'd made in front of his guests, he didn't want to refuse her. ²⁷ So he immediately sent an executioner to bring him John's head. After beheading him in the prison, ²⁸ the executioner brought John's head on a plate and gave

* **6:3** "And rejected him"—implied in the idea of taking offense. † **6:11** Literally, "a witness to them." The act of shaking even the dust of the place from your feet was to indicate you completely abandoned them.

it to the girl, and the young girl handed it to her mother. ²⁹ When John's disciples heard what had happened they came and took his body and placed it in a tomb.

³⁰ The apostles returned[‡] and gathered around Jesus. They told him all they had done and what they had taught.

³¹ "Come with me, just yourselves. We'll go to a quiet place, and rest for a while," Jesus told them, because there was so much coming and going that they didn't even have time to eat. ³² So they went by boat to a quiet place to be alone.

³³ But people saw them leaving and recognized them. So people from all the surrounding towns ran ahead and got there before them. ³⁴ When Jesus got off the boat he saw a huge crowd, and he felt pity for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began to teach them about many things.

³⁵ It was getting late in the day and Jesus' disciples came to him. They told him, "We're miles from anywhere, and it's really late. ³⁶ You should tell the people to go and buy themselves something to eat in the villages and countryside nearby."

³⁷ But Jesus replied, "You give them something to eat."

"What? We'd need more than six month's pay[§] to buy bread to feed all these people," the disciples replied.

³⁸ "Well, how much bread do you have?" Jesus asked. "Go and see."

They went and checked, and told him, "Five loaves, and a couple of fish."

³⁹ Jesus told everyone to sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ They sat in groups of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹ Then he took the five loaves and the two fish. Looking up to heaven he blessed the food and broke the bread into pieces. Then he handed the bread to the disciples to give to the people, and he divided the fish up between all of them. ⁴² Everyone ate until they were full. ⁴³ Then they collected up the leftovers of the bread and fish—twelve basketfuls. ⁴⁴ A total of five thousand men plus their families ate the food.

⁴⁵ Immediately after this Jesus instructed his disciples to get back into the boat. They were to go on ahead to Bethsaida on the other side of the lake while he sent the people on their way. ⁴⁶ Once he'd said goodbye to them he went up into the hills to pray.

⁴⁷ Late that evening the boat was in the middle of the lake while Jesus was alone, still on land. ⁴⁸ He could see them being buffeted about as they rowed hard because the wind was blowing against them. In the early morning hours Jesus came to them, walking on the water. He would have passed them, ⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the water they thought he was a ghost. They screamed out ⁵⁰ because they could all see him and were absolutely terrified.

Jesus told them right away: "Don't worry, it's me. Don't be afraid!" ⁵¹ He went over to them and climbed into the boat, and the wind died down. They were totally shocked, ⁵² for they hadn't understood the meaning of the feeding miracle due to their stubborn, hard-hearted attitude.

[‡] **6:30** From their tour of the villages, spreading the good news. **§ 6:37** Literally, "200 denarii."

⁵³ After crossing the Sea they arrived at Gennesaret and moored the boat. ⁵⁴ As they climbed out, the people immediately recognized Jesus. ⁵⁵ They ran everywhere around the whole area to bring in all the sick on their mats to where they'd heard Jesus was. ⁵⁶ Wherever he went, in the villages, in the towns, or in the countryside, they put the sick in the marketplaces and begged Jesus to let the sick touch just the edge of his clothes. Everyone who touched him was healed.

7

¹ The Pharisees and religious leaders who had come down from Jerusalem to meet Jesus ² noticed that some of his disciples ate with "unclean" (meaning unwashed) hands. ³ (The Pharisees and all Jews don't eat until they wash their hands, following the tradition of their ancestors. ⁴ In the same way, they don't eat when they return from the market until they have had a wash. They observe many other rituals, like the washing of cups, pots, and pans.)*

⁵ So the Pharisees and religious leaders asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples follow the tradition of our ancestors? They eat food[†] with unclean hands."

⁶ Jesus replied, "Isaiah was right about you hypocrites when he said, 'These people claim they honor me, but in their thinking they are far from me. ⁷ There's no point in their worship of me, for what they teach as doctrines are merely human rules.'[‡] ⁸ You disregard God's law, and instead you carefully observe human traditions," he told them.

⁹ "How cleverly you set aside God's law so you can support your traditions! ¹⁰ Moses said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and 'Whoever curses their father or mother should die.'[§] ¹¹ But you say that if someone tells their father or mother, 'Anything you might have received from me is now *Corban*,' (that means dedicated to God), ¹² then you don't permit them to do anything further for their mother or father. ¹³ By means of this tradition of yours that you pass down, you make God's word null and void. You do many other things like this."

¹⁴ Jesus called the crowd to him again and told them, "Please, everyone listen to me and understand. ¹⁵ It's not what's on the outside and goes into you that makes you unclean. It's what comes out that makes you unclean."¹⁶ *

¹⁷ Then Jesus went inside to escape the crowd, and his disciples asked him about his illustration.

¹⁸ "Don't you understand it either?" he asked them. "Don't you see that what you eat doesn't make you unclean? ¹⁹ It doesn't go into your mind, but into your stomach, and then passes out of the body. So all foods are ceremonially 'clean.'[†]

²⁰ It's what comes out of you that makes you unclean. ²¹ It's from the inside, from people's minds, that evil thoughts come: sexual

* **7:4** While hygienic, the focus was on making sure everything was ceremonially clean.

† **7:5** Literally, "bread." ‡ **7:7** Quoting Isaiah 29:13. § **7:10** Quoting Exodus 20:12 and Exodus 21:17.

* **7:16** The earliest manuscripts do not have verse 16. † **7:19** Some scholars believe this sentence is a later addition.

immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² greed, malice, deceit, indecency, envy, slander, pride, thoughtlessness— ²³ all these evils come from inside and defile people.”

²⁴ Then Jesus left and went to the region of Tyre. He didn't want anyone to know he was staying in a house there, but he couldn't keep it a secret. ²⁵ As soon as a woman, whose little daughter had an evil spirit, heard about him she came and fell at his feet. ²⁶ The woman was Greek, born in Syrophenicia. She begged Jesus to drive out the demon from her daughter.

²⁷ “First let the children eat until they're full,” Jesus replied. “It's not right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.”[‡]

²⁸ “True, sir,” she said, “but even the dogs under the table eat the scraps the children leave.”

²⁹ Jesus told her, “For such an answer you may go—the demon has left your daughter.” ³⁰ She went home and found the child lying on the bed, the demon gone.

³¹ Leaving the region of Tyre, Jesus passed through Sidon and then on to the Sea of Galilee and the territory of the Ten Cities. ³² There they brought him a deaf man who also could not speak properly. They asked Jesus to touch the man with his hand and heal him. ³³ After Jesus took him aside from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers in the deaf man's ears. Then he touched the man's tongue with spit. ³⁴ Jesus looked up to heaven and with a sigh he said, “Ephphatha,”[§] which means, “Open!” ³⁵ The man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was gone, and he began speaking properly. ³⁶ Jesus gave strict orders not to tell anyone, but the more he said this, the more they spread the news. ³⁷ They were totally amazed and said, “Everything he does is marvelous. He even makes the deaf hear, and the dumb speak.”

8

¹ Around this time there was another large crowd that had nothing to eat. Jesus called the disciples together and told them, ² “I feel for the crowd because they have already stayed with me for three days and they have nothing to eat. ³ If I send them home without food, they'll faint on the way. Some have come from a long way away.”

⁴ “Where could anybody find enough bread to feed them here in this wilderness?” answered his disciples.

⁵ “How many loaves do you have?” he asked.

“Seven,” they replied.

⁶ He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves of bread, and gave thanks. He broke the bread and handed the pieces to his disciples to give to the crowd. ⁷ They had a few fish as well, so having blessed them, he said, “Take these and share them too.”

⁸ They ate until they were full, and then collected up seven baskets of leftovers. ⁹ There were four thousand people there. After sending

[‡] 7:27 Or puppies, small dogs. [§] 7:34 This is the Aramaic word meaning “cause to be open.”

them on their way, ¹⁰ Jesus climbed into a boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.

¹¹ The Pharisees arrived and began to argue with him, wanting him to give them a miraculous sign from heaven, trying to get him to prove himself. ¹² Jesus sighed deeply, and asked, “Why do you people* want a sign? I tell you the truth: I will not give you a sign.”

¹³ So he left them behind, climbed into the boat, and went back across the lake. ¹⁴ But the disciples had forgotten to bring bread with them. All they had in the boat was one loaf.

¹⁵ “Watch out—beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod!” he warned them.

¹⁶ “He’s saying that because we don’t have any bread,” they concluded.

¹⁷ Jesus knew what they were saying, and said, “Why are you talking about not having any bread? Are you still not thinking and not understanding? Have you closed your minds?† ¹⁸ You’ve got eyes to see, haven’t you? And ears to hear?‡ ¹⁹ Don’t you remember when I shared five loaves among five thousand? How many basketfuls of leftovers did you pick up?”

“Twelve,” they replied.

²⁰ “And the seven loaves divided among four thousand. How many basketfuls of leftovers did you pick up?”

“Seven,” they answered.

²¹ “Do you still not understand?” he asked them.

²² They went to Bethsaida where some people brought a blind man to Jesus. They begged Jesus to touch him and heal him. ²³ Jesus took the blind man by the hand and took him outside the village. Jesus spat on the man’s eyes and touched him with his hands.

Then Jesus asked him, “Can you see anything?”

²⁴ The man looked around, and said, “I can see people, but they look like trees walking.” ²⁵ So Jesus touched the man’s eyes again. He could see properly—he was cured and his sight was clear. ²⁶ Jesus sent the man home, and told him, “Don’t go back through the village.”§

²⁷ Jesus and his disciples left to go to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say I am?”

²⁸ “Some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, others say one of the prophets,” they replied.

²⁹ “But who do you say I am?” he asked them.

“You are the Messiah!” Peter answered.

³⁰ Jesus warned them not to tell anybody about him.

³¹ Then Jesus began to explain to them that the Son of man would suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and religious teachers. He would be killed, but three days later would rise again. ³² Jesus explained this to them very clearly. But Peter took Jesus aside and started to reprimand him for what he said.

* **8:12** Literally, “this generation.” † **8:17** Literally, “Have you hardened your hearts?”

‡ **8:18** An Old Testament expression: see Deuteronomy 29:4, Isaiah 42:20, Jeremiah 5:21, and Ezekiel 12:2. § **8:26** In other words, do not spread the news of what has happened.

³³ Jesus turned around and looking at his disciples, reprimanded Peter. “Get away from me, Satan,” he said. “You’re not thinking as God thinks, but as human beings do.”

³⁴ Jesus called the crowd and his disciples over to him, and told them, “If you want to follow me, you must give up on yourselves, pick up your cross and follow me. ³⁵ If you want to save your life you will lose it, but if you lose your life because of me and the good news you will save it.

³⁶ What use is it for you to gain everything in the whole world, and lose your life? ³⁷ What would you give in exchange for your life?

³⁸ If you’re ashamed to acknowledge* me and what I say among this unfaithful and sinful people,† then the Son of man will be ashamed to acknowledge you when he comes with his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”

9

¹ Jesus told them, “I tell you the truth: some standing here won’t die before they see the kingdom of God having come with power.”

² Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him, and led them up a high mountain to be by themselves. His appearance totally changed. ³ His clothes shone a brilliant white, whiter than anyone on earth could bleach them. ⁴ Then Elijah and Moses appeared in front of them as well, talking with Jesus.

⁵ Peter spoke up and said, “Rabbi, it’s great for us to be here! We should make three shelters—one each for you, Moses, and Elijah.”

⁶ (He really didn’t know what to say because they were all so frightened!)

⁷ Then a cloud covered* them, and a voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, the one I love. Listen to him.”

⁸ Then, all of a sudden, as they were watching, there was nobody. Only Jesus was with them.

⁹ As they came down the mountain Jesus instructed them not to tell anyone what they’d seen until the Son of man had risen from the dead.

¹⁰ They kept this to themselves, but they did argue with each other over what it meant to rise from the dead.

¹¹ “Why do the religious teachers state that Elijah has to come first?” they asked him.

¹² “It’s true that Elijah comes first to prepare everything,” Jesus replied. “But why then does it say in Scripture that the Son of man has to suffer so much and be treated with contempt? ¹³ However, I tell you that Elijah has come, and they abused him in whatever way they wanted, just as Scripture said they would.”

¹⁴ When they returned to the other disciples, they saw them surrounded by a large crowd and some religious teachers arguing with them. ¹⁵ As soon as the crowd saw Jesus they were in total awe, and ran to greet him.

¹⁶ “What are you arguing with them about?” Jesus asked them.

* **8:38** “Ashamed to acknowledge me,” or, “do not take your stand for me.” † **8:38** Literally, “generation.” * **9:7** Or “overshadowed.”

17 One of the people in the crowd answered, “Rabbi, I brought my son to you. He has an evil spirit that prevents him speaking. 18 Whenever he has a seizure it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and he becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive it out of him, but they couldn’t do it.”

19 “You unbelieving people!” Jesus responded. “How long must I remain here with you? How long do I have to put up with you? Bring him over here to me!”

20 So they brought him to Jesus. When the evil spirit saw Jesus it immediately sent the boy into convulsions and threw him on the ground, where he rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

21 “How long has he had this?” Jesus asked the boy’s father.

“Since he was small,” the father replied. 22 “Often it throws him into the fire to burn him to death, or throws him into water to drown him. Please have mercy on us and help, if you can.”

23 “Why do you say,† ‘if you can?’ ” replied Jesus. “Whoever trusts has every power!”

24 “I do trust in you,” the man shouted out right away. “Help me not to distrust you.”

25 Jesus, seeing that the crowd was closing in,‡ commanded the evil spirit, “Spirit that causes deafness and dumbness, I order you to come out of him and never return.”

26 The spirit screamed and threw the boy into severe convulsions. Then the spirit came out of the boy and left him for dead—to the extent that many of the people said, “He’s dead.”

27 But Jesus took the boy by the hand and helped him up, and he got to his feet.

28 Later, when Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him in private, “Why couldn’t we drive the evil spirit out?”

29 “This kind can’t be driven out except by prayer,” Jesus told them.

30 They left and passed through Galilee. Jesus didn’t want anyone to know where he was 31 because he was teaching his disciples.§ “The Son of man will be betrayed to human authorities,” he told them. “They will kill him, but three days later he will rise again.” 32 They didn’t understand what he meant and were too afraid to ask him about it.

33 They arrived at Capernaum, and once they were inside the house where they were staying, Jesus asked them, “What were you talking about on the way?” 34 But they didn’t say anything because they had been arguing over who was the most important.

35 Jesus sat down and called the twelve disciples together. “If anyone wants to be first, he has to be the very last, the servant of everyone else,” he told them. 36 He took a small child and had the child stand right in the middle of them. Then he picked up and hugged the child, and told them, 37 “Whoever welcomes a child like this in my name, welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me doesn’t welcome me but the one who sent me.”

† 9:23 Implied. Jesus was asking why the man said to him, “if you can,” which suggested doubt as to what Jesus could do. ‡ 9:25 Or “running together.” This word is only used once in the New Testament. § 9:31 In other words, he wanted to spend time teaching his disciples.

³⁸ John said to Jesus, "Rabbi, we saw someone driving out demons in your name. We tried to stop him because he wasn't one of us."

³⁹ "Don't stop him," Jesus replied. "For no one who is doing miracles in my name can curse me at the same time. ⁴⁰ Anyone who is not against us is for us. ⁴¹ Anyone who gives a cup of water to you in my name, because you belong to Christ, won't lose their reward, believe me.

⁴² But if anyone leads one of these little ones who trust in me into sin, it would be better for them if they were thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around their neck. ⁴³ If your hand leads you to sin, cut it off! It's better to enter eternal life as a cripple than to go with both hands into Gehenna*, into the fire that can't be put out. ⁴⁴ † ⁴⁵ If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off! It's better to enter eternal life lame than to be thrown into Gehenna still having two feet. ⁴⁶ ‡ ⁴⁷ If your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out! It's better to enter the kingdom of God with just one eye than to be thrown into Gehenna still having both eyes, ⁴⁸ where the worm doesn't die and the fire never goes out. ⁴⁹ Everybody will be 'salted' by fire. ⁵⁰ Salt is good, but if it loses its taste, how could you make it salty again? You need to be like salt, and live in peace with one another."

10

¹ Jesus left Capernaum and went to the region of Judea and Transjordan. Once again people flocked to see him, and he was teaching them like he always did. ² Some Pharisees came to see him. They tried to test him by asking the question, "Is divorce legal?"

³ "What did Moses tell you to do?" he asked in reply.

⁴ "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and send the woman away,"* they replied.

⁵ Then Jesus told them, "Moses only wrote down this rule for you because of your hard-hearted attitude. ⁶ However, in the beginning, from creation, God made male and female. ⁷ That's why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined in marriage to his wife, ⁸ and the two become one body. They are no longer two but one.† ⁹ Let no one separate what God has joined together."

¹⁰ When they were back indoors, the disciples began asking him about this.

¹¹ "Any man who divorces his wife and marries again commits adultery against her," he told them. ¹² "And if the wife divorces her husband and marries again she commits adultery."

¹³ Some people brought their children to Jesus so that he could bless them, but the disciples told them off and tried to keep the children away from Jesus. ¹⁴ But when Jesus saw what they were doing, he became very upset and told them, "Let the children come to me! Don't

* **9:43** The word used here is Literally, "Gehenna," sometimes translated "hell" or "hellfire." Gehenna was the place outside of Jerusalem where fires were lit to dispose of rubbish by burning. "Hell" is a concept that is derived from Nordic and Anglo-Saxon mythology and does not adequately convey the meaning here. † **9:44** Verse 44 is not found in the early manuscripts. ‡ **9:46** Verse 46 is not found in the early manuscripts. * **10:4** See Deuteronomy 24:1. † **10:8** See Genesis 2:24.

stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. ¹⁵ I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't welcome the kingdom of God like a child won't enter it." ¹⁶ He hugged the children, placed his hands on them, and blessed them.

¹⁷ As Jesus set out on his journey,[‡] a man came running over and kneeled down before Jesus. "Good teacher, what should I do to make sure I have eternal life?" he asked.

¹⁸ "Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked him. "No one is good, only God. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: you shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not cheat, honor your father and mother..."[§]

²⁰ "Teacher," the man replied, "I've obeyed all these commandments since I was small."

²¹ Jesus looked at him with love and said, "You're only missing one thing. Go and sell everything you own, give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me."

²² At this, the man's face fell, and he left feeling very sad, for he was very wealthy.

²³ Jesus looked around, and said to his disciples, "It's only with difficulty that wealthy people enter the kingdom of God!"

²⁴ The disciples were shocked at this. But Jesus went on, "My friends, it is difficult to enter God's kingdom. ²⁵ It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the rich to enter God's kingdom."

²⁶ The disciples were even more confused. "Then who on earth can be saved?" they asked one another.

²⁷ Looking right at them, Jesus replied, "From a human point of view, it's impossible—but not with God. Everything is possible with God."

²⁸ Peter spoke up, "We've left everything to follow you..."

²⁹ "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "anyone who has left behind their home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands because of me, and for the sake of the good news, ³⁰ will receive in return in due course a hundred times as many homes and brothers and sisters and children and lands—as well as persecution. In the world to come they will receive eternal life. ³¹ However, many of the first will be last, and the last first."

³² They continued on their way to Jerusalem, with Jesus walking on ahead. The disciples were apprehensive and the other followers were afraid. So Jesus took the disciples aside and began to explain to them what was about to happen to him. ³³ "We're going to Jerusalem," he told them, "and the Son of man will be betrayed to the chief priests and religious teachers. They will condemn him to death and hand him over to the foreigners.* ³⁴ They will mock him, spit on him, flog him, and kill him. But three days later he will rise again."

³⁵ James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to see him.

"Teacher," they said, "We want you to do for us whatever we ask you."

³⁶ "So what do you want me to do for you?" Jesus replied.

‡ **10:17** To Jerusalem, see 11:1. § **10:19** Quoting Exodus 20:12-16 or Deuteronomy 5:16-20.

* **10:33** In this context meaning the Romans.

37 “When you're victorious and sit on your throne,[†] make sure we sit beside you, one on the right, the other on the left,” they told him.

38 “You don't know what you're asking,” replied Jesus. “Can you drink the cup I drink? Can you be baptized with the baptism of pain I will suffer?”

39 “Yes, we can,” they replied.

“You will drink the cup I drink, and you will be baptized with the same baptism as me,” Jesus told them. 40 “But it's not for me to grant who should sit on my right or on my left. These places are reserved for those for whom they have been prepared.”

41 When the other ten disciples heard about this, they started getting upset with James and John. 42 Jesus called the disciples together and told them, “You realize that those who claim to rule over nations oppress their people. The rulers act like tyrants. 43 But for you it's not like this. Anyone of you who wants you to be a ruler must be your servant, 44 and anyone who wants to be first among you must be the slave of all of you. 45 For even the Son of man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

46 Jesus and his disciples passed through Jericho, and as they were leaving town, accompanied by a large crowd, Bartimaeus,[‡] a blind beggar, was sitting at the roadside. 47 When he heard it was Jesus of Nazareth, he started shouting out, “Jesus, son of David, please have mercy on me!” 48 Lots of people told him to be quiet, but that only made him shout even more, “Jesus, son of David, please have mercy me!”

49 Jesus stopped, and said, “Tell him to come here.” So they called him over, telling him, “Good news![§] Get up. He's calling for you.” 50 Bartimaeus jumped up, threw off his coat, and rushed over to Jesus.

51 “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him.

“Teacher,” he said to Jesus, “I want to see!”

52 “You can go. Your trust in me has healed* you.” Immediately Bartimaeus could see and he followed Jesus as he went on his way.

11

1 As they approached Jerusalem, near to Bethphage and Bethany, beside the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples on ahead. 2 He told them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as soon as you enter, you'll find a colt tied up that no one has ever ridden before. Untie it and bring it here. 3 If anyone asks you what you are doing, tell them, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back soon.’”

4 So they set off, and found a colt tied to a door, out on the street, and they untied it. 5 Some of the people standing around asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” 6 The disciples replied just as Jesus told them to, and the people let them go.

[†] 10:37 Implied. [‡] 10:46 For his non-Jewish readers Mark also adds that Bartimaeus means the “son of Timaeus.” [§] 10:49 Literally, “take courage.” * 10:52 Or “saved.” The word can mean both “save” and “heal.”

7 They brought the colt to Jesus, put their cloaks on it, and Jesus sat on it. 8 Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others laid down leafy branches that they'd cut in the fields.

9 Those leading in the front and those that were following were all shouting, "Hosanna!"* Bless the one coming in the name of the Lord. 10 Bless the kingdom of our father David that is coming! Hosanna in the highest!"†

11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and went in to the Temple. He looked around him, observing everything, and then, since it was getting late, he returned to Bethany with the twelve disciples.

12 The next day, as they left Bethany, Jesus was hungry. 13 From some distance away he saw a fig tree with leaves, so he went over to it to see if it had any fruit. But when he got there, he found it had only leaves, because it was not the season for figs.

14 He said to the tree, "May no one eat fruit from you ever again." His disciples heard his words.

15 They arrived back in Jerusalem, and Jesus went into the Temple. He started driving out the people who were buying and selling in the Temple. He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the chairs of the people selling doves. 16 He stopped anyone carrying things through the Temple.

17 He explained to them, "Doesn't Scripture say, 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'?‡ But you have turned it into a den of thieves!"§

18 The chief priests and religious teachers heard what had happened, and tried to find a way to kill Jesus. But they were afraid of him, for everyone was so impressed by his teaching.

19 When evening came Jesus and his disciples left the city. 20 The following morning as they returned, they saw the fig tree, withered from the roots up. 21 Peter remembered what Jesus had done, and said to him, "Rabbi, look, the fig tree that you cursed has withered."

22 "Trust in God," Jesus replied. 23 "Believe me when I say to you that if you told this mountain, 'Get out of here and be thrown into the sea,' and you don't doubt in your heart, but are convinced about what you're asking, then it will happen! 24 I'm telling you that whatever you pray for, whatever you ask, trust that you've received it, and it's yours. 25 But when you're praying, if you have something against someone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your sins." 26 *

27 They returned to Jerusalem, and as he was walking in the Temple, the chief priests, religious teachers, and the leaders approached him. 28 "By what authority are you doing all this?" they demanded. "Who gave you the right?"

29 "Let me ask you a question," Jesus told them. "You answer me, and I'll tell you by whose authority I do these things. 30 John's baptism—did that come from heaven, or from people?"

* **11:9** "Hosanna!" This is simply a transliteration of the Aramaic word meaning "Save!"

† **11:10** Quoting Psalms 118:26. ‡ **11:17** Quoting Isaiah 56:7. § **11:17** Quoting Jeremiah 7:11.

* **11:26** The earliest manuscripts do not contain verse 26, which is inserted from Matthew 6:15.

³¹ They discussed it among themselves. They said, "If we say it's from heaven, he'll reply, 'So why didn't you believe him?'" ³² But if we say, it's of human origin, well..." They were afraid of the crowd, because everyone believed that John was a true prophet.

³³ So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."

"Then I'm not telling you by whose authority I do these things," replied Jesus.

12

¹ Then Jesus began to speak to them using illustrated stories.*

"Once there was a man who planted a vineyard. He put a fence around it, dug a pit for a winepress, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to some farmers, and left on a journey.

² When harvest-time came, he sent one of his servants to the tenant farmers to collect some of the grapes from the vineyard. ³ But they grabbed hold of him, beat him up, and sent him away with nothing.

⁴ So the man sent another servant. They hit him over the head and abused him. ⁵ He sent another servant, and this one they killed. He sent many other servants, and they beat some of them and killed others. ⁶ In the end the only one left was his son whom he loved, and eventually he sent him, thinking 'they will respect my son.' ⁷ But the farmers said to themselves, 'Here's the owner's heir—if we kill him, we can get what he would have inherited!' ⁸ So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. ⁹ Now what is the owner of the vineyard going to do? He will come and kill those farmers, and then he will lease the vineyard to others.

¹⁰ Haven't you even read this Scripture: 'The stone rejected by the builders has become the chief cornerstone. ¹¹ This is from the Lord, and it's marvelous to see!'"†

¹² The Jewish leaders tried to have him arrested because they realized that the illustration was directed at them, but they were afraid of the crowd. So they left him alone and went away. ¹³ Later they sent some Pharisees with some of Herod's supporters to Jesus in an attempt to catch him out by what he said.

¹⁴ They arrived and said, "Teacher, we know you are a truthful person and you don't look for approval, because you don't care about status or position.‡ Instead you teach God's way in accordance with the truth. So is it right to pay tribute to Caesar or not? ¹⁵ Should we pay up, or should we refuse?"

Jesus, realizing how hypocritical they were, asked them, "Why are you trying to catch me out? Bring me a coin to look at."

¹⁶ They gave him a coin. "Whose is this image, and whose inscription?" Jesus asked them. "Caesar's," they replied.

¹⁷ "Then give back to Caesar what belongs to him, and give back to God what belongs to him," Jesus told them. They were amazed at his reply.

* **12:1** See on 3:23. † **12:11** Quoted from Psalms 118:22-23. ‡ **12:14** Literally, "You have no concern for anyone because you do not look at the face of men." However, this literal translation could make it seem that Jesus was uncaring and indifferent.

18 Then the Sadducees, who deny the resurrection, came and asked a question:

19 "Teacher, Moses instructed us that if a man dies, leaving his widow childless, then his brother should marry his wife, and have children by her on his behalf. § 20 Once there were seven brothers. The first one got married, and then died without having children. 21 The second married his widow, and then died, childless. The third did the same. 22 In fact all seven died without having children. In the end the woman died too. 23 In the resurrection, whose wife will she be, because she was the wife of all seven brothers?"

24 Jesus told them, "This proves you're mistaken, and that you don't know the Scriptures or the power of God. 25 When the dead rise, they don't marry, and aren't given in marriage. They're like the angels in heaven. 26 But concerning the resurrection, haven't you read in Moses' writings the story of the burning bush, where God spoke to Moses and told him, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?'" * 27 He's not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are completely mistaken!"

28 One of the religious teachers came and heard them arguing. He recognized that Jesus had given them a good answer. So he asked him, "Which is the most important commandment of all?"

29 Jesus replied, "The first commandment is, 'Hear, Israel, the Lord our God is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your spirit, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' † 31 The second is 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ‡ There's no more important commandment than these."

32 "That's right, Teacher," the man replied. "It's true as you said that God is one, and there is no other. 33 We are to love him with all our heart, all our understanding, and all our strength, and we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. This is far more important than offerings and sacrifices."

34 Jesus saw that he gave a thoughtful answer, and said, "You're not far from the kingdom of God." After this no one was brave enough to ask him any more questions.

35 While Jesus was teaching in the Temple, he asked, "Why do the religious teachers state that Christ is the son of David? 36 As David himself declared, inspired by the Holy Spirit, that the Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.' § 37 Since David himself calls him Lord, how can he be David's son?" The large crowd listened to what Jesus said with great delight.

38 Jesus continued to teach them, saying, "Beware of religious leaders! They love to walk around in long robes, to be greeted respectfully in the marketplaces. 39 They love to have the most important seats in the synagogues, and the best places at banquets. 40 They cheat widows out of what they own,* and cover up the kind of people they really are with long-winded prayers. They will receive severe condemnation in the judgment."

§ 12:19 See Deuteronomy 25:5. * 12:26 See Exodus 3:2-6. † 12:30 Quoting Deuteronomy 6:4. ‡ 12:31 Quoting Leviticus 19:18. § 12:36 Quoting Psalms 110:1. * 12:40 Literally, "devour widow's houses."

⁴¹ Jesus sat down opposite the treasury collection box, watching people tossing in coins. Many of the rich were extravagantly throwing in a lot of money. ⁴² Then a poor widow came along and put in just two small coins.† ⁴³ He called his disciples together and told them, “I tell you the truth: this poor widow has put in more than all the rest together. ⁴⁴ All of them gave from their wealth what they had, but she gave from her poverty what she didn't have. She put in all she had to live on.”

13

¹ As Jesus was leaving the Temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Teacher, look at these massive stones and magnificent buildings!”*

² “You see all these great buildings?” Jesus replied. “Not one stone will be left on top of another. Everything will be torn down.”

³ As Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives overlooking the Temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him in private, ⁴ “Tell us: when this will happen? What's the sign that all this is about to be fulfilled?”†

⁵ Jesus began telling them, “Make sure no one deceives you. ⁶ Many will come in my name claiming, ‘I am the Christ.’ They will deceive many people. ⁷ Don't be troubled when you hear of wars nearby and wars far away. These things must happen but this is not the end. ⁸ Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines too. These are the beginnings of the world's birth pains.

⁹ Watch out for yourselves! They will hand you over to the courts to be tried. You will be beaten in synagogues. Because of me you will have to stand before governors and kings, and you will be witnesses to them.

¹⁰ The good news must first be announced in every nation. ¹¹ When they come to arrest you and put you on trial, don't worry what to say. Just say what you're told at that time, because it's not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

¹² Brother will betray brother to death, and a father will betray his child. Children will turn against their parents and have them condemned to death. ¹³ You will be hated by everyone because of me, but whoever endures until the end will be saved.

¹⁴ But when you see the ‘idolatry that defiles’‡ standing where he should not be (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea should run to the mountains. ¹⁵ Those who are on the roof—don't go back inside the house to get anything. ¹⁶ Those who are out in the fields—don't go home to get a coat. ¹⁷ How hard it will be for those who are pregnant or nursing at that time! ¹⁸ Pray that this won't happen during the winter. ¹⁹ For these will be days of trouble like never before since the beginning of God's creation until now, and they won't ever come again. ²⁰ If God doesn't cut short these days, no one will survive. However, for the sake of those God has chosen, he has cut them short.

† **12:42** Literally, two *lepta*, of little value. * **13:1** Literally, “what sort of stones and what sort of buildings.” † **13:4** Because the disciples' question merges the two events, Jesus' answer combines aspects of the destruction of the Temple and the final end-time ‡ **13:14** Or “the idolatry that causes desolation.” See Daniel 9:27, Daniel 11:31, and Daniel 12:11.

²¹ So if anyone tells you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah,’ or ‘Look, there he is,’ don’t believe it. ²² For false Messiahs and false prophets will appear, and they will perform miraculous signs and wonders to deceive the chosen of God, if that were possible. ²³ Watch out! I’ve told you everything before it happens.

²⁴ This is what will happen after those troubles: ‘The sun will become dark, the moon won’t shine, ²⁵ the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.’[§]

²⁶ Then they will see the Son of man as he comes on the clouds, possessing great power and glory.* ²⁷ He will send out the angels, and gather together all his chosen ones from wherever they are,† from the most distant part of the earth to the farthest point of heaven.

²⁸ Learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branches grow soft and send out leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ In the same way, when you see these things happening, you know that it’s near—right outside the door! ³⁰ I tell you the truth, this generation won’t come to an end until all these things have happened. ³¹ Heaven and earth will come to an end, but my teachings will not.

³² No one knows the day or hour when this will happen—not even the angels in heaven, not even the Son; only the Father knows. ³³ Keep watch! Stay awake! For you don’t know when this will happen. ³⁴ It’s like a man who went away on a journey. He left his house, and gave each of his servants the authority to do what he told them. He told the doorkeeper to stay awake.

³⁵ So keep watch, because you don’t know when the owner of the house is coming back. It may be in the evening, in the middle of the night, before dawn, or in the morning. ³⁶ You don’t want to be caught sleeping if he returns unexpectedly. ³⁷ What I’m telling you, I’m telling everyone: Watch!”

14

¹ It was now two days before Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the religious leaders were trying to find a surreptitious way to arrest Jesus and have him killed. ² “But not during Passover,” they said to themselves, “otherwise the people may riot.”

³ Meanwhile Jesus was in Bethany, eating a meal at Simon the leper’s home. A woman came in with an alabaster jar of very expensive pure nard perfume.* She broke the jar open and poured the perfume on Jesus’ head.

⁴ Some of those who were there became annoyed and said, “Why waste this perfume? ⁵ It could’ve been sold for a year’s wages† and the money given to the poor.” They were angry with her.

⁶ But Jesus replied, “Leave her alone! Why are you criticizing her for doing something beautiful to me? ⁷ You’ll always have the poor with you,‡ and you can help them whenever you want. But you won’t

§ 13:25 See Isaiah 13:10. * 13:26 See Daniel 7:13-14. † 13:27 Literally, “from the four winds.” * 14:3 Nard: an essential oil derived from the roots of the spikenard plant native to China and India. † 14:5 Literally, “300 denarii.” ‡ 14:7 See Deuteronomy 15:11.

always have me with you. ⁸ She did what she could: she anointed my body in anticipation of my burial. ⁹ I tell you the truth: wherever the good news is spread in the world, people will remember what she did.”

¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to the chief priests and arranged to betray Jesus to them. ¹¹ When they heard this, they were delighted, and promised to pay him. So Judas began to look for an opportunity to betray Jesus.

¹² On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the time when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, Jesus' disciples asked him, “Where do you want us to go and prepare the Passover meal for you?”

¹³ He sent two of his disciples, telling them, “Go into the city and there you'll meet a man carrying a water pot. Follow him, ¹⁴ and when he goes into a house, ask the owner where I and my disciples can celebrate the Passover. ¹⁵ He will take you to a large upstairs room that is furnished and ready. You can make preparations for us there.”

¹⁶ The disciples went into the city, and found things just as he'd described them. They prepared the Passover meal. ¹⁷ In the evening Jesus went there with the twelve disciples.

¹⁸ While they were sitting eating, Jesus said, “I tell you the truth: one of you is going to betray me; one who is eating with me now.”

¹⁹ They were shocked, and they each asked, “It's not me, is it?”

²⁰ “It's one of the Twelve, one of you sharing this food with me,” he replied. ²¹ “The Son of man will die, just as the Scriptures predicted. But how terrible it will be for the man who betrays the Son of man! It would be better for that man if he'd never been born.” ²² As they were eating, Jesus picked up some bread. He blessed it, and gave it to them. “Take it. This is my body,” he told them.

²³ Then he picked up the cup. He blessed it, and gave it to them. They all drank from it. ²⁴ “This is my blood,” he told them, “the agreement[§] that's being poured out for many. ²⁵ I tell you the truth, I won't drink of the fruit of the vine until the day I drink it fresh in God's kingdom.”

²⁶ After they had sung a psalm, they left for the Mount of Olives.

²⁷ “All of you will abandon me,” Jesus told them. “For as the Scriptures say, ‘I will attack the shepherd, and the sheep will be completely scattered.’^{*} ²⁸ But after I have risen from the dead, I will go before you to Galilee.”

²⁹ “I won't abandon you even if everyone else does,” Peter replied.

³⁰ Jesus answered him, “I tell you the truth that today, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny that you even know me three times.”

³¹ But Peter was totally adamant, saying, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you.” All of them said the same.

³² They arrived at a place called Gethsemane,[†] where Jesus told his disciples, “Sit here while I go and pray.” ³³ He took Peter, James, and John with him. He began to be very disturbed and troubled.

³⁴ Jesus told them, “My agony is so painful it feels like I'm dying. Please, remain here and stay awake.” ³⁵ He went a little farther on and then fell to the ground. He prayed, asking to be spared the time[‡]

[§] 14:24 Or “covenant,” or “pledge.” ^{*} 14:27 Quoting Zechariah 13:7. [†] 14:32 Meaning “olive press.” [‡] 14:35 Literally, “hour.”

that was coming, if it were possible.

³⁶ “Abba, Father! You can do everything,” he said. “Please, take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet it’s not what I want, but what you want.”

³⁷ Then Jesus returned and found the disciples asleep. “Simon, are you sleeping?” he asked Peter. “Couldn’t you stay awake for just an hour? ³⁸ Stay awake, and pray so you won’t fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

³⁹ He left them once more, and prayed, saying the same things. ⁴⁰ Then he returned, and again he found them sleeping because they couldn’t keep their eyes open. [§] They didn’t know what to say! ⁴¹ He returned a third time, and asked them, “Are you still asleep? Are you still resting? Well that’s enough, * because the time has come! Look, the Son of man is about to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴² Get up! Let’s go! See, here comes my betrayer.”

⁴³ Just as he was saying this, Judas—one of the twelve disciples—arrived with a mob carrying swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests, religious leaders, and elders. ⁴⁴ Now the betrayer had arranged a sign with them: “He’s the one that I kiss. Arrest him, and take him away under guard.”

⁴⁵ Judas went right up to Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, and kissed him affectionately. ⁴⁶ So they grabbed hold of Jesus and arrested him. ⁴⁷ But one of those standing there pulled out his sword and struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his ear.

⁴⁸ “Am I some kind of rebel that you have come to arrest me with swords and clubs?” Jesus asked them. ⁴⁹ “I was there with you, teaching in the Temple every day. Why didn’t you arrest me then? But this is happening to fulfill the Scriptures.”

⁵⁰ Then all Jesus’ disciples deserted him and ran away. ⁵¹ (One of his followers was a young man who was wearing only a linen garment. ⁵² They seized hold of him, but he ran off naked, leaving the garment behind.)

⁵³ They took Jesus to the high priest’s house where all the chief priests, elders, and religious teachers had gathered. ⁵⁴ Peter followed him at a distance, and went into the courtyard of the high priest’s house. He sat down with the guards and warmed himself by the fire.

⁵⁵ Inside the chief priests and the whole governing council† were trying to find some evidence to have Jesus put to death, but they couldn’t find anything. ⁵⁶ Many were giving false testimony against him, but their statements didn’t agree.

⁵⁷ Some of them got up to speak falsely against Jesus. ⁵⁸ “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this Temple that human hands built, and in three days I will build another without hands.’ ” ⁵⁹ But even so their testimony didn’t agree.

⁶⁰ Then the high priest stood up in front of the council, and asked Jesus, “Have you nothing to say in response to these charges made against you?” ⁶¹ But Jesus remained silent and didn’t answer. So the

§ 14:40 Literally, “their eyes were burdened down.” * 14:41 The meaning of the Greek word here is unclear. It usually means “paid in full.” † 14:55 Literally, “Sanhedrin.”

high priest asked again, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"

⁶² "I am," Jesus replied, "and you will see the Son of man sitting on the right of the Mighty One, and coming with the clouds of heaven."[‡]

⁶³ The high priest tore his clothes[§] and asked, "Why do we need any more witnesses? ⁶⁴ You have heard the blasphemy! What's your reaction?"

They all found him guilty and condemned him to death. ⁶⁵ Then some of them began to spit on him. They blindfolded him, hit him with their fists, and said, "Why don't you prophesy then, you 'Prophet!'" The guards took him away and beat him up.

⁶⁶ Meanwhile Peter was down below in the courtyard. One of the high priest's servant-girls passed by, ⁶⁷ and seeing Peter warming himself, looked straight at him and said, "You were with Jesus of Nazareth too!"

⁶⁸ But he denied it. "I don't know what you're talking about or what you mean," he replied. Then he went out to the forecourt, and a rooster crowed.*

⁶⁹ Seeing him there, the servant girl repeated to those standing around, "This man is one of them!" ⁷⁰ Once more Peter denied it. A little while later they said to Peter again, "You're definitely one of them because you're a Galilean too!"

⁷¹ Peter began calling down curses on himself and he swore, "I don't know this man who you're talking about." ⁷² Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said to him: "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." When he realized what he'd done, he burst into tears.

15

¹ Early the next morning, the chief priest, elders, and religious teachers—the whole governing council—came to a decision. They had Jesus bound and sent him to be handed over to Pilate.

² Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

"You said it," Jesus replied.

³ The chief priests kept on making many accusations against him.

⁴ Pilate questioned him again, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many charges they're bringing against you!" ⁵ But Jesus didn't give any more answers, much to Pilate's surprise.

⁶ Now it was Pilate's custom at the Passover feast to release a prisoner to the people, whoever they requested. ⁷ One of the prisoners was a man called Barabbas who belonged to a group of rebels who had committed murder during an uprising. ⁸ The crowd went to Pilate and asked him to release a prisoner following his usual custom.

⁹ "Do you want me to release to you the King of Jews?" he asked them, ¹⁰ for he realized that it was because of their jealousy of Jesus that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. ¹¹ But the chief

[‡] **14:62** See Psalms 110:1 and Daniel 7:13. **§ 14:63** In those times an expression of great

anguish. * **14:68** "And a rooster crowed." This phrase is not found in some of the early manuscripts.

priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas to them instead.

¹² "Then what should I do with the one you call the King of the Jews?" he asked them.

¹³ "Crucify him!" they shouted back.

¹⁴ "Why? What crime has he committed?" Pilate asked them.

"Crucify him!" they shouted back even louder.

¹⁵ Wanting to please the mob, Pilate released Barabbas to them. First he had Jesus flogged and then handed him over to be crucified. ¹⁶ The soldiers took him away into the Praetorium* courtyard, where they called out the whole cohort.† ¹⁷ They put royal purple robes on him and made a crown of thorns that they placed on him. ¹⁸ Then they saluted him, saying, "Hail King of the Jews!" ¹⁹ They repeatedly beat him around the head with a rod, spat at him, and fell on their knees before him as if in worship. ²⁰ After they finished mocking him, they took off the purple robes, and put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him away to be crucified. ²¹ They forced a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the countryside, to carry his cross. Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus.

²² They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha, which means "the Place of the Skull." ²³ They offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he refused it. ²⁴ Then they crucified him. They divided his clothes, and threw dice to decide who would have what.‡ ²⁵ It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. ²⁶ A sign with the written charge against him read: "The King of the Jews."

²⁷ They crucified two criminals with him, one on his left and one on his right. ²⁸ § ²⁹ People passing by shouted insults at him, shaking their heads, and saying, "Aha! You who claimed you were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days; ³⁰ save yourself and come down from the cross!" ³¹ Likewise the chief priests and the religious teachers made fun of him, saying to each other, "He saved others, but he can't save himself. ³² If he really is the Messiah, the King of Israel, then why doesn't he come down from the cross so we can see and believe!" Even those who were crucified with him insulted him.

³³ At noon darkness fell over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ³⁴ At three o'clock Jesus cried out, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," which means, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"* ³⁵ Some of those standing there heard this, and said, "He's calling for Elijah." ³⁶ One man ran and filled a sponge with vinegar, put it on a stick, and tried to give it to Jesus to drink.† "Leave him alone," he said. "Let's see if Elijah will come to take him down." ³⁷ Then Jesus groaned loudly, and died. ³⁸ The Temple veil was ripped in two from top to bottom. ³⁹ When the centurion standing there in front of Jesus saw how he died, he said, "This man was truly the Son of God."

⁴⁰ Some women were watching from a distance including Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and Joses, and

* **15:16** The Roman governor's official residence. † **15:16** A cohort was a group of some 600 soldiers. ‡ **15:24** See Psalms 22:18. § **15:28** Verse 28 is not found in many of the early manuscripts. * **15:34** Quoting Psalms 22:1. † **15:36** See Psalms 69:21.

Salome. ⁴¹ They had followed Jesus and had taken care of him while he was in Galilee. Many other women who had come with him to Jerusalem were also there.

⁴² It was Friday,[‡] the day before the Sabbath. When evening came, ⁴³ Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the governing council who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, had the courage to go to Pilate and ask for Jesus' body. ⁴⁴ Pilate was surprised that Jesus had died so soon, so he summoned the centurion and asked him if Jesus had already died. ⁴⁵ Once he had confirmation from the centurion, Pilate gave permission for Joseph to take the body. ⁴⁶ Joseph bought a linen sheet. Then he took Jesus' body down from the cross and wrapped it in the sheet, and placed it in a tomb that had been cut out of rock. Then he rolled a heavy stone up against the entrance. ⁴⁷ Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses were watching where he was laid.

16

¹ Once the Sabbath had ended, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought aromatic ointments so that they could go and anoint Jesus' body. ² Very early Sunday^{*} morning, just at sunrise, they went to the tomb. ³ They were asking each other, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" ⁴ But when they arrived and looked, they saw that the very large, heavy stone had already been rolled away.

⁵ When they went into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right, wearing a long white robe. They became very frightened.

⁶ "Don't be frightened," he told them. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, the one who was crucified. He is risen from the dead. He is not here. ⁷ Look, this is the place where they laid him to rest. Now go, and tell his disciples and Peter that he's going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there just as he told you."

⁸ They left and ran from the tomb, shaking and confused. They said nothing to anyone because they were too scared.[†]

⁹ When Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday morning, he appeared first of all to Mary Magdalene, from whom he'd driven out seven demons. ¹⁰ She went and told those who had been with him as they mourned and cried. ¹¹ When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they didn't believe it. ¹² Later Jesus appeared in a different form to two other disciples who'd left to go to the countryside. ¹³ They returned and told the others, but they didn't believe them either.

¹⁴ After this he appeared to the eleven disciples as they were eating. He rebuked them for their lack of trust and their stubbornness, because they had not believed those who'd seen him after he had risen.

¹⁵ Then he told them, "Go to the whole world, and announce the good news to everyone."[‡] ¹⁶ Anyone who trusts in me and is baptized will be saved, but anyone who chooses not to trust will be condemned. ¹⁷ The

[‡] **15:42** Literally, "Preparation day." ^{*} **16:2** Literally, "the first day of the week." [†] **16:8** Many of the early manuscripts of Mark end here. Others continue as shown. [‡] **16:15** Literally, "all creation."

following signs will accompany those who trust in me: in my name they will drive out demons; they will speak new languages; ¹⁸ they will be able to handle snakes; if they drink something poisonous they won't be harmed; they will place their hands on the sick and they will be healed."

¹⁹ Then, the Lord Jesus, when he had finished speaking to them, was taken up into heaven where he sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰ The disciples went out and spread the good news everywhere, and the Lord worked with them, confirming the message through miraculous signs that accompanied it.

Luke

¹ As you know, many others have attempted to put down in writing the things that have been fulfilled* that involve us. ² They based their accounts on evidence from the earliest eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word, ³ and so I also decided that since I have followed these things very carefully from the beginning, it would be a good idea to write out an accurate account of all that happened. ⁴ I have done this dear Theophilus† so you can be certain that what you were taught is completely reliable.

⁵ During the time when Herod was king of Judea, there was a priest called Zechariah, who came from the Abijah priestly division. He was married to Elizabeth, who was also descended from Aaron the priest. ⁶ They both did what was right before God, being careful to follow all the Lord's commandments and regulations.

⁷ They had no children because Elizabeth wasn't able to have any, and they were both growing old. ⁸ While Zechariah was serving as a priest before God, on behalf of his priestly division, ⁹ he was chosen by lot‡ according to priestly custom to enter the Temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ During the time of offering incense a large crowd of people were praying outside. ¹¹ An angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah, standing to the right of the altar of incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw the angel, he was startled and became terrified.

¹³ But the angel told him, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call him John. ¹⁴ He will bring you joy and gladness, and many will celebrate his birth. ¹⁵ He will be great in the sight of the Lord. He will refuse to drink wine or other alcoholic drink. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he's born. ¹⁶ He will turn many Israelites back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ He will go ahead of the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the fathers back to thinking about their children, and to turn those who are rebellious back to a right understanding—to prepare a people ready for the Lord."§

¹⁸ "How can I be sure about this?" Zechariah asked the angel. "I'm an old man, and my wife is getting old too."

¹⁹ "I am Gabriel," the angel replied. "I stand in God's presence, and I was sent to speak to you and give you this good news. ²⁰ But since you didn't believe what I told you, you'll become dumb, unable to speak, until the appointed time when my words come true."

²¹ Outside the people were waiting for Zechariah, wondering why he was taking so long in the Temple. ²² When eventually he came out, he wasn't able to speak to them. They realized he'd seen a vision in the Temple, for though he could make gestures, he was completely dumb.

* **1:1** Or "achieved," "accomplished." † **1:4** "Theophilus" means one who loves God. Also in Acts 1:1. ‡ **1:9** A system of random choice like "choosing straws" was used because more wanted to serve than there were places available. § **1:17** Quoting Malachi 4:5-6.

²³ After he'd finished his time of service, he went back home. ²⁴ Some time later his wife Elizabeth became pregnant. She stayed at home for five months.

²⁵ "The Lord has done this for me," she said, "now that he's taken away my disgrace in the eyes of others."

²⁶ In the sixth month of her pregnancy God sent the angel Gabriel to a young girl called Mary who lived in the town of Nazareth in Galilee. ²⁷ She was engaged to a man named Joseph.

²⁸ The angel greeted her.* "You are very privileged," he told her. "The Lord is with you." ²⁹ Mary was very puzzled at what he said, and wondered what this greeting meant.

³⁰ "Don't worry, Mary," the angel went on, "for God has shown his graciousness to you. ³¹ You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. You shall call him Jesus. ³² He will be very great, and he will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never come to an end."

³⁴ "How is this possible?" Mary asked. "I'm still a virgin."

³⁵ He replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you. The baby who is to be born is holy, and will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ And Elizabeth, your relative, even she is pregnant in her old age. The woman that people said couldn't have children is already six months pregnant. ³⁷ Nothing is impossible for God."

³⁸ "Here I am, ready to be the Lord's servant," said Mary. "May it happen to me just as you said." Then the angel left her.

³⁹ A little while later, Mary got herself ready and hurried up into the hills of Judea, to the town where ⁴⁰ Zechariah's house was. She called out to Elizabeth as she went in. ⁴¹ As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's voice, the baby jumped for joy inside her. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, ⁴² and cried out in a loud voice,

"How blessed you are among women, and how blessed will be the child born to you! ⁴³ Why am I so honored that the mother of my Lord should visit me? ⁴⁴ As soon as I heard you call out in greeting, my baby jumped for joy inside me. ⁴⁵ How fortunate you are, because you are convinced that the Lord will do what he has promised you!"

⁴⁶ Mary replied, "How I praise the Lord! ⁴⁷ I am so happy with God my Savior, ⁴⁸ because he decided that I, his servant, was worthy of his consideration, despite my humble background. From now on every generation will say I was blessed. ⁴⁹ God Almighty has done great things for me; his name is holy. ⁵⁰ His mercy lasts for generation after generation to those who respect him.† ⁵¹ With his power‡ he has broken to pieces those who arrogantly think they're so clever. ⁵² He tears the powerful down from their thrones, and elevates those who are humble. ⁵³ He fills the hungry with good things to eat, and

* **1:28** In fact the angel uses the common form of greeting of the time that literally meant "Rejoice" but was actually equivalent to saying "Hello." Even modern translations have trouble here, with the angel saying "Hail, favored woman" or "Greetings, O favored one," neither of which seem particularly suitable. On the other hand an angel arriving and saying "Hi" hardly fits either... † **1:50** Literally, "fear," but in modern use this can have the idea of abject terror. ‡ **1:51** Literally, "strong arm."

he sends the rich away empty-handed. ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, remembering him in mercy, ⁵⁵ just as he promised our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants for ever.” ⁵⁶ Mary stayed with her for three months and then returned home.

⁵⁷ The time came for Elizabeth to have her baby and she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had showed her great kindness, and they celebrated together with her. ⁵⁹ Eight days later they came to circumcise the boy. They planned to call him Zechariah after his father.

⁶⁰ “No,” Elizabeth said. “He shall be called John.”

⁶¹ “But there's nobody among your relatives who has this name,” they told her. ⁶² Through gestures they asked Zechariah, the boy's father, what he wanted to call his son. ⁶³ Zechariah motioned for something to write on. To everyone's surprise he wrote, “His name is John.” ⁶⁴ Immediately he could speak again, and he started praising God.

⁶⁵ All those living nearby were in awe at what had happened, and the news spread throughout the hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶ Everyone who heard the news wondered what it meant. “What will the little boy grow up to be?” they asked, for it was clear he was very special to God. §

⁶⁷ Zechariah, his father, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke this prophecy:

⁶⁸ “The Lord, the God of Israel, he is wonderful, for he has come to his people and set them free. ⁶⁹ He has given us a great Savior from the line of his servant David, ⁷⁰ as he promised through his holy prophets long ago. ⁷¹ He promised to save us from our enemies, from those who hate us. ⁷² He was merciful to our fathers, remembering his holy agreement— ⁷³ the promise that he made to our father Abraham. ⁷⁴ He gives us freedom from fear and rescues us from our enemies, ⁷⁵ so we can serve him by doing what is good and right for our whole lives. ⁷⁶ Even though you are only a small child, you will be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go ahead of the Lord to prepare his way, ⁷⁷ providing knowledge of salvation to his people through the forgiveness of their sins. ⁷⁸ Through God's caring kindness to us, heaven's dawn will break upon us ⁷⁹ to shine on those who live in darkness and under the shadow of death, and to guide us along the path of peace.”

⁸⁰ The boy John grew and became spiritually strong. He lived in the desert until the time came for his public ministry to Israel.

2

¹ It was the time when Caesar Augustus issued a decree that there should be a census of everyone in the Roman Empire. ² This was the first census under governor Quirinius of Syria. ³ So everybody went to their own city to be registered. ⁴ Joseph was descended from King David, so he left Nazareth in Galilee to go to Bethlehem, the city of David, in Judea. ⁵ He went to register there, together with Mary, who

§ 1:66 Literally, “for the hand of the Lord was with him.”

was pledged in marriage to him and expecting a baby. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to have her baby. ⁷ She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him up in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger because the inn had no rooms left.

⁸ Nearby some shepherds were spending the night out in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone all around them. They were scared out of their wits!

¹⁰ "Don't be afraid!" the angel told them. "I'm here to bring you good news that will make the all the people really glad. ¹¹ The Savior has been born to you today, here in David's city. He is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² You will recognize him by this sign: you will find the child wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³ Suddenly many heavenly beings appeared, praising God, saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to the God of heaven, and on earth peace to those with whom he is pleased!"

¹⁵ After the angels had left them and returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see what's happened concerning these things the Lord has told us about."

¹⁶ They hurried there and found Mary, Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ After they'd seen for themselves, they spread the news of what had happened and what they had been told about this baby. ¹⁸ All those who heard about it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary was careful to remember all the things that had happened and often thought about them. ²⁰ The shepherds went back to watching their flocks, glorifying and thanking God for all that they'd heard and seen, for it was just as they'd been told.

²¹ After eight days, the time came for the baby to be circumcised, and he was named Jesus. This was the name given to him by the angel before he had even been conceived. ²² When the time of their purification according to the law of Moses was finished, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, ²³ as the law of the Lord states, "Every firstborn son must be dedicated to the Lord."* ²⁴ There they made a sacrifice, as God's law also states, of "a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons."†

²⁵ Living in Jerusalem at that time was a man called Simeon. Simeon did what was good and was very devout. He was waiting expectantly for the hope of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ The Holy Spirit had shown him that he would not die before he saw the Lord's Messiah.‡ ²⁷ Following the Spirit's leading, he went to the Temple. When Jesus' parents brought in the little boy to be dedicated as required by the Law, ²⁸ Simeon took Jesus in his arms, thanked God, and said,

²⁹ "Lord and Master, now you can let your servant die in peace as you promised, ³⁰ because I have seen for myself your salvation ³¹ which you have prepared for everyone. ³² He is a light that will show you

* **2:23** Quoting Exodus 13:2. † **2:24** Quoting Leviticus 12:8. ‡ **2:26** Or "Christ."

to the nations, the glory of your people Israel.”³³ Jesus' father and mother were shocked at what Simeon said about him.

³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Jesus' mother Mary, “This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall and many to rise. He is a sign from God that many will reject,³⁵ revealing what they really think. For you it will feel like a sword piercing right through you.”

³⁶ Anna the prophetess also lived in Jerusalem. She was the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher, and she was very old. She had been married for seven years,³⁷ and then she had been widowed. She was eighty-four years old. She spent her time at the Temple in worship, fasting and praying.³⁸ She came up to them right at that moment, and began praising God. She spoke about Jesus to all those who were looking forward to the time when God would set Jerusalem free.

³⁹ Once they had completed everything God's law required, they returned to their home town of Nazareth in Galilee.⁴⁰ The child grew strong, and was very wise. God's blessing was with him.

⁴¹ Jesus' parents traveled to Jerusalem every year for the Passover festival.⁴² When Jesus was twelve years old, they went to the festival as they always did.⁴³ When the festival had finished and it was time to return home, the boy Jesus remained in Jerusalem, but his parents didn't realize this.⁴⁴ They assumed he was with all the others traveling home. A day passed before they started looking for him among their friends and relatives.⁴⁵ When they couldn't find him they returned to Jerusalem to look for him there.⁴⁶ It was three days before they found him in the Temple. He was sitting among the religious teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.⁴⁷ All who heard him speak were surprised by his understanding and his answers.

⁴⁸ His parents were totally confused when they saw what he was doing. His mother asked him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I—we've been worried sick! We've been looking everywhere for you!”

⁴⁹ “Why is it that you were looking for me?” Jesus replied. “Didn't you know I should be here in my Father's house?”⁵⁰ But they didn't understand what he meant.⁵¹ Then he went back with them to Nazareth, and did what he was told. His mother kept a careful note of everything that happened.⁵² Jesus grew steadily wiser and stronger, favored both by God and by the people.

3

¹ By now Tiberias had been Caesar for fifteen years. Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea. Herod was ruler* of Galilee, his brother Philip was ruler of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was ruler of Abilene.² Annas and Caiphas were the current high priests. This was the time when the word of God came to John, Zechariah's son, who was living in the desert.³ He went throughout the whole Jordan region, announcing to everyone that they needed to be baptized to show they had repented and their sins had been forgiven.⁴ As Isaiah the prophet wrote: “A voice was heard crying out in the desert, ‘Prepare the way of the

* **3:1** Literally, “tetrarch.” Also the other instances where ruler is used in this verse.

Lord: make his paths straight. ⁵ Every valley will be filled, and every mountain and hill will be leveled. Crooked ways will be straightened, and rough roads will be smoothed. ⁶ Every human being will see God's salvation.' "†

⁷ John addressed the crowds that came to him to be baptized. "You viper's brood! Who warned you to flee from the coming judgment?" he asked. ⁸ "Demonstrate that you have truly repented.‡ Don't try to justify yourselves by saying, 'We're Abraham's descendants.' Let me tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these stones. ⁹ The ax is set to begin chopping at the base of the trees. Any tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰ "So what should we do?" the crowds asked him.

¹¹ "If you have two coats, then share with someone who doesn't have one. If you have food, then share with those who don't," he told them.

¹² Some tax collectors came to be baptized. "Teacher, what should we do?" they also asked.

¹³ "Don't collect any more tax than you're meant to," he replied.

¹⁴ "What about us?" some soldiers asked. "What should we do?"

"Don't demand money with threats of violence. Don't make accusations that are untrue. Be satisfied with your wages," he replied.

¹⁵ The people were waiting expectantly, and wondered whether John himself might be the Messiah. ¹⁶ John replied and explained to everybody, "Yes, I am baptizing you in water. But the one who is coming is more important than me, and I'm not worthy to undo his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand and he's ready to separate the wheat from the chaff on his threshing floor. He'll gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with fire that can't be extinguished."

¹⁸ John gave many warnings like this as he announced the good news to the people. ¹⁹ But when John reprimanded Herod the ruler for marrying Herodias, Herod's brother's wife, and for all the evil things he'd done, ²⁰ Herod added to his crimes by having John thrown into jail.

²¹ Now it happened that after everyone had been baptized, Jesus was baptized as well. As he was praying, heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon him, taking the form of a dove. A voice came from heaven, saying, "You are my son, the one I love. I am truly pleased with you."

²³ Jesus was around thirty when he began his public ministry. People presumed he was the son of Joseph. Joseph was the son of Heli, ²⁴ the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, ²⁵ the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, ²⁶ the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, ²⁷ the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, ²⁸ the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, ²⁹ the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, ³⁰ the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of

† 3:6 Quoting Isaiah 40:3-5. ‡ 3:8 Literally, "Produce worthy fruits of repentance."

Jonam, the son of Eliakim, ³¹ the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, ³² the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon, ³³ the son of Amminadab, the son of Arni, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, ³⁴ the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, ³⁵ the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, ³⁶ the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, ³⁷ the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, ³⁸ the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

4

¹ Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River and was led by the Spirit into the desert, ² where he was tempted by the devil for forty days. He didn't eat anything during that whole time, so at the end he was starving.

³ The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."

⁴ "It is written in Scripture, 'You shall not live on bread alone,' "^{*} Jesus answered.

⁵ The devil led him up to a high place, and in a rapid view showed him all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ Then the devil said to Jesus, "I will give you authority over all of them, and their glory. This authority has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want. ⁷ Bow down and worship me and you can have it all."

⁸ "It is written in Scripture, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and you shall serve only him,' "[†] Jesus replied.

⁹ The devil took Jesus to Jerusalem, set him on the top of the Temple, and told him, "If you are the Son of God, then jump! ¹⁰ For it is written in Scripture, 'He will order his angels to care for you, ¹¹ holding you up to protect you from stumbling over a stone.' "[‡]

¹² "It is written in Scripture, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God,' "[§] Jesus replied. ¹³ When the devil had completed all his temptations, he waited for another opportunity.*

¹⁴ Jesus returned to Galilee, full of the Spirit's power. News about him spread everywhere. ¹⁵ Jesus taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. ¹⁶ When he arrived in Nazareth, where he had grown up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day as usual. ¹⁷ The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Jesus unrolled the scroll and found the place where it's written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to announce good news to the destitute. He has sent me to proclaim that prisoners will be released, the blind will see, the oppressed will be freed, ¹⁹ and to proclaim the time of the Lord's favor." ²⁰ He rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant. Then he sat down. Everybody in the synagogue was staring at him.

* **4:4** Quoting Deuteronomy 8:3. † **4:8** Quoting Deuteronomy 6:13. ‡ **4:11** Quoting Psalms 91:11-12. § **4:12** Quoting Deuteronomy 6:16. * **4:13** Or "for an opportune time."

²¹ “This Scripture you’ve just heard has been fulfilled today!” he told them. ²² Everybody expressed their approval of him, amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” they wondered.

²³ Jesus replied, “I’m sure you’ll repeat this proverb to me, ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ and ask, ‘Why don’t you do here in your own hometown what we heard you did in Capernaum?’” ²⁴ But I tell you the truth, no prophet is accepted in his hometown. ²⁵ I guarantee that there were many widows in Israel during the time of Elijah when there was a drought for three and a half years, causing a great famine throughout the country. ²⁶ Yet Elijah wasn’t sent to any of them. He was sent to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon! ²⁷ Even though there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha, the only one who was healed was Naaman the Syrian!”

²⁸ When they heard this everyone in the synagogue became furious. ²⁹ They jumped to their feet and threw him out of the town. Then they dragged him to the top of the hill on which the town was built in order to throw him off the cliff. ³⁰ But he walked right through them and went on his way.

³¹ Jesus went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee. On Sabbath he started teaching them. ³² They were amazed at what he taught them for he spoke with authority.

³³ In the synagogue there was a man who was possessed by a demon. He cried out, ³⁴ “So, what do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: God’s Holy One!”

³⁵ Jesus interrupted him, saying, “Be quiet!” Then he ordered the demon, “Come out of him!” Throwing him to the ground right before them, the demon left the man without injuring him. ³⁶ They were all amazed and asked each other, “What is this teaching? With power and authority he orders evil spirits to leave—and they do!” ³⁷ News about Jesus spread throughout the nearby region.

³⁸ Leaving the synagogue, Jesus went to Simon’s house. Simon’s mother-in-law was sick with a high fever and those who were there asked Jesus to help. ³⁹ Jesus went and stood over her. He told the fever to leave her—which it did. She got up right away and prepared a meal for them. ⁴⁰ When the sun set, they brought to him all who were sick, suffering from various diseases. Jesus placed his hands on them, one after the other, and he healed them. ⁴¹ Demons came out of many people, shouting, “You are the Son of God.” But Jesus stopped them and refused to let them speak because they knew he was the Christ.

⁴² Early the following morning Jesus left to find some peace and quiet. But the crowds went out looking for him, and finally found him. They tried to stop him leaving because they did not want him to go.

⁴³ But he told them, “I have to go to other towns to tell them the good news of the kingdom of God too, because that is what I was sent to do.” ⁴⁴ So Jesus went on traveling around, teaching the good news in the synagogues of Judea.

5

¹ One day, as Jesus was standing beside the Sea of Galilee, people crowded around him to hear the word of God. ² Jesus noticed two boats lying on the shore, left there by fishermen who were washing their nets. ³ Jesus got into a boat, the one that belonged to Simon, and asked him to push it out into the water, just offshore. Then Jesus sat down in the boat and taught the people from there.

⁴ After he'd finished speaking, he told Simon, "Go out into deeper water, and let down your nets for a catch."

⁵ "Lord, we worked hard all night, and didn't catch anything. But if you say so, I'll let down the nets," Simon replied.

⁶ Having done this, a large shoal of fish filled the nets full to breaking point. ⁷ They waved to their partners in the other boat, asking them to come over and help. The others came over and together they filled both of the boats with fish. The boats were so full that they began to sink.

⁸ When Simon Peter saw what had happened, he dropped to his knees before Jesus. "Lord, please stay away from me, for I am a sinful man!" he exclaimed. ⁹ For he and everybody with him were completely amazed by the catch of fish that they had landed. ¹⁰ James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners, felt the same way.

"Don't be afraid," Jesus told Simon. "From now on you'll be fishing for people!" ¹¹ So they dragged the boats onto the shore, left everything, and followed Jesus.

¹² Once when Jesus was visiting one of the towns, he met a man there who had a very bad case of leprosy. The man fell with his face to the ground and begged Jesus, "Please Lord, if you're willing, you can make me clean."*

¹³ Jesus reached out and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately the leprosy disappeared.

¹⁴ "Say nothing to anyone," Jesus instructed him. "Go and show yourself to the priest and make the ceremonial offerings as required by the law of Moses as proof that you've been healed."†

¹⁵ Yet the news about Jesus spread more and more. Large crowds came to hear Jesus and to be healed from their diseases. ¹⁶ But Jesus often used to retreat to quiet places and pray.

¹⁷ One day when Jesus was teaching, the Pharisees and religious teachers who had come from all over Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem were sitting there. The power of the Lord to heal was with him so he could heal. ¹⁸ Some men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. They tried to take him in and lay him in front of Jesus. ¹⁹ But they couldn't find any way through the crowd, so they went up on the roof and made a hole in the roof tiles. Then they lowered the man down on the mat, right into the crowd in front of Jesus.

²⁰ When Jesus saw the trust they had in him, he said to the man, "Your sins are forgiven."

* **5:12** "Clean." Of course, what the man was looking for was healing from his leprosy, however his leprosy made him ceremonially unclean. So "clean" not only healed his disease but also made him socially acceptable. † **5:14** See Leviticus 14:1-32.

²¹ The religious teachers and the Pharisees began to argue with that. “Who is this who’s speaking blasphemies?” they asked. “Who can forgive sins? Only God can do that!”

²² Jesus knew what they were arguing about, so he asked them, “Why are you thinking to question this? ²³ What is easier? To say your sins are forgiven, or to say get up and walk? ²⁴ However, I will prove to you that the Son of man has the authority here on earth to forgive sins.” Then he said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you: Get up, pick up your mat, and go home.”

²⁵ Immediately the man stood up in front of them. He picked up the mat he’d been lying on, and went home, praising God as he went. ²⁶ Everyone was completely astonished at what had happened, and in great awe they praised God, saying, “What we saw today was amazing!”

²⁷ Later, as Jesus was leaving the town, he saw a tax collector called Levi sitting at his tax booth.

“Follow me,” Jesus told him. ²⁸ Levi stood up, left everything, and followed Jesus.

²⁹ Levi organized a large banquet at his home in Jesus’ honor. Many tax collectors and others were in the crowd that sat down to eat with them. But the Pharisees and the religious teachers complained to Jesus’ disciples, asking, ³⁰ “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

³¹ “Healthy people don’t need a doctor—but sick people do,” Jesus replied. ³² “I didn’t come to call those who are living right to repentance—I came to call sinners.”

³³ “Well, John’s disciples often fast and pray, and the Pharisees’ disciples do so as well. But your disciples don’t—they go on eating and drinking,” they told him.

³⁴ “Should the groomsmen fast while the bridegroom is with them?” Jesus asked. ³⁵ “No—but the time is coming when the bridegroom will be taken away from them. Then they can fast.”

³⁶ Then he gave them an illustration: “You don’t tear out a patch from new clothes to mend old clothes. Otherwise you’d ruin new clothes, and the patch from the new wouldn’t match the old. ³⁷ You don’t put new wine into old wineskins, because if you did the new wine would burst the wineskins. Then both wine and wineskins would be wasted. ³⁸ You put new wine in new wineskins. ³⁹ And nobody after drinking old wine wants new wine, for they say, ‘the old tastes good.’ ”

6

¹ One Sabbath while Jesus was walking through grainfields, his disciples began picking some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands,* and eating them. ² Some of the Pharisees questioned him, asking, “Why are you doing what is not permitted on the Sabbath?”

³ Jesus replied, “Have you never read what David did when he and his men were hungry? ⁴ How he went into the house of God and took

* **6:1** To remove the husks, or chaff, from the grain. This was seen by the Pharisees as equivalent to doing the work of threshing.

the consecrated bread? He ate it, and gave it to his men too. That's not permitted either. The consecrated bread is only for the priests."

⁵ Then he told them, "The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath."

⁶ On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue to teach. A man was there with a crippled right hand. ⁷ The religious teachers and the Pharisees were observing Jesus closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath. They wanted to find something to accuse him of.

⁸ But Jesus knew what was in their minds. He told the man with the crippled hand, "Get up, and stand here in front of everyone." The man got up and stood there.

⁹ Then Jesus turned to them and said, "Let me ask you a question. Is it legal to do good on the Sabbath, or to do bad? To save life, or to destroy it?"

¹⁰ He looked round at all of them there. Then he said to the man, "Hold out your hand." The man did so, and his hand became like new.

¹¹ But they flew into a rage, and began to discuss what they could do to Jesus.

¹² One day shortly after, Jesus went up a mountain to pray. He remained there all night, praying to God. ¹³ When morning came he called together his disciples, and chose twelve of them. These are the names of the apostles: ¹⁴ Simon (also called Peter by Jesus), Andrew his brother, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, ¹⁵ Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Revolutionary, ¹⁶ Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot (who became a traitor).

¹⁷ Jesus went back down the mountain with them, and stopped at a place where there was some flat ground. There a crowd made up of his disciples and many other people from all over Judea, Jerusalem, and the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, had gathered to listen to him and to be cured from their diseases. ¹⁸ Those who were troubled by evil spirits were also healed. ¹⁹ Everyone in the crowd tried to touch him, because power was coming out from him and healing them all.

²⁰ Looking at his disciples, Jesus told them, ²¹ "How happy are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours. How happy are you who are hungry now, for you will eat all you need. How happy are you who are weeping now, for you will laugh.

²² How happy are you when people hate you, exclude you, insult you, and curse your name as evil because of me, the Son of man. ²³ When that day comes, be happy. Jump for joy, for great is your reward in heaven. Don't forget† their forefathers mistreated the prophets just like this.

²⁴ But how sad are you who are rich, for you have already received your reward. ²⁵ How sad are you who are full now, for you will become hungry. How sad are you who laugh now, for you will mourn and cry. ²⁶ How sad are you when everyone praises you. Don't forget that their forefathers praised false prophets just like this.

²⁷ But I say to those of you who are listening: Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. ²⁸ Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹ If someone hits you on one cheek, turn the other cheek. If someone takes your coat, don't prevent them

† 6:23 Implied. Also verse 26.

taking your shirt. ³⁰ Give to anyone who asks you. If someone takes something from you, don't ask for it back. ³¹ Do to others what you want them to do to you.

³² If you love those who love you, why should you deserve any credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them. ³³ If you do good to those who do good to you, why should you deserve any credit for that either? Sinners do that as well. ³⁴ If you lend money expecting to be repaid, why should you deserve any credit for that? Sinners lend money to other sinners as well, expecting to be repaid what they loaned. ³⁵ No: love your enemies, do good to them, and lend without expecting to be repaid anything. Then you will receive a great reward, and you will be children of the Most High God, for he is kind to ungrateful and wicked people. ³⁶ Be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.

³⁷ Don't judge,[‡] and you won't be judged; don't condemn, and you won't be condemned; forgive, and you'll be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and you will be given generously in return. When what you're given is measured out, it's pressed down so more can be added, spilling out over the top, pouring into your lap! For how much you give will determine how much you receive."[§]

³⁹ Then he illustrated the point: "Can a blind person lead another? Wouldn't they both fall into a ditch? ⁴⁰ Do students know more than the teacher? Only when they've learned everything: then they will be like their teacher. ⁴¹ Why are you so worried about the speck that's in your brother's eye when you don't even notice the plank that's in your own eye? ⁴² How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that's in your eye,' when you don't even see the plank that's in your own eye? Hypocrite! Take out the plank from your own eye first, and then you'll be able to see well enough to take out the speck from your brother's eye.

⁴³ A good tree doesn't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree doesn't produce good fruit. ⁴⁴ You recognize a tree by the fruit it produces. You don't pick figs from thorn bushes, or harvest grapes from brambles. ⁴⁵ Good people produce what's good from the good things they value that they have stored inside them. Bad people produce what's bad from the bad things they have stored inside them. What fills people's minds spills out in what they say.

⁴⁶ So why do you bother to call me, 'Lord, Lord,' when you don't do what I say? ⁴⁷ I'll give you an example of someone who comes to me, hears my instructions, and follows them. ⁴⁸ That person is like a man building a house. He digs down deep and lays the foundations on solid rock. When the river bursts its banks and the floodwater breaks against the house it's not damaged because it's built so well. ⁴⁹ The person who hears me but doesn't do what I say is like a man who builds a house without foundations. When the floodwater breaks against the house it collapses immediately, completely destroyed."

[‡] 6:37 Or "criticize." [§] 6:38 Or "For the way you measure what you give will be used to measure what you receive."

7

¹ When he'd finished speaking to the people, Jesus left for Capernaum. ² A centurion lived there who had a servant he greatly valued who was sick and was about to die. ³ When he heard about Jesus, the centurion sent some Jewish elders to him, asking him to come and heal his servant.

⁴ When the elders came to Jesus, they pleaded with him strongly, saying, "Please come and do what he asks. He deserves your help, ⁵ because he loves our people and he built a synagogue for us."

⁶ Jesus went with them and as they approached the house, the centurion sent some friends to Jesus to tell him, "Lord, please don't trouble yourself by coming into my house, because I'm not worthy of that. ⁷ I didn't even think that I was worthy to come and see you. Just give the command, and my servant will be healed. ⁸ For I'm under the authority of my superior officers, and I have soldiers under my authority too. I command one to go and he goes, another to come and he comes. I command my servant to do something and he does it."

⁹ When Jesus heard this he was astounded. He turned to the crowd that was following him, and said, "I tell you, I haven't found trust like this even in Israel." ¹⁰ Then the centurion's friends returned to the house and found the servant in good health.

¹¹ Soon after Jesus went to a town called Nain, accompanied by his disciples and a large crowd.

¹² As he approached the town gate a funeral procession was coming the other way. The man who had died was the only son of a widow, and a sizeable crowd from the town was with her. ¹³ When the Lord saw her he was filled with compassion for her. "Don't cry," he told her. ¹⁴ Jesus went over to the coffin and touched it, and the pall-bearers stopped.

Jesus said, "Young man, I tell you, get up." ¹⁵ The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

¹⁶ A sense of awe filled everyone there and they praised God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us," and "God has visited his people." ¹⁷ News about Jesus spread throughout Judea, and all around.

¹⁸ The disciples of John told John about all this. ¹⁹ John called two of his disciples and told them to go and see Jesus, and ask, "Are you the one we've been expecting, or should we wait for someone else?" ²⁰ When they came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to you, to ask you, 'Are you the one we've been expecting or should we wait for someone else?'"

²¹ At that very moment Jesus was healing many people of their diseases, illnesses, evil spirits, and making the blind to see.

²² Jesus answered John's disciples, "Go and tell John what you've seen and heard. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers cured, the deaf hear, the dead raised back to life, the poor are told the good news. ²³ How good it is for those who are not offended because of me!"

²⁴ After the messengers from John had left, Jesus began telling the crowd, "About John: what did you expect to see when you went out to meet him in the desert? Some reed blown about by the wind? ²⁵ Did you come looking for a man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who have stylish clothes and live in luxury are found in palaces. ²⁶ Were

you looking for a prophet? Yes he is, and I'm telling you, he's much more than a prophet.

²⁷ It was written about him in Scripture: 'Look, I'm sending my messenger to go before you to prepare your way.'^{*}

²⁸ I tell you, no one born of women is greater than John, but even the most unimportant person in God's kingdom is greater than he is!"

²⁹ When they heard this, all of them—even the tax collectors—followed what God said was good and right, for they had been baptized by John. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and the religious teachers rejected what God wanted them to do, for they had refused to be baptized by John.

³¹ "What shall I compare these people to?" asked Jesus. "What are they like? ³² They're like children sitting in the market who tell one other, 'We played the flute for you but you didn't dance; we sang sad songs but you didn't cry.'³³ When John the Baptist came he didn't eat bread or drink wine, but you say he's demon-possessed. ³⁴ Now the Son of man is here, and eats and drinks with people, but you say, 'Look, he spends his time eating too much food and drinking too much wine.† Plus he's a friend of tax collectors and sinners.'³⁵ However, God's wise ways are proved right by all who follow him!"[‡]

³⁶ One of the Pharisees invited Jesus to come and eat with him. Jesus went to the Pharisee's house and sat down to the meal. ³⁷ A woman who was a sinner[§] in that town found out that Jesus was eating in the Pharisee's house. She went there, carrying an alabaster jar of perfume. ³⁸ She kneeled beside Jesus and with her tears wet his feet, and dried them with her hair. She kissed his feet, and then she poured the perfume over them.

³⁹ When the Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this he said to himself, "If this man was really a prophet he would know who this woman was who's touching him, and what kind of person she was—that she's a sinner!"

⁴⁰ Jesus spoke up and said, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Tell me, Teacher," he responded.

⁴¹ "Once two people were in debt to a money-lender. One owed five hundred denarii,^{*} the other only fifty. ⁴² Neither of them could repay him, so he forgave the debts. Which one will love him the most?"

⁴³ "The one he forgave the most, I would think," Simon answered.

"You're absolutely right," said Jesus. ⁴⁴ Turning to the woman, he said to Simon, "You see this woman? When I came into your house, you didn't give me water to wash my feet. But she has washed my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You didn't give me a kiss, but since I came in she hasn't stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You didn't anoint my head with oil,† but she poured perfume over my feet. ⁴⁷ So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—that's why she loves

^{*} **7:27** Quoting Malachi 3:1. † **7:34** "Eating too much food and drinking too much wine." The words used here indicate excess, in comparison to the basic words used earlier in the verse. ‡ **7:35** Probably a proverb. Literally, "Wisdom is proved right by all her children," meaning that the proof is in the consequences... § **7:37** Usually understood to mean that she was living an immoral life. * **7:41** Denarius: equivalent to a day's wage. † **7:46** A sign of hospitality and respect.

so much.‡ But whoever is forgiven little, only loves a little.”⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to the woman, “Your sins have been forgiven.”

⁴⁹ Those who were sitting eating with him began talking among themselves, saying, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”⁵⁰ But Jesus told the woman, “Your trust has saved you, go in peace.”

8

¹ Soon after this Jesus went around the towns and villages announcing the good news of God’s kingdom. The twelve disciples went with him,² along with a number of women who had been healed from evil spirits and sickness: Mary called Magdalene from whom he had cast out seven demons;³ Joanna, the wife of Herod’s manager Chuza; Susanna; and many more who provided support from their personal resources.

⁴ Once when a large crowd of people gathered, coming from many towns to see him, Jesus spoke to them, using a story as an illustration.⁵ “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he scattered the seed, some fell on the road where people trampled on it and birds ate it up.⁶ Some fell on stony ground, and once the seeds had sprouted they withered for lack of moisture.⁷ Some seeds fell among thorns and as they both grew the thorns choked the plants.⁸ Some seeds fell on good earth and after they grew they produced a harvest one hundred times more than what had been sown.” After he told them this, he called out, “If you have ears, then listen!”

⁹ But his disciples asked him, “What does this illustration mean?”

¹⁰ Jesus replied, “You’ve been given insights into the mysteries of God’s kingdom, but the rest are given illustrations, so that, ‘Even though they see, they don’t really see; and even though they hear, they don’t really understand.’”^{*}

¹¹ This is the meaning of the illustration: The seed is God’s word.¹² The seeds that fall on the road are those who hear the message, but then the devil comes and steals away the truth from their minds so they won’t trust in God and be saved.¹³ The seeds that fall on the stony ground are those who hear and welcome the message with joy but don’t have any roots. They trust for a while but when difficult times come they give up.¹⁴ The seeds that fall among thorns are those who hear the message but it’s choked out by life’s distractions—worries, wealth, pleasure—so they don’t produce anything.¹⁵ The seeds sown on good earth are those who are honest and do what is right. They hear the message of truth, hold on to it, and through their perseverance produce a good harvest.

¹⁶ You don’t light a lamp and then cover it with a bucket, or hide it under a bed. No, you put it on a stand, so that anyone who comes in can see the light.¹⁷ For there’s nothing hidden that won’t be revealed; there’s nothing secret that won’t become known and obvious.

‡ **7:47** This verse is sometimes understood as if it’s woman’s love that brings the great forgiveness. However, the context (especially verse 43) makes it clear that it’s the extent of forgiveness that engenders the great love. ^{*} **8:10** Quoting Isaiah 6:9.

18 So pay attention how you 'hear.'[†] To those who have received, more will be given; from those who don't receive, even what they think they have will be taken away!"

19 Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived, but they couldn't get through the crowd to see him. 20 Jesus was told, "Your mother and your brothers are outside. They want to see you."

21 "My mother and my brothers are those who hear God's word, and do what it says," Jesus replied.

22 One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's cross over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and set off. 23 As they were sailing, Jesus fell asleep, and a storm came down on the lake. The boat began filling with water and they were in danger of sinking. 24 They went over to Jesus and woke him up. "Master, master, we're going to drown!" they said. Jesus woke up and commanded the wind and the rough waves to stop. They stopped, and all was calm.

25 "Where is your trust?" he asked them. Terrified and amazed, they said to each other, "So who is this? He gives commands to the winds and the water, and they obey him!"

26 They sailed across to the Gerasene region that lies opposite Galilee. 27 When Jesus stepped out of the boat onto the shore, a demon-possessed man from the town came to meet him. For a long time he hadn't worn any clothes or lived in a house. He lived in the tombs. 28 When he saw Jesus he screamed, fell down at Jesus' feet, and asked in a loud voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Please don't torture me, I beg you!" 29 For Jesus had already commanded the evil spirit to leave the man. It had often seized him, and despite being tied down with chains and shackles, and placed under guard, he would break the chains apart and would be driven by the demon into the desert areas.

30 "What is your name?" Jesus asked him. "Legion,"[‡] he replied, for many demons had entered him. 31 They begged Jesus not to order them to go into the Abyss.[§] 32 There was a large herd of pigs feeding on the nearby hillside, and the demons begged him to be allowed to go into the pigs. Jesus gave them permission,³³ so the demons left the man and entered the pigs. The herd rushed down the steep slope into the lake and drowned.

34 When the pig-keepers saw what had happened they ran off and spread the news through the town and the countryside. 35 The people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus they found the man freed from the demons. He was sitting there at Jesus' feet, wearing clothes and in his right mind; and they became scared. 36 Those who had seen what happened explained how the demon-possessed man had been healed. 37 Then all the people from the Gerasene region asked Jesus to leave because they were overwhelmed by fear. So he got into the boat and went back. 38 The man who had been freed from the demons begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away. 39 "Go back home, and tell people all that God has done for you,"

[†] 8:18 "Hear": meaning to listen to God's message and follow it. [‡] 8:30 Or "many." [§] 8:31 "The depths," or "bottomless pit."

Jesus told him. So he went away, telling the whole town all that Jesus had done for him.

⁴⁰ A crowd of people was there to welcome Jesus when he returned, all eagerly expecting him. ⁴¹ One was a man called Jairus, a synagogue leader, who came and fell at Jesus' feet. He pleaded with Jesus to come to his home ⁴² because his only daughter was dying. She was about twelve years old.

While Jesus was on his way there, people were crowding around him. ⁴³ In the crowd was a woman who had suffered with bleeding for twelve years. She had spent all she had on doctors, but none of them had been able to help her. ⁴⁴ She approached Jesus from behind and touched the hem of his cloak. Immediately the bleeding stopped.

⁴⁵ "Who touched me?" Jesus asked. Everybody around denied doing so.

"But Master," said Peter, "there are people crowding around you, and they keep pushing up against you."

⁴⁶ "Someone touched me," Jesus replied. "I know because power went out from me."

⁴⁷ When the woman realized she couldn't go unnoticed, she came forward, trembling, and fell down before him. Right in front of everybody she explained the reason why she had touched Jesus, and that she'd been cured immediately.

⁴⁸ Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your trust has healed you, go in peace."

⁴⁹ While he was still speaking, someone came from the home of the synagogue leader to tell him, "Your daughter's dead. You don't need to bother the Teacher any longer."

⁵⁰ But when he heard this, Jesus told Jairus, "Don't be afraid. If you trust, she will be healed."

⁵¹ When Jesus arrived at the house he didn't allow anyone else to go in except Peter, John, and James, and the girl's father and mother.

⁵² All the people there were crying and mourning for her.

"Don't cry," Jesus told them. "She's not dead, she's just sleeping."

⁵³ They laughed at him, because they knew that she was dead. ⁵⁴ But Jesus took her by the hand, and said in a loud voice, "My child, get up!"

⁵⁵ She came back to life,* and she got up at once. Jesus told them to give her something to eat. ⁵⁶ Her parents were astonished at what had happened, but Jesus instructed them not to tell anyone about it.

9

¹ Jesus called the twelve disciples together. He gave them power and authority over all demons, and the ability to heal diseases. ² Then he sent them out to proclaim God's kingdom and to heal the sick.

³ "Take nothing with you for the journey," he told them. "No staff, no bag, no bread, no money, not even any extra clothes. ⁴ Whatever house you enter, stay there, and when you leave, leave from there.

⁵ If people refuse to accept you, shake the dust off your feet when you

* **8:55** Literally, "her breath/spirit returned." The word for breath or spirit is the same.

leave town as a warning against them.”⁶ They left and went around the villages, announcing the good news and healing everywhere they went.

⁷ Herod the tetrarch had heard about all that was happening,^{*} and he was very puzzled. Some were saying that John had been raised from the dead; ⁸ others that Elijah had appeared; still others that one of the ancient prophets had come back to life.

⁹ Herod said, “There’s no question[†] I beheaded John. So who is this man? I’m hearing all these things about him.” And he tried to find a way to meet Jesus.

¹⁰ When the apostles returned they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he left with them and went to a town called Bethsaida.¹¹ However, the crowds found out where he was going and followed him there. He welcomed them and explained the kingdom of God to them, and healed those who needed healing.

¹² Late in the day, the twelve disciples came to him and said, “You should send the crowd away now so they can go to the villages and farms nearby and find a place to stay and food to eat—there’s nothing here where we are.”

¹³ “You give them something to eat!” said Jesus.

“All we have here are five loaves and two fish—unless you want us to go and buy food for everyone,” they said. ¹⁴ There were about five thousand men present.

“Sit them down in groups of about fifty,” he told his disciples. ¹⁵ The disciples did so, and everybody sat down. ¹⁶ Jesus picked up the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed the food and broke it into pieces. He kept on giving the food to the disciples to share with the people. ¹⁷ Everybody ate until they were full, and then twelve baskets of leftovers were collected.

¹⁸ At another time, when Jesus was praying in private with just his disciples with him, he asked them, “All these crowds of people—who do they say I am?”

¹⁹ “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others say one of the ancient prophets risen from the dead,” they replied.

²⁰ “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

“God’s Messiah,” Peter replied.

²¹ Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell anybody about this. ²² “The Son of man must experience terrible sufferings,” he said. “He will be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the religious teachers. He will be killed, but on the third day he will rise again.”

²³ “If any one of you wants to follow me, you must deny yourself, pick up your cross daily, and follow me,” Jesus told all of them. ²⁴ “For if you want to save your life, you will lose it; and if you lose your life for my sake, you will save it. ²⁵ What do you benefit by gaining the whole world if you end up lost or destroyed? ²⁶ If you are ashamed of me and my message, the Son of man will be ashamed of you when he comes in his glory, and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels. ²⁷ I tell you the truth, some standing here won’t taste death until they see the kingdom of God.”

* **9:7** Particularly in reference to Jesus. † **9:9** Implied; reflecting the fact that the “I” is emphatic.

²⁸ About eight days later, after he had told them this, Jesus took Peter, John, and James with him and went up a mountain to pray. ²⁹ While he was praying, his face changed in appearance, and his clothing became a dazzling white. ³⁰ Two men appeared in brilliant glory. They were Moses and Elijah, and they began to talk with Jesus. ³¹ They spoke about his death,[‡] which would soon happen in Jerusalem.

³² Peter and the others were asleep. When they woke up they saw Jesus in his glory, and the two men standing next to him. ³³ As the two men were about to leave, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it's great to be here. Let's make some shelters: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He really didn't know what he was saying.

³⁴ While he was speaking a cloud came and spread over them. They were terrified as they entered the cloud.

³⁵ A voice spoke from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him!" ³⁶ When the voice finished speaking, Jesus was there alone. They kept this to themselves, and didn't tell anyone at that time what they'd seen.

³⁷ The next day, when they had come down the mountain, a huge crowd was waiting to meet Jesus. ³⁸ A man in the crowd called out, "Teacher, please look at my son. He's my only child. ³⁹ A spirit possesses him and he screams immediately. It sends him into convulsions and makes him foam at the mouth. It hardly ever leaves him alone and it causes him a lot of pain. ⁴⁰ I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they couldn't."

⁴¹ "What an unbelieving and corrupt people you are! How long do I have to remain here with you, and put up with you?" said Jesus. "Bring your son here." ⁴² Even as the boy came over, the demon sent him into convulsions, throwing him to the ground. But Jesus intervened, rebuking the evil spirit and healing the boy, and then gave him back to his father. ⁴³ Everyone was amazed at this demonstration of God's power. However, even though everyone was amazed by all he did, Jesus warned his disciples, ⁴⁴ "Listen carefully to what I'm telling you: the Son of man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men."

⁴⁵ But they didn't understand what this meant. Its meaning was hidden from them so they didn't realize its implications, and they were afraid to ask him about it.

⁴⁶ Then an argument started among the disciples about which of them was the greatest. ⁴⁷ But Jesus, knowing what they were arguing about, picked up and placed a small child next to him.

⁴⁸ Then he said to them, "Anyone who accepts this little child in my name accepts me, and anyone who accepts me accepts the one who sent me. Whoever is least among you all is the greatest."

⁴⁹ John spoke up, saying, "Master, we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him because he wasn't one of us."

⁵⁰ "Don't stop him," Jesus replied. "Anyone who isn't against you is for you."

⁵¹ As the time approached for him to ascend to heaven, Jesus was determined to go to Jerusalem. ⁵² He sent messengers on ahead to a

[‡] 9:31 Literally, "departure."

Samaritan village to get things ready for him. ⁵³ But the people would not welcome him because he was determined to press on to Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ When James and John saw this, they asked Jesus, “Master, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to burn them up?” ⁵⁵ But Jesus turned, and reprimanded them. ⁵⁶ Then they proceeded to another village.

⁵⁷ While they were walking, one man told Jesus, “I will follow you wherever you go!”

⁵⁸ Jesus told the man, “Foxes have their dens, and wild birds have their nests, but the Son of man doesn't even have a place to rest his head.”

⁵⁹ He told another man, “Follow me.” But the man replied, “Master, first let me go home and bury my father.”

⁶⁰ “Let the dead bury their own dead,” Jesus replied. “You go and proclaim God's kingdom.”

⁶¹ Another man said, “Lord, I will follow you! But first let me go home and say goodbye to my family.”

⁶² But Jesus told him, “Nobody once they've started plowing and then looks back is fit for God's kingdom.”

10

¹ After this, the Lord appointed seventy* other disciples, and sent them in pairs to every town and place that he planned to visit.

² “The harvest is large, but the number of workers is small,” he told them. “Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send workers to his harvest fields. ³ So get on your way: I'm sending you like sheep among wolves.

⁴ Don't take any money or a bag or extra sandals, and don't spend time chatting with people you meet. ⁵ Whatever house you enter, first of all say, ‘May this house have peace.’ ⁶ If there's a peaceful person living there, then your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you.

⁷ Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for a worker deserves to be paid. Don't go from house to house. ⁸ If you enter a town and the people there welcome you, then eat what's set

before you ⁹ and heal those who are sick. Tell them, ‘God's kingdom has come to you.’ ¹⁰ But if you enter a town and the people there don't

welcome you, go through their streets telling them, ¹¹ ‘We are wiping off even the dust from your town that clings to our feet to show you our disapproval.† But you should recognize this: God's kingdom has come.’

¹² I tell you, in the Day of Judgment it will be better for Sodom than for such a town. ¹³ Shame on you Korazin! Shame on you Bethsaida! For if the miracles you saw happen had happened in Tyre and Sidon they would have repented a long time ago, and they would be sitting in sackcloth and ashes. ¹⁴ That's why in the judgment it will be better for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ¹⁵ And you, Capernaum, you won't be exalted to heaven; you will go down to Hades.

¹⁶ Anyone who hears you hears me, and anyone who rejects you rejects me. But anyone who rejects me rejects the one who sent me.”

* **10:1** Some early texts read “seventy-two.” † **10:11** “Disapproval”—implied.

¹⁷ The seventy disciples returned in great excitement, saying, “Lord, even the demons do what we tell them in your name!”

¹⁸ Jesus replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ Yes, I have given you power to tread on snakes and scorpions, and to overcome all the enemy’s strength, and nothing will harm you. ²⁰ But don’t take delight that the spirits do what you tell them—just be glad that your names are written in heaven.”

²¹ At that moment Jesus was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit, and said, “I thank you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for you hid these things from the wise and clever people and revealed them to children! Yes, Father, you were pleased to do it in this way.

²² My Father has handed over everything to me. No one understands the Son except the Father, and no one understands the Father except the Son, and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

²³ When they were by themselves Jesus turned to the disciples and told them, “Those who see what you’re seeing should be really happy! ²⁴ I tell you, many prophets and kings have wanted to see what you’re seeing, but they didn’t see, and wanted to hear the things you’re hearing, but didn’t hear.”

²⁵ Once an expert in religious law stood up and tried to trap Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “What do I have to do to gain eternal life?”

²⁶ “What is written in the law? How do you read it?” asked Jesus.

²⁷ “You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, and your whole spirit, and your whole strength, and your whole mind; and love your neighbor as yourself,”[‡] the man replied.

²⁸ “You’re right,” Jesus told him. “Do this, and you will live.”

²⁹ But the man wanted to vindicate himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

³⁰ Jesus replied, saying, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He was attacked by robbers who stripped him and beat him, and left him for dead. ³¹ It so happened that a priest was going the same way. He saw the man, but he passed by on the other side of the road. ³² Then a Levite came along. But when he got to the place and saw the man, he also passed by on the other side.

³³ Finally a Samaritan man came along. As he passed by, he saw the man and felt sorry for him. ³⁴ He went over and treated the man’s wounds with oil and wine, and bandaged them. Then he placed the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn where he took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he gave two denarii to the innkeeper and told him, “Take care of him, and if you spend more than this, I’ll pay you back when I return.” ³⁶ Which one of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by robbers?”

³⁷ “The one who showed him kindness,” the man replied.

“Go and do the same,” Jesus told him.

³⁸ While they were on their way,[§] Jesus arrived at a village, and a woman called Martha invited him to her home. ³⁹ She had a sister

[‡] 10:27 Quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. [§] 10:38 To Jerusalem.

called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching.*
⁴⁰ Martha was concerned about all that needed to be done to prepare the meal, so she came to Jesus and said, "Master, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me!"

⁴¹ "Martha, Martha," the Lord replied, "you're worried and upset about all this. ⁴² But only one thing is really necessary. Mary has chosen the right thing, and it shall not be taken away from her."

11

¹ Once Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples asked him, "Lord, please teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

² Jesus told them, "When you pray, say, 'Father, let your name be honored as holy. May your kingdom come. ³ Give us every day the food we need. ⁴ Forgive us our sins, just as we forgive everyone who sins against us. Keep us from temptation.' "

⁵ Jesus went on to tell them, "Say you have a friend and you go to him in the middle of the night and ask, 'My friend, lend me three loaves of bread ⁶ because a friend of mine has come to visit me, and I don't have any food to give him.' ⁷ Your friend in the house might reply, 'Don't bother me—I've already locked the door, and I and my children have gone to bed. I can't get up to give you anything now.' ⁸ I tell you, even though he refuses to get up and give you anything, despite you being his friend, if you are persistent, your friend will get up and give you everything you need.

⁹ I tell you: ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and the door shall be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks, receives; and everyone who seeks, finds; and to everyone who knocks the door will be opened. ¹¹ Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, would give him a snake instead? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, would you give him a scorpion? ¹³ So if you, even though you are evil, still know to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

¹⁴ Jesus was driving out a demon that had made a man dumb. When the demon had left, the man who was dumb spoke, and the crowds were amazed. ¹⁵ But some of them said, "He is driving out demons using the power of Beelzebub, the ruler of demons." ¹⁶ Others were trying to test Jesus by demanding a miraculous sign from heaven.

¹⁷ Jesus knew what they were thinking and said, "Any kingdom divided against itself will be destroyed. A family* divided against itself will fall. ¹⁸ If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? You say that I cast out demons using the power of Beelzebub.

* **10:39** By doing this Mary identified herself as one of Jesus' disciples, and the fact that Jesus allowed this and defended her action shows that he accepted her as such. It may be that Martha's concern was more about this breaking of normal social protocol than for kitchen help, and that her complaint to Jesus was more of an excuse. Jesus' reply indicates that Mary's choice to be his disciple was more important, calling it the right thing that wouldn't be taken away from her. * **11:17** Literally, "house."

19 But if I drive out demons by the power of Beelzebub, by whose power do your own people[†] drive them out? They themselves will condemn you as wrong!

20 However, if I am driving out demons by the power of God, then this proves God's kingdom has arrived. It's right here among you! 21 When a strong man who is fully armed guards his house, all he owns is safe. 22 But if a stronger man comes and defeats him, taking from him all his weapons that he depended on, then he can carry off all his possessions. 23 Anyone who is not with me is against me, and anyone who doesn't build together with me is breaking it all apart.

24 When an evil spirit leaves someone, it goes through the desert looking for a place to stay. When it doesn't find anywhere, it says, 'I'll return to the house I left.' 25 When it returns, it finds its old home is swept and tidy. 26 So it goes and finds seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there. In the end that man is worse off than before."

27 As he was speaking, a woman in the crowd called out, "Blessed is the womb from where you came and the breasts that nursed you." 28 But Jesus said, "Even more blessed are those who hear God's word, and follow what it says."

29 As people crowded around him, Jesus began telling them, "This is an evil generation for it's looking for some miraculous sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. 30 In the same way that Jonah was a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of man be a sign to this generation. 31 The queen of the south will rise in the judgment together with the people of this generation and will condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear Solomon's wisdom, and now there is someone greater than Solomon here! 32 The people of Nineveh rise in the judgment together with this generation, and will condemn it, for they repented when they heard Jonah's message, and now there's someone greater than Jonah here! 33 No one lights a lamp and then hides it or places it under a bowl. No, you put it on a lamp stand so that those who come into the house can see the light. 34 Your eye is the light for your body. When your eye is good, your whole body is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body is in the dark. 35 So make sure the light you have in you is not actually darkness. 36 If your whole body is full of light, with no areas of darkness, then it will be completely illuminated, just as a bright lamp gives you light."

37 After Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to come and eat with him. So Jesus went and sat down to a meal. 38 The Pharisee was surprised that Jesus didn't wash his hands before eating as ceremonially required. 39 So the Lord told him, "You Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you're full of greed and wickedness. 40 You're so foolish! Don't you think the one who made the outside made the inside as well? 41 If, acting from within, you do acts of kindness to others, then everything will be clean to you. 42 Shame on you Pharisees! You pay tithe on herbs[‡] and plants, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You need to pay attention

[†] 11:19 Literally, "sons." [‡] 11:42 Literally, "mint and rue."

to the latter, while not leaving the former things undone. ⁴³ Shame on you Pharisees! You love to have the best seats in the synagogues, and to be greeted with respect when you go to the markets. ⁴⁴ Shame on you! You are like unmarked graves that people walk over without knowing."

⁴⁵ One of the experts in religious law reacted, saying, "Teacher, when you talk like this, you're insulting us too!"

⁴⁶ Jesus replied, "Shame on you lawyers too! You place burdens on people that are too hard to carry, but you don't lift a finger to help them.

⁴⁷ Shame on you! You build memorial tombs to honor the prophets, but it was your own fathers who killed them in the first place! ⁴⁸ By doing this you are witnesses showing that you agree with what your fathers did. They killed the prophets, and you build their tombs!

⁴⁹ This is why God in his wisdom said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles; some they will kill, and others they will persecute.'

⁵⁰ Consequently, this generation will be held accountable for the blood of all the prophets shed from the beginning of the world, ⁵¹ from the blood of Abel right up to the blood of Zachariah who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held accountable for all of it. ⁵² Shame on you lawyers! You have removed the key of knowledge. You didn't go in yourselves, and you prevented others from going in too."

⁵³ As Jesus was leaving, the religious teachers and the Pharisees began to attack him aggressively, asking questions to provoke him.

⁵⁴ They were hoping to catch him out, trying to get him to say something they could use against him.

12

¹ In the meantime so many thousands of people had gathered that they were stepping on each another. Jesus began speaking first to his disciples. "Beware the yeast of the Pharisees—hypocrisy. ² For there's nothing hidden that won't be revealed, nothing secret that won't be made known. ³ Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and whatever you whispered in private will be announced from the rooftops. ⁴ I tell you, my friends, don't be afraid of those who kill the body, for once they've done that there's no more they can do. ⁵ Let me make it clear whom you should be afraid of. You should be afraid of the one who after he has killed has the power to dispose of them in Gehenna.* That's the one you should be afraid of. ⁶ Aren't five sparrows sold for two pennies? But God doesn't forget a single one of them. ⁷ Even the hairs on your head have been counted. Don't be afraid—you're worth more than many sparrows!

⁸ I tell you the truth, those who declare they belong to me, the Son of man will also declare they belong to him before God's angels, ⁹ but those who deny me will be denied before God's angels. ¹⁰ Everyone

* **12:5** The word here is Literally, "Gehenna," sometimes translated "hell" or "hellfire." Gehenna was the place outside of Jerusalem where fires were lit to dispose of rubbish by burning. "Hell" is a concept that is derived from Nordic and Anglo-Saxon mythology and does not parallel the idea here.

who speaks against the Son of man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

¹¹ When you're brought to trial before synagogues, rulers, and authorities, don't worry about how to defend yourself, or what you should say. ¹² The Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what's important to say."

¹³ Someone in the crowd asked Jesus, "Teacher, please tell my brother to share the inheritance with me."

¹⁴ "My friend," Jesus replied, "Who appointed me as your judge to decide how your inheritance should be divided?" He told the people, ¹⁵ "Watch out, and beware of all greedy thoughts and actions, for a person's life isn't summed up by all the things they own."

¹⁶ Then he told them a story as an illustration. "Once there was a rich man who owned land that was very productive. ¹⁷ The man said to himself, 'What shall I do? I've nowhere to store my crops. ¹⁸ I know what I'll do,' he decided. 'I'll pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and then I'll be able to store all my crops and everything I own. ¹⁹ Then I'll tell myself: You have enough to live on for many years, so take life easy: eat, drink, and enjoy yourself!' ²⁰ But God said to him, 'You foolish man! Your life will be demanded back this very night, and then who will get everything you've stored up?' ²¹ This is what happens to people who hoard up wealth for themselves but are not rich as far as God is concerned."

²² Jesus told his disciples, "That's why I tell you don't worry about life, about what to eat, or about what clothes you should wear. ²³ Life is about more than food, and the body is about more than wearing clothes. ²⁴ Look at the ravens. They don't sow or reap, they don't have any storerooms or barns, but God feeds them. And you're far more valuable than birds! ²⁵ Can you add an hour to your life by worrying about it? ²⁶ If you can't do anything about such small things, why worry about the rest? ²⁷ Think of the lilies and how they grow. They don't work, and they don't spin thread for clothes, but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory was as beautifully dressed as one of them.

²⁸ So if God clothes the fields with such beautiful flowers, which are here today but gone tomorrow when they are burned in a fire to heat an oven, how much more will God clothe you, you who have so little trust! ²⁹ Don't be concerned about what you're going to eat or drink—don't worry about it. ³⁰ These are all things that people in the world worry about, but your Father knows you need them. ³¹ Search for God's kingdom, and you'll be given these things as well. ³² Don't be afraid, little flock, for your Father is happy to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell what you have, and give the money to the poor. Get yourselves purses that don't wear out: treasure in heaven that will never run out, where no thief can steal it and no moth can destroy it. ³⁴ For what you value the most shows who you really are.

³⁵ Be dressed and ready, and keep your lamps lit, ³⁶ like servants waiting for their master when he returns from his wedding feast, prepared to open the door quickly for him when he comes and knocks. ³⁷ How good it will be for those servants that the master finds watching

when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will get dressed, have them sit down for a meal, and will come and serve them himself!

³⁸ Even if he comes at midnight, or just before dawn—how good for them if he finds them watching and ready! ³⁹ But remember this: if the master knew when a thief was coming, he would keep watch, and not allow his house be broken into. ⁴⁰ You must also be ready, for the Son of man is coming when you don't expect him."

⁴¹ "Is this story you're telling just for us, or for everyone?" Peter asked.

⁴² The Lord replied, "Who then is the trustworthy and wise manager, the one person in the household that the master puts in charge to share out their food at the right time? ⁴³ It will be good for that servant when his master returns and finds him doing what he should. ⁴⁴ I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of everything. ⁴⁵ But what if the servant were to say to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and then starts beating the other servants, both men and women, feasting and getting drunk? ⁴⁶ That servant's master will return unexpectedly one day at a time he wasn't aware of, and will punish him severely, treating him as totally untrustworthy.

⁴⁷ That servant who knew what his master wanted and yet didn't get ready or follow his instructions, will be beaten severely; ⁴⁸ but the servant who didn't know and did things deserving punishment will be beaten only lightly. From those who are given much, much will be required, and from those who are entrusted with more, more will be demanded. ⁴⁹ I have come to set the earth on fire, and I really wish it was already burning! ⁵⁰ But I have a baptism to go through, and I'm in agony, wishing it was over! ⁵¹ Do you think that I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, I bring division. ⁵² From now on, if there are five in a family, they will be divided against each other: three against two, and two against three. ⁵³ They will be divided against each other—father against son, son against father, mother against daughter, daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."[†]

⁵⁴ Then Jesus spoke to the crowds. "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'a rain-shower's coming,' and it happens. ⁵⁵ When a south wind blows, you say 'it's going to be hot,' and it is. ⁵⁶ You hypocrites, how is it that you know how to rightly interpret the weather but you don't know how to interpret the present time? ⁵⁷ Why don't you think for yourselves and judge what's the right thing to do? ⁵⁸ As you go with your accuser to the magistrate, on the way you should be working on a settlement. Otherwise you may be dragged before the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. ⁵⁹ I tell you, you won't get out until you've paid the last penny."

13

¹ It was around this time that some people told Jesus about Pilate's killing of some Galileans while they were offering sacrifices in the

[†] 12:53 See Micah 7:6.

Temple. ² “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than any other Galileans because they suffered like this?” Jesus asked. ³ “No, I tell you. But unless you repent, you will all perish as well. ⁴ What about those eighteen people that were killed when the tower in Siloam fell on them? Do you think they were the worst people in the whole of Jerusalem? ⁵ No, I tell you. But unless you repent, you will all perish as well.”

⁶ Then he told them this story as an illustration. “Once there was man who had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. He came to look for fruit on the tree, but he didn't find any. ⁷ So he told the gardener, ‘Look, for three years I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and I haven't found any. Chop it down! Why should it be taking up space?’

⁸ ‘Master,’ the man replied, ‘please leave it alone for just one more year. I'll dig the soil around it and put down some fertilizer. ⁹ If it produces fruit, then that's fine. If not, then chop it down.’”

¹⁰ One Sabbath Jesus was teaching in a synagogue, ¹¹ and a woman was there who had been crippled by an evil spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not stand straight. ¹² When Jesus saw her, he called her over and told her, “You're freed of your sickness.” ¹³ Then he placed his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up, and she praised God.

¹⁴ However, the synagogue leader was upset that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath. He said to the crowd, “There are six days for work. Come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.”

¹⁵ But the Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Doesn't every one of you untie your ox or donkey from the stall and take it to drink? ¹⁶ Why shouldn't this woman, this daughter of Abraham whom Satan has kept tied up for eighteen years, be untied and set free this Sabbath day?”

¹⁷ What he said shamed all his opponents, but everyone in the crowd was delighted by all the wonderful things he was doing.

¹⁸ Then Jesus asked, “So what is the kingdom of God like? What should I compare it to? ¹⁹ It's like a mustard seed that a man planted in his garden. It grew into a tree, and the birds came and nested in its branches.”

²⁰ He asked again, “What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? ²¹ It's like yeast that a woman took and mixed into three measures* of flour which made the whole batch rise.”

²² Jesus went around the towns and villages, teaching on his way to Jerusalem.

²³ Someone asked him, “Lord, will only a few be saved?”

Jesus replied, ²⁴ “Try very hard to enter the narrow doorway, because I tell you that many will try to go in, and won't succeed. ²⁵ Once the house owner gets up and closes the door, you'll be standing outside knocking on the door, saying, ‘Master, please open the door for us.’ But he'll reply, ‘I don't know you or where you're from.’ ²⁶ Then you'll say, ‘But we ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets!’ ²⁷ He'll reply, ‘I tell you, I don't know you or where you're from. Get away from me, all of you who don't do what's good!’ ²⁸ There will be crying and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob

* **13:21** About 3 gallons or 13 liters.

and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you are thrown out. ²⁹ People will come from the east and the west, the north and the south, and they will sit down to eat in the kingdom of God. ³⁰ For the last shall be first, and the first shall be last."

³¹ At that moment some Pharisees came to Jesus and told him, "You should leave here. Herod wants to kill you!"

³² Jesus replied, "Go tell that fox that I will go on driving out demons and healing people for today and tomorrow, and on the third day I'll achieve what I came to do.† ³³ Well anyway I must continue on my way for today and tomorrow, and the day after. For it wouldn't be right for a prophet to die outside of Jerusalem!

³⁴ Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you kill prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often I have wanted to gather all your children together just like a hen does with her chicks under her wings, but you refused! ³⁵ Look, your house is left desolate, and I tell you that you won't see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'‡

14

¹ One Sabbath Jesus went to have a meal at the home of one of the leaders of the Pharisees where they watched him closely. ² A man was there whose arms and legs were swollen. ³ So Jesus asked the experts in religious law and the Pharisees, "Does the law allow healing on the Sabbath, or not?" ⁴ But they kept quiet. Jesus touched the man, healed him, and sent him on his way. ⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "If your son or your ox happened to fall into a well on the Sabbath, wouldn't you go and pull him out immediately?" ⁶ They weren't able to give an answer.

⁷ So he told a story to the guests, noticing how they'd chosen to sit in places of honor. ⁸ "When you're invited to a wedding reception, don't take the place of honor, because someone more important than you may have been invited," he began. ⁹ "Your host who invited you both will come and tell you, 'Give this man your place.' Then in embarrassment you'll have to move to whatever place is left. ¹⁰ Instead, when you're invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes in, he'll tell you, 'My friend, please move to a better seat.*" Then you'll be honored before all the guests sitting with you. ¹¹ For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

¹² Then he said to the man who had invited him, "When you give a lunch or a dinner, don't invite your friends, or your brothers, or your relatives, or your rich neighbors, for they may invite you back, and then you'd be repaid. ¹³ Instead, when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and you will be blessed, for they have nothing to repay you with, and you'll be rewarded at the resurrection of the good."

¹⁵ When one of them eating at the table with Jesus heard this, he said to Jesus, "How wonderful it will be for those who feast in the kingdom of God!"

† **13:32** Or "achieve my goal." ‡ **13:35** Quoting Psalms 118:26. * **14:10** See Proverbs 25:7.

¹⁶ “Once there was a man who prepared a great banquet, and invited many guests,” Jesus replied. ¹⁷ “When it was time to eat he sent his servant out to tell everyone who had been invited, ‘Come, because the banquet’s ready.’” ¹⁸ But they all started to make excuses. The first said, ‘I’ve just bought a field and I have to go and see it. Please excuse me.’ ¹⁹ Another said, ‘I’ve just bought five pairs of oxen and have to go and try them out. Please excuse me.’ Still another said, ²⁰ ‘I’ve just got married, so I can’t come.’ ²¹ The servant returned and told his master what they’d said. The home-owner became angry and told his servant, ‘Quickly, go out into the streets and alleys of the town, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’

²² Then the servant said, ‘Master, I did what you told me, but there are still empty places.’

²³ So the master told the servant, ‘Go out on the country roads and lanes, and make people come—I want my house to be full.’ ²⁴ I tell you, not a single one of those people I invited will get a taste of my banquet.’ ”

²⁵ A large crowd was accompanying Jesus. He turned to them and said, ²⁶ “If you want to follow me but you don’t hate your father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters—even your own life—you can’t be my disciple. ²⁷ If you don’t carry your cross and follow me, you can’t be my disciple. ²⁸ If you planned to build a tower, wouldn’t you first work out how much it would cost, and see if you had enough money to complete it? ²⁹ Otherwise, if after laying the foundation you weren’t able to finish it, everyone who saw it would laugh at you, saying, ³⁰ ‘Look at him: he started building but he couldn’t finish it.’

³¹ What king goes to war with another king without first sitting down with his advisors to work out whether he and his ten thousand can defeat the one marching against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he can’t, he’ll send representatives to ask for peace while the other king is still a long way off. ³³ In the same way every one of you who doesn’t give up everything can’t be my disciple. ³⁴ Salt is good, but if it loses its taste, how can you make it salty again? ³⁵ It’s no good for the soil or for fertilizer—you just toss it out. Whoever has ears, then listen!”

15

¹ Tax collectors and other “sinners” often used to come and listen to Jesus. ² As a result the Pharisees and the religious teachers complained, “This man welcomes sinners, and eats with them.”

³ So Jesus told them this story as an illustration. ⁴ “Imagine a man who had a hundred sheep lost one of them. Wouldn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture, and search for the one that’s lost until he finds it? ⁵ When he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders. ⁶ Once he gets home, he calls his friends and neighbors together, saying, ‘Come and celebrate with me! I’ve found my lost sheep!’ ⁷ I tell you that there’s more joy in heaven over a sinner that repents than over ninety-nine good people who don’t need to repent.

⁸ Imagine a woman who has ten silver* coins, and loses one of them.

* 15:8 Literally, *drachma*.

Wouldn't she light a lamp and sweep the house, carefully searching until she finds it? ⁹ When she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Come and celebrate with me! I've found the silver coin that I lost.' ¹⁰ I tell you there is joy in the presence of God's angels over one sinner that repents.

¹¹ Once there was a man who had two sons," Jesus explained. ¹² "The younger one told his father, 'Father, give me my inheritance now.' So the man divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son packed up what he had and left for a distant country. Here he wasted all his money living a reckless life.

¹⁴ After he'd spent everything, the country was hit by a severe famine and he was starving. ¹⁵ So he went and took a job with one of the farmers there who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He was so hungry that he would have eaten even the pig food,[†] but no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ When he came to his senses, he said to himself, 'All of my father's workers have more than enough to eat—why am I dying from hunger here? ¹⁸ I'm going home to my father! I'll tell him, Father, I've sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. Please treat me as one of your hired workers.' ²⁰ So he left and went home to his father.

Even though he was still far away in the distance, his father saw him coming, and his heart went out to his son. The father ran to his son, hugging and kissing him. ²¹ The son said to him, 'Father, I've sinned against heaven and against you. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²² But the father told his servants, 'Quick—bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the calf we've been fattening and kill it. Let's have a feast to celebrate ²⁴ because this is my son who was dead, but who has returned alive; he was lost but now he's found.' So they started celebrating.

²⁵ Now the older son was working out in the fields. As he walked towards the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked what was going on.

²⁷ 'Your brother is back,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he's come home safe and sound.'

²⁸ The brother became angry. He refused to go in. So his father came out to plead with him.

²⁹ He told his father, 'Look, all these years I've served you, and never disobeyed you, but you never once gave me even a young goat so I could have a party with my friends. ³⁰ Now this son of yours comes back, having spent your money on prostitutes, and you kill the fattened calf for him!'

³¹ 'Son,' the father replied, 'you are always here with me. Everything I have is yours. ³² But we should be happy and celebrate! This is your brother who was dead, but who has returned alive; he was lost but now he's found!' "

[†] **15:16** Literally, "seed pods the pigs were eating."

16

¹ Jesus told his disciples this story. “There was once a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting what belonged to his master. ² So the rich man called in his manager, and asked him, ‘What’s this I hear about you? Bring in your accounts, because you won’t be continuing as manager.’

³ The manager said to himself, ‘Now what will I do since my master is going to fire me from my job? I’m not strong enough to dig, and I’m ashamed to beg. ⁴ Oh, I know what I’m going to do so that when I’m sacked as manager people will make me welcome in their homes.’

⁵ So he invited all those who were in debt to his master to come and see him. He asked the first one, ‘How much do you owe my master?’

⁶ The man replied, ‘A hundred units* of oil.’ He said to him, ‘Sit down quickly. Take your bill, and change it to fifty.’ ⁷ Then he said to another, ‘How much do you owe?’ The man replied, ‘A hundred units† of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill and change it to eighty.’

⁸ The rich man commended his dishonest manager for his cunning idea. The children of this world are more cunning towards one another than are the children of light.

⁹ I tell you, use the wealth of this world to make friends for yourselves so that when it’s gone, you’ll be welcomed into an eternal home. ¹⁰ If you can be trusted with very little you can also be trusted with much; if you are dishonest with very little you will also be dishonest with much. ¹¹ So if you can’t be trusted when it comes to worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? ¹² And if you can’t be trusted with what belongs to someone else, who will trust you with what is yours? ¹³ No servant can obey two masters. Either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You can’t serve both God and Money.”

¹⁴ The Pharisees, who loved money, heard what Jesus said and laughed at him. ¹⁵ But Jesus told them, “You appear pious to people, but God knows what you’re thinking. What people value highly is detested by God. ¹⁶ What was written in the law and the prophets lasted until John. From then on the good news of the kingdom of God is being spread, and everyone is forcing their way in. ¹⁷ However, it’s easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for the smallest point of the Law to disappear. ¹⁸ Any man who divorces his wife and marries someone else commits adultery, and a man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

¹⁹ Once there was a man who was rich. He wore purple clothes‡ and fine linen, and enjoyed a luxurious life. ²⁰ A beggar named Lazarus used to sit at his gate, covered in sores, ²¹ longing to eat the leftovers from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

²² Then the beggar died, and angels carried him away to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham in the far distance, with Lazarus beside him.

* **16:6** One *batos* “bath” was equivalent to around 6 gallons or 22 liters. † **16:7** One *koros* “kor” was equivalent to 11 bushels or 390 liters. ‡ **16:19** Purple clothes were very expensive.

²⁴ 'Father Abraham,' he called out, 'Have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I'm burning in agony.'

²⁵ But Abraham replied, 'My son, remember that you enjoyed the good things of life, while Lazarus had a very poor life. Now he is here being comforted, while you suffer in torment. ²⁶ Apart from that, there's a great gulf that stretches between us and you. Nobody who wants to cross from here to you can do so, and nobody can cross from there over to us.'

²⁷ The rich man said, 'Then Father, I beg you, please send him to my father's house. ²⁸ For I have five brothers and he can warn them so that they don't end up here in this place of torment.'

²⁹ But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets. They should listen to them.'

³⁰ 'No, father Abraham,' said the man. 'But they would repent if someone went to them from the dead!'

³¹ Abraham said to him, 'If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't be convinced even if someone returns from the dead.' "

17

¹ Jesus said to his disciples, "Temptations are unavoidable, but it will be a disaster for those through whom they come! ² For such people it would be better to have a millstone hung around the neck and be thrown into the sea than to cause these little ones to sin. ³ So take care what you do. If your brother sins, warn him; and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴ Even if he sins against you seven times a day, and seven times comes back and tells you, 'I'm really sorry,' forgive him."

⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, "Help us to have more trust!" ⁶ The Lord replied, "Even if your trust was as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Uproot yourself, and plant yourself in the sea,' and it would obey you."

⁷ Say you have a servant who does plowing or shepherding. When he comes in from work, do you say to him, 'Come in and sit down now for a meal'? ⁸ No. You say to him, 'Prepare a meal for me, get yourself dressed, and serve me until I've finished my meal. After that you can have your meal.' ⁹ And do you thank the servant for doing what you told him? No. ¹⁰ Likewise once you've done everything you were told, you should simply say, 'We are undeserving servants. We just did our duty.' "

¹¹ As Jesus continued on his way to Jerusalem, he passed along the border between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² As he entered a particular village, ten lepers met him, standing at a distance. ¹³ They called out, "Jesus, Master, please have mercy on us."

¹⁴ When Jesus saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests."* On their way there, they were healed. ¹⁵ One of them when he saw that he was healed, returned to Jesus, shouting praises to God. ¹⁶ He fell down at Jesus' feet, thanking him. He was a Samaritan.

* **17:14** See Leviticus 14.

¹⁷ “Weren't ten lepers healed?” Jesus asked. “Where are the other nine? ¹⁸ Didn't anyone else come back to praise God—only this foreigner?”

¹⁹ Jesus told the man, “Get up and go on your way. Your trust has healed you.”

²⁰ Once, when the Pharisees came and asked him when God's kingdom would come, Jesus replied, “God's kingdom doesn't come with visible signs that you can observe. ²¹ People won't be saying, ‘Look, it's here’ or ‘Look, it's there,’ for God's kingdom is among you.”[†]

²² Then Jesus told the disciples, “The time is coming when you'll long to see the day[‡] when the Son of man comes, but you won't see it. ²³ They'll be telling you, ‘Look, there he is,’ or ‘Look, here he is,’ but don't go running off after them. ²⁴ The day when the Son of man comes will be just like lightning that flashes, lighting up the sky from one side to the other. ²⁵ But first he will have to suffer many things, and be rejected by this generation. ²⁶ The time when the Son of man comes will be like it was in Noah's day. ²⁷ People went on eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day Noah went into the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸ It will be like it was in Lot's day. People went on eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. ²⁹ But on the day Lot left Sodom, fire and brimstone rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

³⁰ The day when the Son of man appears will be just like that. ³¹ If you're up on the roof that day don't go down and get your things; and if you're out in the fields don't go back home either. ³² Remember Lot's wife! ³³ If you try to hold on to your life you'll lose it; but if you lose your life you'll save it. ³⁴ I tell you, at that time two will be in bed at night; one will be taken and the other left. ³⁵ Two women will be grinding grain, one will be taken; and the other left.” ³⁶ §

³⁷ “Where, Lord?” they asked. “Where the carcass is, that's where the vultures gather,” Jesus replied.

18

¹ Jesus told them this story to encourage them to pray at all times, and not to become discouraged. ² “Once there was a judge in this particular town who didn't respect God or care about anyone,” Jesus explained. ³ “In the same town lived a widow who time and again went to the judge, saying, ‘Give me justice in the case against my enemy!’ ⁴ For a while he didn't want to do anything about it, but eventually he said to himself, ‘Even though I don't respect God or care about anyone, ⁵ this widow is so annoying I'll make sure she receives justice. Then she won't wear me out by her coming to see me so often.’

⁶ Listen to what even an unjust judge decided,” said the Lord. ⁷ “Don't you think that God will make sure his chosen people receive justice, those who cry out to him day and night? Do you think he will make them wait? ⁸ No, I tell you, he will give them justice quickly. However,

[†] 17:21 Or “within you.” [‡] 17:22 Literally, “one of the days.” § 17:36 Verse 36 is not found in the early manuscripts.

when the Son of man comes, will he find people on earth who trust in him?"

⁹ He also told this story about those who are so sure that they are living right, and who put everybody else down. ¹⁰ "Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood up and prayed to himself, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—cheats, criminals,* adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my income.'

¹³ But the tax collector stood at a distance. He wouldn't even look up to heaven. Instead he beat his chest and prayed, 'God, please be merciful to me. I am a sinner.'

¹⁴ I tell you, it was this man who went home right in God's sight and not the other. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, while those who humble themselves will be exalted."

¹⁵ Parents were bringing their infants to Jesus to have him bless them by his touch. When the disciples saw what was happening, they tried to stop them. ¹⁶ But Jesus called the children to him. "Let the little children come to me," he said. "Don't prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to those who are like them. ¹⁷ I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

¹⁸ One of the rulers came to Jesus and asked him, "Good Teacher, what do I have to do to inherit eternal life?"

¹⁹ "Why do you call me good?" Jesus replied. "No one is good, only God. ²⁰ You know the commandments: do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother."[†]

²¹ "I've kept all these commandments since I was young," the man replied.

²² When Jesus heard this he told the man, "You still lack one thing. Go and sell all you have, give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me!"

²³ But when the man heard this he became very sad, for he was very wealthy.

²⁴ When he saw his reaction, Jesus said, "How difficult it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."

²⁶ Those who heard this wondered, "Who can be saved then?"

²⁷ Jesus replied, "What is impossible in human terms is possible for God."

²⁸ Peter said, "We left everything to follow you!"

²⁹ "I tell you the truth," Jesus told them, "anybody who leaves behind their home, wife, brothers, parents, or children for the sake of God's kingdom ³⁰ will receive so much more in this life, and eternal life in the world to come."

³¹ Jesus took the twelve disciples aside, and told them, "We're going to Jerusalem, and all that the prophets wrote about the Son of man will be fulfilled. ³² He will be handed over to the foreigners[‡] he will be mocked, insulted, and spat upon. ³³ They will flog him and kill him, but on the third day he will rise again."

* **18:11** Literally, "unright." † **18:20** Quoting Exodus 20:12-16 or Deuteronomy 5:16-20.

‡ **18:32** Literally, "Gentiles."

³⁴ But they didn't understand anything Jesus told them. The meaning was hidden from them and they didn't grasp what he was talking about.

³⁵ As Jesus approached Jericho a blind man was sitting beside the road begging. ³⁶ He heard the crowd going past, so he asked what was happening. ³⁷ They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." ³⁸ He called out, "Jesus, son of David, please have mercy on me!" ³⁹ Those at the front of the crowd told him to stop shouting and be quiet, but he only shouted louder, "Son of David, please have mercy on me!"

⁴⁰ Jesus stopped and told them to bring the blind man to him. As he came over, Jesus asked him, ⁴¹ "What do you want me to do for you?" "Lord, please, I want to see," he pleaded.

⁴² "Then see!" Jesus told him. "Your trust in me has healed you." ⁴³ Immediately the man could see. He followed Jesus, praising God. Everyone there who saw what happened also praised God.

19

¹ Jesus entered Jericho and walked through the town. ² A man was there named Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector. He was very rich. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he couldn't see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead, and climbed up a sycamore tree to see Jesus as he passed by.

⁵ When Jesus got there, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly! I need to stay at your house today."

⁶ Zacchaeus climbed down quickly and was so happy to welcome Jesus to his home. ⁷ When the people saw this they all complained, "He's gone to stay with such a sinner!" ⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said before the Lord, "Look, I'm giving half of everything I own to the poor, and if I've cheated anybody, I'll pay them back four times as much!"

⁹ In response Jesus said, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man has shown he is a son of Abraham too. ¹⁰ For the Son of man came to search for and save those who are lost."

¹¹ While they were still paying attention, Jesus told them a story for they were close to Jerusalem and the people thought that God's kingdom was going to become a reality right away.

¹² "Once there was a nobleman who left home to go to a distant country to be crowned king there, and then to return. ¹³ He called ten of his servants, divided money* equally among them, and told them, 'Invest this money until I return.' ¹⁴ But his people hated him, and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We won't have this man as king over us.' ¹⁵ After he had been crowned king he returned. He ordered his servants brought to him. He wanted to know what profit they had made by investing the money he had given them. ¹⁶ The first servant came in and said, 'Lord, your money has earned ten times as much.'

¹⁷ 'Well done! You're a good servant,' said the king. 'Since you proved yourself trustworthy in a very small matter, I'm placing you in charge of ten cities.'

* **19:13** Money: actually one *mina*, worth 100 *drachmas*, equivalent to 100 days pay.

18 The second servant came in and said, 'Lord, your money has earned five times as much.'

19 'I'm placing you in charge of five cities,' said the king.

20 Another servant came in and said, 'Lord, look, here's your money back. I kept it safe, wrapped up in a cloth. 21 I was afraid of you because you're a hard man. You take what doesn't belong to you, and you harvest what you didn't plant.'

22 'I'll judge you by your own words,' the king replied. 'You know I'm a hard man, who as you say, takes what doesn't belong to me, and I harvest what I didn't plant. 23 Why then didn't you deposit my money in the bank, so that when I returned I could have had my money with interest?'

24 The king told those who were standing beside him, 'Take the money away from him, and give it to the one who made ten times as much.'

25 'But master, he already has ten times as much,' they replied.

26 The king said, 'I tell you, to those who have, more will be given; but those who do not have, even what they have will be taken away from them. 27 And as for my enemies who didn't want me to be king over them, bring them here and kill them in front of me.' "

28 After he'd finished telling them this story, Jesus left for Jerusalem, walking on ahead. 29 As he approached Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives, he sent two disciples, telling them:

30 "Go to the village farther on. As you enter it you'll find a colt tied up that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 31 If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say, 'The Lord needs it.' "

32 So the two disciples went and found that everything was just as Jesus had said. 33 As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" 34 The disciples replied, "The Lord needs it." 35 They brought the colt to Jesus. Then they threw their cloaks over it, and sat Jesus on its back. 36 As he rode along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

37 As he approached Jerusalem,[†] right where the road goes down from the Mount of Olives, the crowd of disciples all began shouting joyful praises to God at the top of their voices for all the miracles they had seen.

38 "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord,"[‡] they shouted. "Peace in heaven and glory in highest heaven."[§] 39 Some of the Pharisees who were in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, stop your disciples from saying that." 40 But Jesus replied, "I tell you that if they kept quiet then the stones will shout!"

41 But as he got closer, he saw the city and wept over it. 42 "I really wish today that you, even you, had known the path that leads to peace!" he said. "But now it's hidden from your eyes. 43 The time is coming upon you when your enemies will besiege you, building ramps to attack you, encircling you and closing you in from every side. 44 They will smash you to the ground, you and your children within you. They won't leave one stone on another within you, for you refused to accept salvation when it came to you."

[†] 19:37 "Jerusalem," implied. [‡] 19:38 See Psalms 118:26. [§] 19:38 See Psalms 148:1.

⁴⁵ Jesus entered the Temple and began driving out all the people trading* there. ⁴⁶ He told them, "Scriptures state that 'my house will be a house of prayer,'† but you've turned it into a den of thieves."‡

⁴⁷ He was teaching in the Temple every day. The chief priests, the religious teachers, and the leaders of the people were trying to kill him. ⁴⁸ But they couldn't find a way to do it because everyone appreciated him, hanging on his every word.

20

¹ Once when Jesus was teaching the people in the Temple, telling them the good news, some of the chief priests and religious teachers came with the elders. ² They asked him, "Tell us: by whose authority are you doing what you do? Who gave you the right to do this?"

³ "Let me ask you a question too," Jesus replied. "Tell me: ⁴ the baptism of John—was it from heaven, or was it just human?"

⁵ They talked about it among themselves: "If we say it was from heaven, he'll ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?'" ⁶ And if we say it was just human, everybody will stone us for they're sure John was a prophet."

⁷ So they answered, "We don't know where it came from."

⁸ Jesus replied, "Then I won't tell you by whose authority I do what I do." ⁹ Then he began to tell the people a story:

"Once there was a man who planted a vineyard, leased it to some farmers, and went to live in another country for a long while. ¹⁰ At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenant farmers to collect his share of the crop, but the farmers beat the servant and sent him away with nothing. ¹¹ So the owner sent another servant, but they beat him too and treated him shamefully, and sent him away with nothing. ¹² So he sent a third servant, but they wounded him and threw him out.

¹³ The owner of the vineyard asked himself, 'What shall I do? I know, I'll send my son whom I love. Perhaps they will respect him.' ¹⁴ But when they saw him coming, the farmers said to themselves, 'This is the owner's heir. Let's kill him! That way we can take his inheritance.' ¹⁵ They threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Now what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶ He will come and kill these farmers and let others have the vineyard."

When they heard the story, they said, "May this never happen!" ¹⁷ But Jesus looked at them and said, "Then why is it written in the Scriptures, 'The stone the builders rejected has now become the chief cornerstone'?"* ¹⁸ Anyone who falls on that stone will be broken in pieces; anyone it falls upon will be crushed." ¹⁹ Immediately the religious teachers and the chief priests wanted to arrest him because they realized that the story Jesus told was aimed at them, but they were afraid of what the people would do.

²⁰ Watching for an opportunity they sent spies who pretended to be sincere. They tried to catch Jesus out in something he said so they could

* **19:45** Particularly in reference to those selling animals for sacrifice. † **19:46** Quoting Isaiah 56:7. ‡ **19:46** Quoting Jeremiah 7:11. * **20:17** Quoting Psalms 118:22.

hand him over to the power and authority of the governor. ²¹ They said, “Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is good and right, and that you’re not swayed by the opinions of others. You truly teach the way of God. ²² So should we pay taxes to Caesar or not?”

²³ But Jesus saw through their trickery, and said to them, ²⁴ “Show me a coin—a denarius.† Whose image and inscription is on it?” “Caesar’s,” they answered.

²⁵ “Then give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give back to God what belongs to God,” he told them. ²⁶ They weren’t able to trap him by what he told the people. They were stunned at his reply, and fell silent.

²⁷ Then some of the Sadducees, who deny the resurrection, came to Jesus with this question: ²⁸ “Teacher,” they began, “Moses gave us a law that if a married man dies leaving a wife without children, then his brother should marry the widow and have children for his dead brother.‡ ²⁹ Once there were seven brothers. The first had a wife, and died without having children. ³⁰ The second ³¹ and then the third brother also married her. In the end all seven brothers married her, and then died without having children. ³² Finally the wife died too. ³³ Now whose wife will she be in the resurrection, since all seven brothers had married her?”

³⁴ “Here in this age people marry and are given in marriage,” Jesus explained. ³⁵ “But those who are considered worthy to share in the age to come and the resurrection from the dead don’t marry or are given in marriage. ³⁶ They can’t die any longer; they’re like the angels and are children of God since they’re children of the resurrection. ³⁷ But on the question of whether the dead are raised, even Moses proved this when he wrote about the burning§ bush, when he calls the Lord, ‘the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’* ³⁸ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him they all are alive.”

³⁹ Some of the religious teachers responded, “That was a good answer, Teacher.” ⁴⁰ After this no one dared to ask him any more questions.

⁴¹ Then Jesus asked them, “Why is it said that Christ is the son of David? ⁴² For David himself says in the book of Psalms: The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand ⁴³ until I make all your enemies a footstool for your feet.’† ⁴⁴ David calls him ‘Lord,’ so how can he be David’s son?”

⁴⁵ While everyone was paying attention, he said to his disciples, ⁴⁶ “Watch out for religious leaders who like to go around in long robes, and love to be greeted with respect in the markets, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets. ⁴⁷ They cheat widows out of what they own,‡ and cover up the kind of people they really are with long-winded prayers. They will receive severe condemnation in the judgment.”

† **20:24** Jesus specifically asks for a denarius, a Roman coin. ‡ **20:28** Quoting Deuteronomy 25:5. § **20:37** “Burning bush”—the Greek simply says “bush.” * **20:37** Quoting Exodus 3:6. † **20:43** Quoting Psalms 110:1. ‡ **20:47** Literally, “they devour widow’s houses.”

21

¹ Looking around, Jesus watched rich people putting their gifts into the collection box.* ² He also saw a very poor widow put in two small coins.†

³ "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the rest together. ⁴ All of them gave from their wealth what they had, but she gave from her poverty all she had to live on."

⁵ Some of those‡ there were talking about the Temple, its fine stonework and the beautiful gifts that had been donated. But Jesus said, ⁶ "Regarding these things you're looking at... The time is coming when not one stone will be left on another; everything will be destroyed!"

⁷ "Teacher, when will this happen?" they asked him. "What will be the sign that these things are about to happen?"

⁸ "Make sure you're not deceived," Jesus warned them. "Many people will come claiming to be me,§ saying, 'Here I am!' and, 'The time has come!' but don't follow them. ⁹ When you hear of wars and revolutions, don't be frightened, because these things have to happen first, but the end won't come immediately.

¹⁰ Nation will fight nation, and kingdom will fight kingdom," he told them. ¹¹ "There will be severe earthquakes, famines, and epidemic diseases in many lands, and extraordinary signs in the sky that are terrifying. ¹² But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will drag you before synagogues and throw you into prison, and put you on trial before kings and governors on account of me. ¹³ But this will provide you an opportunity to speak on my behalf before them. ¹⁴ So make up your mind beforehand not to worry about how to defend yourselves, ¹⁵ for I will give you words of wisdom that your enemies won't be able to dispute or contradict. ¹⁶ You will be betrayed even by your parents, brothers, relatives, and friends, and they will kill some of you. ¹⁷ Everyone will hate you because of me. ¹⁸ But not a single hair of your head will be lost. ¹⁹ By standing firm you will gain your lives.*

²⁰ However, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you know that its destruction is near. ²¹ Those who are in Judea should run away to the mountains, and those who are in Jerusalem should leave, and those who are the countryside shouldn't enter the city. ²² For these are days of punishment, fulfilling all that's written.

²³ How hard it will be for those who are pregnant or nursing babies at that time! For terrible trouble is coming on the land and punishment against this people. ²⁴ They will be killed by the sword and taken away as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trodden down by the foreign nations until their time is fulfilled.

²⁵ There will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars, and on the earth the nations will be in distress, confused by the sea's rolling and crashing. ²⁶ People will be faint from fear, terrified about what

* **21:1** In the Temple. (See 20:1.) † **21:2** Small low value coins called *lepta*. ‡ **21:5** Probably some of the disciples, see Mark 13:1. § **21:8** Or "come in my name." * **21:19** Meaning eternal life, or even that you gain who you really were intended to be.

is happening to the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. ²⁷ Then they'll see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.† ²⁸ But when these things happen, stand up and look up, because you will soon be saved."

²⁹ Then he told them this story as an illustration. "Look at the fig tree, or any other kind of tree. ³⁰ When you see new leaves appear, you don't need to be told that summer is near. ³¹ In the same way, when you see these things happening, you don't need to be told that God's kingdom is near. ³² I tell you the truth, this generation won't come to an end before all this happens. ³³ Heaven and earth will come to an end, but my word will not.

³⁴ Watch out that you don't become distracted by partying or getting drunk or by the worries of this life, so that this day‡ catches you by surprise. ³⁵ For this day will come upon everyone who lives on the face of the earth. ³⁶ Always keep watch and pray, so that you may be able to escape all that will happen and stand before the Son of man."

³⁷ Every day Jesus taught in the Temple, and every evening he went and stayed on the Mount of Olives. ³⁸ All the people came early in the morning to listen to him in the Temple.

22

¹ Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread, also called the Passover, was approaching. ² The chief priests and religious teachers were looking for a way to kill Jesus, but were afraid of what the people would do.

³ Satan entered into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples. ⁴ He went and discussed with the chief priests and guard officers how he could betray Jesus. ⁵ They were delighted, and offered him money. ⁶ He agreed, and began to look for an opportunity to hand over Jesus when a crowd would not be there.

⁷ The Day of Unleavened Bread arrived when the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸ Jesus sent Peter and John, telling them, "Go and prepare the Passover meal, so we can eat it together."

⁹ They asked him, "Where do you want us to prepare for it?"

¹⁰ He replied, "When you enter the city you'll meet a man carrying a jar of water. Follow him and go into the house he enters. ¹¹ Tell the owner of the house that the Teacher asks you, 'Where is the dining room where I can eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹² He'll show you a large upstairs room that already has the necessary furniture. Prepare the meal there."

¹³ They went and found that everything was just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover meal there. ¹⁴ When the time came, he sat down at the table with his apostles. He told them, ¹⁵ "I've been really looking forward to eating this Passover meal with you before my sufferings begin. ¹⁶ I tell you I shall not eat it again until the time is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

¹⁷ Jesus took the cup, and after he had given thanks, he said, "Take this and share it among yourselves. ¹⁸ I tell you that I won't drink again

† **21:27** See Daniel 7:13-14. ‡ **21:34** "This day"—the coming of the Son of man.

of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”¹⁹ He picked up some bread, and after he had given thanks, he broke it into pieces and gave it to them. “This is my body which is given for you; do this in order to remember me,” Jesus told them.²⁰ In the same way after they had finished supper, he picked up the cup and said, “This cup is the new agreement* in my blood which is poured out for you.”

²¹ “In spite of this, my betrayer† is sitting right here with me at the table.²² For it has been determined that the Son of man will die, yet how disastrous it will be for his betrayer!”²³ They began to argue among themselves as to who this might be and who could do this.²⁴ At the same time they also got into a quarrel about which of them was the most important.

²⁵ Jesus told them, “Foreign kings lord it over their subjects, and those having power even want people to call them ‘benefactors.’²⁶ But it should not be so with you! Whoever is highest among you should be like the lowest, and the leader should be like a servant.²⁷ Who is greater—the one who sits at the table, or the one who serves? Isn’t it the one who sits at the table? But I’m among you as the one who serves.²⁸ You have stayed with me throughout my trials.²⁹ And I grant to you authority to rule, just as my Father granted it to me,³⁰ so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

³¹ “Simon, Simon—Satan has asked to have all of you‡ to sift like wheat,³² but I have prayed for you that your trust in me may not fail. And when you have returned,§ encourage your brothers.”

³³ Peter said, “Lord, I’m ready to go with you to prison, and to die with you!”

³⁴ Jesus replied, “I’m telling you, Peter, before the cock crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.”

³⁵ Jesus asked them, “When I sent you out without money, without a bag, and without an extra pair of sandals, did you lack anything?”

“No, nothing,” they replied.

³⁶ “But now, if you have money you should take it, as well as a bag, and if you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one.³⁷ I tell you that this statement in Scripture about me must be fulfilled: ‘He was counted with the wicked.’* What was said about me is now being fulfilled.”

³⁸ “Look, Lord, here are two swords,” they said.

“That’s enough,” he replied.

³⁹ Jesus left and as usual went to the Mount of Olives together with his disciples.⁴⁰ When he arrived he said to them, “Pray that you don’t give in to temptation.”⁴¹ Then he left them and walked about a stone’s throw away, where he knelt down and prayed.

⁴² “Father,” he prayed, “if you’re willing, please take away this cup of suffering from me. But I want to do what you want, not what I want.”

⁴³ Then an angel appeared from heaven to strengthen him.

* **22:20** Or “covenant.” † **22:21** Literally, “the hand of the one betraying me.” ‡ **22:31** The first “you” in this statement is plural, the rest are singular, applying specifically to Peter.

§ **22:32** Meaning “return to the truth.” * **22:37** Quoting Isaiah 53:12.

44 In great distress Jesus prayed even harder, and his sweat fell like drops of blood onto the ground.† 45 He finished praying, stood up, and went over to the disciples. He found them asleep, worn out by grief. 46 “Why are you sleeping?” he asked them. “Get up and pray so that you won’t fall into temptation.”

47 While he was still speaking, a crowd appeared led by Judas, one of the twelve disciples. Judas went up to Jesus to kiss him. 48 But Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of man with a kiss?”

49 Jesus’ followers asked him, “Lord, should we attack them with our swords?” 50 And one of them struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear.

51 “Stop! No more of this!” said Jesus. He touched the man’s ear and healed him. 52 Then Jesus spoke to the chief priests, and the officers of the Temple guard, and the elders. “Am I some kind of criminal that you had to come with swords and clubs?” he asked. 53 “You didn’t arrest me before, even though I was with you in the Temple every day. But this is your moment now, the time when darkness is in power.”

54 They arrested him and led him away, taking him to the chief priest’s house. Peter followed at a distance. 55 They started a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down by it. Peter was there among them. 56 As he sat there, a servant girl noticed him in the firelight, and stared directly at him and said, 57 “This man was with him.” But Peter denied it. “Woman, I don’t know him!” he said.

58 A little later someone else looked at him and said, “You’re also one of them.” “No, I’m not!” Peter replied. 59 About an hour later, another person insisted, “I’m sure he was with him too—he’s a Galilean.” 60 “I’ve no idea what you’re talking about!” Peter replied. Right then, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. 61 And Peter remembered what the Lord had said, how he’d told him: “Before the cock crows today, you’ll deny me three times.” 62 Peter went out and wept bitterly.

63 The men guarding Jesus began to mock him and beat him. 64 They put a blindfold on him, and then asked him, “If you can prophesy, tell us who hit you that time!” 65 and shouted many other insults at him.

66 Early in the morning the council of elders gathered together with the chief priests and religious teachers. Jesus was led before the council. 67 “If you really are the Messiah, then tell us,” they said.

“Even if I were to tell you, you wouldn’t believe me,” Jesus replied. 68 “And if I were to ask you a question, you wouldn’t answer. 69 But from now on the Son of man will sit at the right hand of the mighty God.”‡

70 They all asked, “So are you the son of God?”

“You say that I am,” Jesus replied.

71 “Why do we need any more witnesses?” they said. “We’ve heard it ourselves from his own mouth!”

† 22:44 The authenticity of verses 43 and 44 are disputed. Manuscript evidence is divided.

‡ 22:69 See Psalms 110:1.

23

¹ The whole council rose and took him to Pilate. ² There they started to accuse him. “We found this man deceiving our nation, telling people not to pay taxes to Caesar, and claiming he is Messiah, a king,” they said.

³ “Are you the King of the Jews?” Pilate asked him.

“So you say,” replied Jesus.

⁴ Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “I don’t find this man guilty of any crime.”

⁵ But they insisted, saying, “He is inciting rebellion all over Judea with his teachings, from Galilee to right here in Jerusalem.”

⁶ When he heard this, Pilate asked, “Is this man a Galilean?” ⁷ When he discovered that Jesus came under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod who was also in Jerusalem at the time.

⁸ Herod was very pleased to see Jesus since he had wanted to meet him for a long time. He had heard about Jesus and was hoping to see him perform a miracle. ⁹ He asked Jesus many questions, but Jesus did not answer him at all. ¹⁰ The chief priests and religious teachers stood there, angrily accusing him. ¹¹ Herod and his soldiers treated Jesus with contempt and mocked him. Then they placed a royal robe on him and sent him back to Pilate. ¹² From that day on Herod and Pilate were friends—before that they had been enemies.

¹³ Pilate called together the chief priests, rulers, and the people, ¹⁴ and told them, “You brought this man before me, accusing him of inciting the people to rebellion. I’ve carefully examined him in your presence, and do not find him guilty of the charges you have brought against him. ¹⁵ Neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. He has done nothing that demands he should be put to death. ¹⁶ So I will have him flogged and then release him.” ¹⁷ *

¹⁸ But they all shouted together, “Kill this man, and release Barabbas to us.” ¹⁹ (Barabbas had been put in prison for taking part in a rebellion in the city, and for murder.)

²⁰ Pilate wanted to release Jesus, so spoke to them again. ²¹ But they kept on shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

²² Pilate asked them for the third time, “But why? What crime has he committed? I don’t find any reason for executing him. So I will have him flogged and then release him.”

²³ But they continued insisting with loud shouts, demanding that he be crucified. Their shouting succeeded, ²⁴ and Pilate gave the sentence they demanded. ²⁵ He released the man imprisoned for rebellion and murder, but he sent Jesus to be put to death in accordance with their demands.†

²⁶ As the soldiers‡ led him away, they seized a man called Simon of Cyrene, who had come in from the countryside. They put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. ²⁷ A large crowd followed him, along with women who were mourning and lamenting him. ²⁸ Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, don’t

* **23:17** Verse 17 is not in most early manuscripts. † **23:25** Literally, “handed Jesus over to their will.” It does not say that Pilate handed Jesus over to the Jews, since Jesus was executed by the Romans, but that Pilate acceded to their demands for Jesus’ death. ‡ **23:26** Implied.

weep for me. Weep for yourselves and your children. ²⁹ For the time is coming when they'll say, 'Happy are those who are childless, and those who never had babies, and those who never nursed them.' ³⁰ They'll say to the mountains, 'Fall down on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' § ³¹ For if they do this to wood that is green, what will happen when it's dried out?""*

³² They also took two others who were criminals to be executed with him. ³³ When they reached the place called the Skull they crucified him together with the criminals, one on his right, and the other on his left.

³⁴ Jesus said, "Father, please forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing." They divided up his clothes by throwing dice for them. †

³⁵ The people stood and watched and the leaders sneered at Jesus. "He saved others, let him save himself, if he is really God's Messiah, the Chosen One," ‡ they said.

³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up to him and offering him wine vinegar, saying, ³⁷ "If you're the King of the Jews, then save yourself."

³⁸ Above Jesus was a sign on which it was written, "This is the King of the Jews."

³⁹ One of the criminals hanging there joined in the insults against Jesus. "Aren't you the Messiah?" he asked. "Then save yourself—and us too!"

⁴⁰ But the other criminal disagreed and argued with him, "Don't you fear God even when you're suffering the same punishment?" he asked.

⁴¹ "For us the sentence is right since we're being punished for what we did, but this man didn't do anything wrong."

⁴² Then he said, "Jesus, please remember me when you come into your kingdom."

⁴³ Jesus replied, "I promise you today you will be with me in paradise." ⁴⁴ By this time it was around noon and darkness fell over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ⁴⁵ The sun's light was shut out, and the Temple veil was torn in two.

⁴⁶ Jesus called out in a loud voice, "Father, I place myself in your hands." § Having said this he breathed his last.*

⁴⁷ When the centurion saw what had happened he praised God and said, "Surely this man was innocent." ⁴⁸ When all the crowds that had come to watch saw what happened they went home beating their chests in grief. ⁴⁹ But all those who knew Jesus, including the women who'd followed him from Galilee, watched from a distance.

⁵⁰ There was a man called Joseph who was good and honest. He was a member of the council, ⁵¹ but he hadn't agreed with its decisions and actions. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. ⁵² Joseph went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. ⁵³ Once he'd taken it down, he wrapped it in a linen cloth. He laid Jesus in an unused tomb cut into the rock. ⁵⁴ It was preparation day† and the Sabbath would soon begin. ⁵⁵ The women

§ 23:30 Quoting Hosea 10:8. * 23:31 Meaning that things become worse later. † 23:34 See Psalms 22:18. ‡ 23:35 See Psalms 22:7. § 23:46 Quoting Psalms 31:5. * 23:46 "Myself": Literally, "my spirit." Breath and spirit are the same word. † 23:54 Meaning Friday.

who had come with Jesus from Galilee had followed Joseph and had seen the tomb where Jesus' body had been laid. ⁵⁶ They returned home and prepared spices and ointments.‡ But on the Sabbath they rested, observing the commandment.

24

¹ Very early on the first day of the week,* the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they'd prepared. ² They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance to the tomb, ³ but when they went in they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering what was going on, two men suddenly appeared dressed in clothes that shone brilliantly. ⁵ The women were terrified and bowed down, their faces on the ground.

They said to the women, "Why are you looking for someone who is alive among the dead? ⁶ He's not here; he's risen from the dead! Remember what he told you while you were still in Galilee: ⁷ 'The Son of man must be betrayed into the hands of evil men, be crucified, and on the third day rise again.' "

⁸ Then they remembered what he'd said. ⁹ When they returned from the tomb they reported all that had happened to the eleven disciples and to all the others. ¹⁰ Those who told the apostles what had happened were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women with them. ¹¹ But it seemed like nonsense to them, so they didn't believe the women. ¹² However, Peter got up and ran to the tomb. Bending down, he looked in and saw only the linen grave-clothes. So he went back home, wondering what had happened.

¹³ The same day two disciples were on their way to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking about all that had happened. ¹⁵ As they discussed and debated, Jesus came up and fell into step with them. ¹⁶ But they were kept from recognizing him.

¹⁷ "What are you discussing as you walk along?" he asked them. They stopped, their faces sad. ¹⁸ One of them, called Cleopas, replied, "Are you just visiting Jerusalem? You must be the only person who doesn't know the things that have happened in the past few days."

¹⁹ "What things?" Jesus asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet who spoke powerfully and performed great miracles before God and all the people. ²⁰ But our high priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. ²¹ We had hoped he was the one who was going to rescue Israel. It's been three days now since all this happened.

²² But then some of the women in our group surprised us. ²³ At dawn they went to the tomb and they didn't find his body. They came back saying that they'd seen a vision of angels who told them he's alive. ²⁴ Some of us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women said—but they didn't see him."

²⁵ Jesus told them, "You're so dull! How slow you are to trust in all that the prophets said! ²⁶ Didn't the Messiah have to suffer before he

‡ 23:56 To anoint Jesus' body. * 24:1 That is, Sunday.

could enter into his glory?" ²⁷ Then, starting with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them everything that was said in Scripture about himself.

²⁸ As they approached the village they were going to, Jesus made it seem as if he was going farther. ²⁹ But they urged him, saying, "Please come and stay with us. It's getting late—the day is almost over." So he went to stay with them.

³⁰ When he sat down to eat with them, he took the bread and gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. Then he disappeared from view.

³² The two disciples said to each other, "Weren't our thoughts on fire when he spoke to us, as he explained the Scriptures to us?" ³³ They got up right away and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and those who were with them meeting together, ³⁴ who said, "The Lord has really risen again! He has appeared to Simon."

³⁵ Then those who had just arrived explained to the other disciples what had happened to them on the road, and how they had recognized Jesus when he broke bread. ³⁶ While they were talking, Jesus himself stood among them, and said, "Peace to you!" ³⁷ They were startled and afraid, thinking they were seeing a ghost.

³⁸ "Why are you frightened? Why are you doubting?" he asked them. ³⁹ "Look at my hands and my feet—you can see it's me. Touch me and you'll be certain, for a spirit doesn't have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

⁴⁰ Having said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹ But they still couldn't believe it because they were so elated and amazed. He asked them, "Do you have anything to eat?" ⁴² They gave him a piece of cooked fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate it in front of them.

⁴⁴ Then Jesus said to them, "This is what I explained to you while I was still with you. Everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms, had to be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they were able to understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, "It was written like this: the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and in his name ⁴⁷ repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of all this. ⁴⁹ Now I'm going to send you what my Father promised—but wait in the city until you receive power from heaven."

⁵⁰ Then he led them out until they were near Bethany, and lifting up his hands, he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he left them, and was taken up to heaven. ⁵² They worshiped him, and then they returned to Jerusalem full of joy. ⁵³ They spent all their time in the Temple praising God.

John

¹ In the beginning the Word already was.* The Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² In the beginning he was with God. ³ Everything came into being through him; nothing came into being without him. ⁴ In him was life, the life that was the light of everyone. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not extinguished it.†

⁶ God sent a man named John. ⁷ He came as a witness to explain about the light so that everyone might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to witness to the light.

⁹ The true light was coming into the world to give light to everyone. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world didn't know who he was.‡ ¹¹ He came to his own people, but they didn't accept him.§ ¹² But to all those who accepted him and trusted in him, he gave the right to become God's children. ¹³ These are the children born not in the usual way, not as the result of human desire or a father's decision, but born of God. ¹⁴ The Word became human and lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only* Son, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵ John gave his testimony about him, shouting out to the people, "This is the one I was telling you about when I said, 'The one who is coming after me is more important than me, for before I ever existed he already was.'" ¹⁶ We have all been recipients of his generous nature, one gracious gift after another. ¹⁷ The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ While no one has ever seen God, God the one and only, who is close to the Father, has shown us what God is like.†

¹⁹ This is what John publicly stated when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰ John declared plainly and clearly without hesitation, "I am not the Messiah."

²¹ "So then, who are you?" they asked. "Elijah?"

"No, I'm not," he answered.

"Are you the Prophet?"‡

"No," he replied.

²² "Well, who are you, then?" they asked. "We have to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

²³ "I am a voice calling in the desert, 'Make the Lord's way straight!' " he said, using the words of the prophet Isaiah.§

* **1:1** In other words, the Word existed from eternity past. The concept of the Word means more than letters making up a word: it is the divine mind, the expression of God, the active aspect of divinity that speaks into existence as in Genesis 1:1. † **1:5** The word in the original can also mean "overpowered" or "understood." ‡ **1:10** Or "didn't recognize him." § **1:11** Or "He came to his own home but his own people did not welcome him." * **1:14** Literally, "only begotten." This refers to position and uniqueness rather than birth. † **1:18** Or "has made him known." ‡ **1:21** In Jewish thought a special prophet was expected before the End. § **1:23** Quoting Isaiah 40:3.

²⁴ The priests and Levites* sent by the Pharisees ²⁵ asked him, “Why then are you baptizing, if you're not the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet?”

²⁶ John replied, “I baptize with water, but standing among you is someone you don't know. ²⁷ He is coming after me, but I am not even worthy to untie his sandals.” ²⁸ This all happened in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus approaching him, and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is the one I was talking about when I said, ‘A man who is coming after me is more important than me, for before I ever existed he already was.’

³¹ I didn't know myself who he was, but I came baptizing with water so that he could be revealed to Israel.”

³² John gave his evidence about him, saying, “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove and rest upon him. ³³ I wouldn't have known him except he who sent me to baptize with water had told me, ‘The one you see the Spirit descend to and rest upon, he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴ I saw it happen and I declare that this is the Son of God.”

³⁵ The next day John was standing there with two of his disciples.

³⁶ He saw Jesus passing by, and said, “Look! This is the Lamb of God!”

³⁷ When the two disciples heard what he said they went and followed Jesus.

³⁸ Jesus turned round and saw them following him. “What are you looking for?” he asked them.

“Rabbi (which means ‘Teacher’), where are you staying?” they asked in reply.

³⁹ “Come and see,” he told them. So they went with him and saw where he was staying. It was about four p.m., and they spent the rest of the day with him.

⁴⁰ Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of these two disciples who had heard what John said and followed Jesus. ⁴¹ He went at once to find his brother Simon and told him, “We've found the Messiah!” (which means “Christ”).[†] ⁴² He took him to Jesus. Looking directly at Simon, Jesus said, “You are Simon, son of John. But now you will be called Cephas,” (which means “Peter”).[‡]

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. Jesus found Philip there, and told him, “Follow me.” ⁴⁴ Philip was from Bethsaida, the same town that Andrew and Peter came from.

⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We've found the one that Moses wrote about in the law and that the prophets did too—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

⁴⁶ “From Nazareth? Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael wondered.

“Just come and see,” Philip replied.

⁴⁷ As Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said about him, “Look, here's a true Israelite! There's nothing false about him.”

⁴⁸ “How do you know who I am?” Nathanael asked.

* **1:24** “Priests and Levites”: implied from verse 19. † **1:41** Christ means “the Anointed One.” ‡ **1:42** Cephas and Peter both mean “rock” or “stone.”

"I saw you there under the fig tree, before Philip called you," Jesus replied.

⁴⁹ "Rabbi, you are the Son of God, the king of Israel!" Nathaniel exclaimed.

⁵⁰ "You believe this just because I told you I saw you under the fig tree?" Jesus replied. "You'll get to see much more than that!" ⁵¹ Then Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, you will all see heaven open, and the angels of God going up and down on the Son of man."§

2

¹ Two days* later a wedding was held at Cana in Galilee, and Jesus' mother was there. ² Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ The wine ran out, so Jesus' mother told him, "They don't have any more wine."

⁴ "Mother, why should you involve me?† My time hasn't come yet," he replied.

⁵ His mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶ Standing nearby were six stone jars used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each one holding twenty to thirty gallons.‡ ⁷ "Fill the jars with water," Jesus told them. So they filled them right up. ⁸ Then he told them, "Pour some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So they took him some. ⁹ The master of ceremonies didn't know where it had come from, only the servants knew. But when he tasted the water that had been turned to wine, he called the bridegroom over:

¹⁰ "Everyone serves out the best wine first," he told him, "and once people have had plenty to drink, then they put out the cheaper wine. But you have kept the best wine till last!" ¹¹ This was the very first of Jesus' miraculous signs, and was performed in Cana of Galilee. Here he revealed his glory, and his disciples put their trust in him.

¹² After this Jesus left for Capernaum with his mother, brothers, and disciples where they stayed for a few days. ¹³ Since it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went on to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the Temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves; and money-changers sitting at their tables. ¹⁵ He made a whip out of cords and drove everyone out of the Temple, along with the sheep and cattle, scattering coins of the money-changers and turning over their tables. ¹⁶ He ordered the dove-sellers, "Take these things out of here! Don't turn my Father's house into a market!" ¹⁷ His disciples remembered the Scripture that says, "My devotion for your house is like a fire burning inside me!"§

¹⁸ The Jewish leaders reacted, asking him, "What right do you have to do this? Show us some miraculous sign to prove it!"

¹⁹ Jesus replied, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I'll raise it up!"

§ 1:51 Referring to Jacob's experience in Genesis 28:12, with the term "Son of man" replacing the word "ladder." * 2:1 Literally, "on the third day" (by inclusive reckoning). † 2:4 Literally, "What to me and to you?" (that is, "What has this got to do with me or you?")

‡ 2:6 Literally, "two or three measures." § 2:17 Quoting Psalms 69:9.

²⁰ “It took forty-six years to build this Temple, and you’re going to raise it up in three days?” the Jewish leaders replied. ²¹ But the Temple Jesus was speaking of was his body. ²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered what he said, and so they believed in Scripture and Jesus’ own words.

²³ As a result of the miracles Jesus did while he was in Jerusalem during the Passover, many believed in him. ²⁴ But Jesus did not trust himself to them, because he knew all about people. ²⁵ He didn’t need anyone to tell him about human nature for he knew the way people think.

3

¹ There was a man named Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish ruling council. ² He came at night to where Jesus was and said, “Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God, for nobody could do the miraculous signs you’re doing unless God was with him.”

³ “I tell you the truth,” Jesus replied, “Unless you are reborn,* you can’t experience God’s kingdom.”

⁴ “How can you be reborn when you’re old?” Nicodemus asked. “You can’t go back into your mother’s womb and be born a second time!”

⁵ “I tell you the truth, you can’t enter God’s kingdom unless you are born of water and the Spirit,” Jesus told him. ⁶ “What’s born of the flesh is flesh, and what’s born of the Spirit is Spirit. ⁷ Don’t be surprised at my telling you, ‘You must be reborn.’† ⁸ The wind blows wherever it wants, and just as you hear the sound it makes, but don’t know where it’s coming from or where it’s going, that’s how it is for everyone who is born of the spirit.”

⁹ “How is this possible?” Nicodemus asked.

¹⁰ “You’re a famous teacher in Israel,‡ and yet you don’t understand such things?” Jesus replied. ¹¹ “I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know and give evidence regarding what we have seen, but you refuse to accept our testimony. ¹² If you don’t trust what I say when I tell you about earthly things, how would you ever trust what I say if I were to tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has gone up to heaven, but the Son of man came down from heaven. ¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert,§ so the Son of man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ that everyone who trusts in him will have eternal life.

¹⁶ For God loved the world, and this is how:* he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who trusts in him shouldn’t die, but have eternal life. ¹⁷ God didn’t send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Those who trust in him are not condemned, while those who don’t trust in him are condemned† already because they didn’t trust in the one and only Son of God. ¹⁹ This

* **3:3** Or “born from above.” † **3:7** The first “you” refers to Nicodemus in the singular. The second “you” is plural, and refers to a wider audience. ‡ **3:10** Literally, “you are the teacher of Israel.” § **3:14** See Numbers 21:9. * **3:16** The word often translated “so” (as in “so loved”) is primarily describing the way or manner in which God loves rather than the extent or intensity of his love. † **3:18** Or “have condemned themselves.”

is how the decision[‡] is made: the light came to the world, but people loved the darkness rather than the light, for their actions were evil. ²⁰ All those who do evil hate the light and don't come into the light, because they don't want their actions to be exposed. ²¹ But those who do good[§] come into the light, so that what God accomplishes in them can be revealed."

²² After this Jesus and his disciples went into Judea and spent some time with the people, baptizing them. ²³ John was also baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water there and people kept coming to be baptized. ²⁴ (This was before John was imprisoned.) ²⁵ An argument developed between John's disciples and a Jew over ceremonial purification. ²⁶ They went to John and told him, "Rabbi, the man you were with on the other side of the Jordan River, the one you testified in support of—see, now he's baptizing, and everyone is going to him!"

²⁷ "No one receives anything unless they're given it from heaven," John replied. ²⁸ "You yourselves can testify that I declared, 'I'm not the Messiah. I've been sent to prepare his way.' ²⁹ The bridegroom is the one who has the bride! The best man waits, listening for the bridegroom, and is so happy when he hears the bridegroom's voice—in the same way my happiness is now complete. ³⁰ He must become more important, and I must become less important."

³¹ He who comes from above is greater* than all; he who comes from the earth belongs to the earth and talks about earthly things. He who comes from heaven is greater than all. ³² He gives evidence about what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts what he has to say. ³³ Yet anyone who accepts what he says confirms[†] that God is truthful. ³⁴ For the one God sent speaks God's words, because God doesn't restrict the Spirit. ³⁵ The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. ³⁶ Anyone who trusts in the Son has eternal life, but anyone who refuses to trust the Son will not experience eternal life but remains under God's condemnation.

4

¹ When Jesus realized that the Pharisees had discovered that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, ² (although it wasn't Jesus who was baptizing, but his disciples), ³ he left Judea and returned to Galilee. ⁴ On the way he had to pass through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to the Samaritan city of Sychar, near to the field that Jacob had given his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, who was tired from the journey, sat straight down beside the well. It was around noon.

⁷ A Samaritan woman came to fetch water. Jesus said to her, "Please could you give me a drink?" ⁸ for his disciples had gone to the town to buy food.

[‡] 3:19 Or "judgment." § 3:21 Literally, "doing the truth." * 3:31 Or "above" in the sense of authority. † 3:33 Literally, "stamp of approval."

9 "You're a Jew, and I'm a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" the woman replied, for Jews don't associate with Samaritans.*

10 Jesus answered her, "If you only recognized God's gift, and who is asking you, 'Please could you give me a drink?' you would have asked him and he would have given you the water of life."

11 "Sir, you don't have a bucket, and the well is deep. Where are you going to get the water of life from?" she replied. 12 "Our father Jacob gave us the well. He drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock. Are you greater than he?"

13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks water from this well will become thirsty again. 14 But those who drink the water I give won't ever be thirsty again. The water I give becomes a bubbling spring of water inside them, bringing them eternal life."

15 "Sir," replied the woman, "Please give me this water so I won't be thirsty, and I won't have to come here to fetch water!"

16 "Go and call your husband, and come back here," Jesus told her.

17 "I don't have a husband," the woman answered.

"You're right in saying you don't have a husband," Jesus told her.

18 "You've had five husbands, and the one you're living with now is not your husband. So what you say is true!"

19 "I can see you're a prophet, sir," the woman replied. 20 "Tell me this: our ancestors worshiped here on this mountain, but you† say that Jerusalem is where we must worship."

21 Jesus replied,‡ "Believe me the time is coming when you won't worship the Father either on this mountain or in Jerusalem. 22 You really don't know the God§ you're worshiping, while we worship the God we know, for salvation comes from the Jews. 23 But the time is coming—and in fact it's here already—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for these are the kind of worshipers the Father wants. 24 God is Spirit, so worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

25 The woman said, "Well, I know that the Messiah is coming," (the one who is called Christ). "When he comes he will explain it all to us."

26 Jesus replied, "I AM—the one who is speaking to you."*

27 Just then the disciples returned. They were shocked that he was talking to a woman, but none of them asked "What are you doing?" or "Why are you talking with her?" 28 The woman left her water jar behind and ran back to the town, telling the people, 29 "Come and meet a man who told me everything I ever did! Could this be the Messiah?"

30 So they went out of the town to go and see him. 31 Meanwhile Jesus' disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, please eat something!"

32 But Jesus replied, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about."

33 "Did someone bring him food?" the disciples asked one another.

34 Jesus told them, "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me, and to complete his work. 35 Don't you have a saying, 'four more

* 4:9 Or "Jews do not share dishes with Samaritans." † 4:20 As a Jew. ‡ 4:21 Jesus addresses her as "woman" which is the normal term used, but sounds impolite in English.

§ 4:22 Literally, "what." * 4:26 "I AM" is used in the Old Testament as a name for God. Jesus is telling her he is the Messiah and also identifying his divinity.

months until harvest?† Open your eyes and look around! The crops in the fields are ripe, ready for harvest. ³⁶ The reaper is being paid and harvesting a crop for eternal life so that both the sower and the reaper can celebrate. ³⁷ So the proverb ‘one sows, another reaps,’ is true. ³⁸ I sent you to reap what you didn’t work for. Others did the hard work and you have reaped the benefits of what they did.”

³⁹ Many Samaritans from that town trusted in him because of what the woman said: “He told me everything I ever did.” ⁴⁰ So when they came to see him they pleaded with him to stay with them. He stayed for two days, ⁴¹ and because of what he told them many more trusted in him. ⁴² They said to the woman, “Now our trust in him isn’t just because of what you told us but because we have heard him for ourselves. We’re convinced that he really is the Savior of the world.”

⁴³ After the two days he continued on to Galilee. ⁴⁴ Jesus himself had made the comment that a prophet is not respected in his own country. ⁴⁵ But when he arrived in Galilee, the people welcomed him, because they had also been at the Passover feast and had seen everything he’d done in Jerusalem. ⁴⁶ He visited Cana in Galilee again, where he had turned water into wine. Nearby in the town of Capernaum lived a royal official whose son was very sick. ⁴⁷ When he heard that Jesus had returned from Judea to Galilee, he went to Jesus and begged him to come and heal his son who was close to death.

⁴⁸ “Unless you see signs and wonders you people really won’t trust me,” said Jesus.

⁴⁹ “Lord, just come before my child dies,” the official pleaded.

⁵⁰ “Go on home,” Jesus told him. “Your son will live!”

The man trusted what Jesus told him and left for home. ⁵¹ While he was on his way, his servants met him with the news that his son was alive and recovering. ⁵² He asked them what time it was when his son began to get better. “Yesterday at one p.m. the fever left him,” they told him. ⁵³ Then the father realized this was the precise time when Jesus had told him, “Your son will live!” So he and everyone in his household trusted in Jesus. ⁵⁴ This was the second miraculous sign Jesus did after coming from Judea to Galilee.

5

¹ After this, there was a Jewish festival so Jesus went to Jerusalem. ² Now near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem is a pool called Bethzatha in Hebrew, with five porches beside it. ³ Crowds of sick people were lying in these porches—those who were blind, lame, or paralyzed. ⁴ ⁵ One man who was there had been sick for thirty-eight years. Jesus looked at him, knowing he had been lying there for long time, and asked him, ⁶ “Do you want to be healed?”

† **4:35** It was usually four months between sowing and reaping. * **5:4** This text is not in the earliest manuscripts and appears to have been added to explain verse 7. They are added here for information: “There they waited for the water to move, for an angel of the Lord would come down to the pool every so often and stir the water. Whoever got into the pool first after the water was stirred was healed of whatever disease they had.” It seems that this idea was what was believed by some at the time.

⁷ “Sir,” the sick man answered, “I don’t have anyone to help me get into the pool when the water is stirred. While I’m trying to get there, someone always gets in before me.”

⁸ “Stand up, pick up your mat, and start walking!” Jesus told him. ⁹ Immediately the man was healed. He picked up his mat and started walking.

Now the day that this happened was the Sabbath. ¹⁰ So the Jews said to the man who’d been healed, “This is the Sabbath! It’s against the law to carry a mat!”

¹¹ “The man who healed me told me to pick up my mat and start walking,” he replied.

¹² “Who’s this person who told you to carry your mat and walk?” they asked.

¹³ However, the man who’d been healed didn’t know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the surrounding crowd. ¹⁴ Later on Jesus found the man in the Temple, and told him, “Look, now you’ve been healed. So stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.”

¹⁵ The man went and told the Jews it was Jesus who had healed him. ¹⁶ So the Jews started to harass Jesus because he was doing things on the Sabbath. ¹⁷ But Jesus told them, “My Father is still working, and so am I.”[†] ¹⁸ This was why the Jews tried even harder to kill him, for not only did he break the Sabbath but also called God his Father, making himself equal with God.

¹⁹ Jesus explained to them, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can only do what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does the Son does as well. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son, and reveals to him everything he does; and the Father will show to him even more incredible things that will completely amaze you. ²¹ For just as the Father gives life to those he resurrects from the dead, in the same way the Son also gives life to those that he wants. ²² The Father judges no one. He has given to the Son all the authority to judge, ²³ so that everyone may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who doesn’t honor the Son doesn’t honor the Father who sent him. ²⁴ I tell you the truth: those who follow[‡] what I say and trust the one who sent me have eternal life. They won’t be condemned, but have gone from death to life.

²⁵ I tell you the truth: The time is coming—in fact it’s here already—when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live! ²⁶ Just as the Father has life-giving power in himself, so has he given the Son the same life-giving power in himself. ²⁷ The Father also granted the authority for judgment to him, for he is the Son of man. ²⁸ Don’t be surprised at this, for the time is coming when all those in the grave will hear his voice ²⁹ and will rise again: those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation.[§] ³⁰ I can do nothing by myself. I judge based on what I’m told,^{*} and my decision is right, for I’m not doing my own will but the will of the one who sent me. ³¹ If

[†] **5:17** Or “My Father is always working, and I am working too.” [‡] **5:24** Literally, “hear.”

[§] **5:29** See Daniel 12:2. ^{*} **5:30** Implying “told by God the Father.”

I were to make claims about myself, such claims wouldn't be valid;³² but someone else gives evidence about me, and I know what he says about me is true.³³ You asked John about me, and he told the truth,³⁴ but I don't need any human endorsement. I'm explaining this to you so you can be saved.³⁵ John was like a brightly-burning light, and you were willing to enjoy his light for a while.³⁶ But the evidence I'm giving is greater than John's. For I am doing the work that the Father gave me to do,³⁷ and this is the proof that the Father sent me. The Father who sent me, he himself speaks on my behalf. You've never heard his voice, and you've never seen what he looks like,³⁸ and you don't accept what he says, because you don't trust in the one he sent.

³⁹ You search the Scriptures because you think that through them you'll gain eternal life. But the evidence they give is in support of me!⁴⁰ And yet you don't want to come to me so that you might live.⁴¹ I'm not looking for human approval⁴² —I know you, and that you don't have God's love in you.⁴³ For I've come to represent† my Father, and you won't accept me; but if someone comes representing themselves, then you accept them!⁴⁴ How can you trust in me when you look for praise from one another and yet you don't look for praise from the one true God?⁴⁵ But don't think I will be making accusations about you to the Father. It's Moses who is accusing you, the one in whom you place such confidence.⁴⁶ For if you really trusted Moses you would trust in me, because he wrote about me.⁴⁷ But since you don't trust what he said, why would you trust what I say?"

6

¹ After this, Jesus left to go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (also known as the Sea of Tiberias).² A large crowd was following him, for they'd seen his miracles of healing.³ Jesus went up a hill and sat down there with his disciples.⁴ The time for the Jewish festival of the Passover was approaching.⁵ When Jesus looked up, and saw a large crowd coming towards him, he asked Philip, "Where can we buy enough bread to feed all these people?"⁶ He only asked this to see how Philip would respond, because Jesus already knew what he was going to do.

⁷ "Two hundred silver coins* wouldn't buy enough bread to give everyone even just a little," Philip replied.

⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up.⁹ "There's a boy here who has five barley loaves and a couple of fish, but what good is that when there are so many people?"

¹⁰ "Have everybody sit down," Jesus said. There was plenty of grass there, so they all sat down, the men numbering around five thousand.¹¹ Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, and had it handed out to the people as they sat there. Then he did the same with the fishes, making sure the people had as much as they wanted.¹² Once they were all full, he said to his disciples, "Collect what's left over so nothing is wasted."¹³ So they collected and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the

† 5:43 Literally, "in the name of." * 6:7 Literally, *denarius*. One *denarius* was worth a day's wage.

five barley loaves the people had eaten. ¹⁴ When the people saw this miracle, they said, "Surely this is the Prophet who was to come into the world." ¹⁵ Jesus realized that they were about to force him to become their king, so he left them and went up into the hills to be by himself.

¹⁶ When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷ climbed into a boat, and headed across the water towards Capernaum. By now it was night and Jesus had not joined them yet. ¹⁸ A strong wind began blowing and the sea grew rough. ¹⁹ When they had rowed three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea, coming towards the boat. They were very frightened. ²⁰ "Don't be afraid!" he told them. "It's me." ²¹ Then they gladly took him into the boat, and immediately they reached the shore where they were going.

²² The next day the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea noticed that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not got into the boat with his disciples, but they had left without him. ²³ Then other boats arrived from Tiberias, landing near to the place where they'd eaten the bread once the Lord had blessed it. ²⁴ Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went over to Capernaum, looking for Jesus. ²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the sea, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"[†]

²⁶ "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "you're looking for me because you ate as much bread as you wanted, not because you understood the miracles. ²⁷ Don't be preoccupied about food that doesn't last, but concentrate on the lasting food of eternal life which the Son of man will give you, for God the Father has placed his seal of approval on him."

²⁸ So they asked him, "What do we have to do in order to do what God wants?"

²⁹ Jesus replied, "What God wants you to do is to trust in the one he sent."

³⁰ "What miracle are you going to perform for us to see so we can trust you? What are you able to do?" they asked. ³¹ "Our forefathers ate manna in the desert in fulfillment of the Scripture that says, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"[‡]

³² "I tell you the truth, it wasn't Moses who gave you bread from heaven," Jesus replied. "It's my Father who gives you the true bread of heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is the one who comes from heaven and gives life to the world."

³⁴ "Lord, please give us this kind of bread all the time!" they said.

³⁵ "I am the bread of life," Jesus replied. "Anyone who comes to me will never be hungry again, and anyone who trusts in me will never be thirsty again. ³⁶ But as I explained to you before, you have seen me,§ but you still don't trust me. ³⁷ All those the Father gives me will come to me, and I won't reject any of them. ³⁸ For I came down from heaven not to do what I want, but to do what the one who sent me wants. ³⁹ What he wants is for me not to lose anyone he has given to me, but

[†] 6:25 An oblique question for they were really wondering *how* he got there... [‡] 6:31

Quoting Psalms 78:24 referring to Exodus 16:4. [§] 6:36 Referring to all that Jesus had done, not just seeing his person. In fact the word "me" is not in all ancient manuscripts.

for me to raise them up at the last day.* 40 What my Father wants is for everyone who sees the Son and trusts in him to have eternal life, and for me to raise them up at the last day.”

41 Then the Jews began to grumble about him because he had said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” 42 They said, “Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know his father and his mother. So how can he now tell us, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

43 “Stop grumbling to each other,” Jesus said. 44 “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me attracts them, and I will raise them up at the last day. 45 As is written in Scripture by the prophets, ‘Everyone will be taught by God.’† Everyone who listens to and learns from the Father comes to me. 46 Not that anyone has seen God, except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. 47 I tell you the truth: anyone who trusts in him has eternal life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your forefathers ate manna in the desert but they still died. 50 But this is the bread that comes down from heaven, and anyone who eats it won't ever die. 51 I am the life-giving bread from heaven, and anyone who eats this bread will live forever. The bread is my flesh that I give so that the world may live.”

52 Then the Jews argued heatedly among themselves. “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” they asked.

53 Jesus told them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you cannot truly live. 54 Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. 56 Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood remain in me, and I remain in them. 57 Just as the life-giving Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so anyone who feeds on me will live because of me. 58 Now this is the bread that came down from heaven, not the kind your forefathers ate and still died. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever.”

59 Jesus explained this while he was teaching in a synagogue at Capernaum. 60 Many of his disciples when they heard it said, “This is hard to accept! Who can follow‡ it?”

61 Jesus saw that his disciples were complaining about this, so he asked them, “Are you offended by this? 62 Then what if you were to see the Son ascend to where he was before? 63 The Spirit gives life; the physical body doesn't do anything.§ The words I've told you are spirit and life! 64 Yet there are some of you who don't trust me.” (Jesus had known from the very beginning who didn't trust him, and who would betray him.)

65 Jesus added, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is made possible* by the Father.”

66 From this time on many of Jesus' disciples gave up and no longer followed him. 67 Then Jesus asked the twelve disciples, “What about you? Do you want to leave as well?”

* **6:39** “Last day,” referring to the day of judgment. Also verses 40, 44, and 54. † **6:45** Quoting Isaiah 54:13. ‡ **6:60** “Follow” not only in the sense of “understand,” but also “observe” or “agree with.” § **6:63** Or “counts for nothing.” * **6:65** Or “granted.”

⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered, “Lord, who would we follow? You’re the one who has the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We trust in you, and we’re convinced that you are God’s Holy One.”

⁷⁰ Jesus replied, “Didn’t I choose you, the twelve disciples? Yet one of you is a devil.” ⁷¹ (Jesus was referring to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. He was the one of the twelve disciples who would betray Jesus.)

7

¹ After this, Jesus spent his time going from place to place in Galilee. He did not want to do so in Judea because the Jews were out to kill him. ² But as it was almost time for the Jewish festival of the Tabernacles, ³ his brothers told him, “You ought to leave and go to Judea so your followers will be able to see what miracles you can do. ⁴ No one who wants to be famous keeps what they do hidden. If you can do such miracles, then show yourself to the world!” ⁵ For even his own brothers really didn’t believe in him.

⁶ Jesus told them, “This is not my time to go, not yet; but you can go whenever you want, for any time’s the right time for you. ⁷ The world has no reason to hate you, but it does hate me, because I make it clear that its ways are evil. ⁸ You go on to the festival. I’m not going to this festival because this is not the right time for me, not yet.” ⁹ After saying this he stayed behind in Galilee.

¹⁰ After his brothers left to go to the festival, Jesus also went, but not openly—he stayed out of sight. ¹¹ Now at the festival the Jewish leaders were searching for him and kept on asking, “Where is he?” ¹² Many people in the crowds were complaining about him. Some said, “He’s a good man,” while others argued, “No! He deceives people.” ¹³ But no one dared to speak openly about him because they were afraid of what the Jewish leaders would do to them.

¹⁴ When the festival was halfway through Jesus went to the Temple and began to teach. ¹⁵ The Jewish leaders were very surprised, and asked, “How does this man have so much learning* when he hasn’t been educated?”

¹⁶ Jesus answered, “My teaching is not from me but from the one who sent me. ¹⁷ Anyone who chooses to follow what God wants will know if my teaching comes from God or if I’m only speaking for myself. ¹⁸ Those who speak for themselves want to glorify themselves, but someone who glorifies the one who sent him is truthful and not deceitful. ¹⁹ Moses gave you the law, didn’t he? Yet none of you keeps the law! Why are you trying to kill me?”

²⁰ “You’re demon-possessed!” the crowd replied. “No one’s trying to kill you!”

²¹ “I did one miracle† and you’re all shocked by it,” Jesus replied. ²² “However, because Moses told you to circumcise—not that it really came from Moses, but from your forefathers before him—you perform circumcision on the Sabbath. ²³ If you circumcise on the Sabbath to make sure that the law of Moses isn’t broken, why are you angry

* **7:15** In the sense of religious education. † **7:21** On the Sabbath, referring back to what happened in 5:1-9.

with me for healing someone on the Sabbath? ²⁴ Don't judge by appearances; decide what is right!"

²⁵ Then some of those from Jerusalem began wondering, "Isn't this the one they're trying to kill? ²⁶ But see how openly he's speaking, and they're saying nothing to him. Do you think the authorities believe he's the Messiah? ²⁷ But that's not possible because we know where he comes from. When the Messiah comes, nobody will know where he's from."

²⁸ While he was teaching in the Temple, Jesus called out in a loud voice, "So you think you know me and where I'm from? However, I did not come for my own sake. The one who sent me is true. You don't know him, ²⁹ but I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me."

³⁰ So they tried to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him because his time had not yet come. ³¹ However, many of the crowd did put their trust in him. "When the Messiah appears, will he do more miraculous signs than this man has done?" they said. ³² When the Pharisees heard the crowd whispering this about him, they and the chief priests sent guards to arrest Jesus.

³³ Then Jesus told the people, "I'll be with you just a little longer, but then I'll return to the one who sent me. ³⁴ You'll search for me but you won't find me; and you can't come where I'm going."

³⁵ The Jews said to each other, "Where could he be going that we couldn't find him? Is he planning to go to those scattered among the foreigners,[‡] and teach the foreigners? ³⁶ What does he mean by saying, 'You'll search for me but you won't find me; and you can't come where I'm going'?"

³⁷ On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and shouted out in a loud voice, "If you're thirsty, come to me and drink. ³⁸ If you trust in me, you will have streams of life-giving water flowing out from within you, as Scripture says."[§] ³⁹ He was referring to the Spirit that those who trusted in him would later receive. The Spirit hadn't been given yet because Jesus hadn't yet been glorified.

⁴⁰ When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This man is definitely the Prophet!"^{*} ⁴¹ Others said, "He is the Messiah!" Still others said, "How can the Messiah come from Galilee? ⁴² Doesn't Scripture say that the Messiah comes from David's lineage, and from David's home town of Bethlehem?"[†] ⁴³ So the crowd had a strong difference of opinion about him. ⁴⁴ Some wanted to arrest him, but nobody laid a hand on him.

⁴⁵ Then the guards returned to the chief priests and the Pharisees who asked them, "Why didn't you bring him in?"

⁴⁶ "Nobody ever spoke like this man does," the guards replied.

⁴⁷ "Have you been fooled too?" the Pharisees asked them. ⁴⁸ "Has a single one of the rulers or Pharisees believed in him? No! ⁴⁹ But this crowd that knows nothing about teachings of the law—they're damned anyway!"

[‡] **7:35** Literally, "Greeks." **§ 7:38** The closest reference appears to be Song of Songs 4:15.

^{*} **7:40** See 6:14. [†] **7:42** Referring to Micah 5:2.

⁵⁰ Nicodemus, who had previously gone to meet Jesus, was one of them and asked them, ⁵¹ “Does our law condemn a man without a hearing and without finding out what he actually did?”

⁵² “So you’re a Galilean as well, are you?” they replied. “Check the Scriptures and you’ll discover that no prophet comes from Galilee!”

⁵³ Then they all went home,‡

8

¹ but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ² Early in the morning he returned to the Temple where many people gathered around him and he sat down and taught them. ³ The religious teachers and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught committing adultery and made her stand before everyone.

⁴ They said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. What do you say?” ⁶ They said this to try and trap Jesus so they could condemn him. But Jesus bent down and wrote on the ground with his finger.

⁷ They kept on demanding an answer, so he stood up and told them, “Whichever one of you has never sinned may throw the first stone at her.” ⁸ Then he bent down again and went on writing on the ground.

⁹ When they heard this they began to leave, one by one, starting with the oldest until Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman still standing there. ¹⁰ Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Where are they? Didn’t anybody stay to condemn you?”

¹¹ “No one did, sir,” she replied.

“I don’t condemn you either,” Jesus told her. “Go, and don’t sin anymore.”

¹² Jesus spoke again to the people, telling them, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me you won’t walk in darkness for you will have the life-giving light.”

¹³ The Pharisees replied, “You can’t be your own witness!* What you say doesn’t prove anything!”

¹⁴ “Even if I am my own witness, my testimony is true,” Jesus told them, “for I know where I came from and where I’m going. But you don’t know where I came from or where I’m going. ¹⁵ You judge in a typically human way, but I don’t judge anyone. ¹⁶ Even if I did judge, my judgment would be right because I am not doing this alone. The Father who sent me is with me. ¹⁷ Your own law states† that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. ¹⁸ I am my own witness, and my other witness is my Father who sent me.”

¹⁹ “Where is your father?” they asked him.

“You don’t know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me then you would know my Father as well.” ²⁰ Jesus explained this while he was teaching near the Temple treasury. Yet no one arrested him because his time had not yet come.

‡ **7:53** This section (7:53-8:11) does not appear in this location in all manuscripts. However, it surely represents an authentic account. * **8:13** Or “you’re just making claims about yourself!” † **8:17** See Deuteronomy 17:6 and Deuteronomy 19:15.

²¹ Jesus told them again, "I'm leaving, and you'll search for me, but you'll die in your sin. You can't come where I'm going."

²² The Jews wondered out loud, "Is he going to kill himself? Is that what he means when he says 'You can't come where I'm going'?"

²³ Jesus told them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴ That is why I told you that you'll die in your sins. For if you don't trust in me, the 'I am,' you'll die in your sins."

²⁵ Then they asked him, "Who are you?"

"Exactly who I told you I was from the beginning," Jesus replied.

²⁶ "There's much I could say about you, and much I could condemn. But the one who sent me tells the truth, and what I'm saying to you here in this world is what I heard from him."

²⁷ They didn't understand that he was talking to them about the Father. So Jesus explained to them:

²⁸ "When you have lifted up the Son of man then you'll know that I am the 'I am,' and that I do nothing of myself, but only say what the Father taught me. ²⁹ The one who sent me is with me; he has not abandoned me, for I always do what pleases him." ³⁰ Many who heard Jesus say these things put their trust in him.

³¹ Then Jesus said to those Jews who trusted in him, "If you follow my teaching then you really are my disciples. ³² You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

³³ "We're descendants of Abraham! We've never been slaves to anyone," they answered. "How can you say that we'll be set free?"

³⁴ Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin. ³⁵ A slave doesn't have a permanent place in the family, but the son is part of the family forever. ³⁶ If the Son sets you free, then you're truly free. ³⁷ I know you're Abraham's descendants, yet you're trying to kill me because you refuse to accept my words. ³⁸ I'm telling you what the Father has revealed to me,[‡] while you do what your father told you."

³⁹ "Abraham is our father," they answered.

"If you really were children of Abraham, you'd do what Abraham did," Jesus told them. ⁴⁰ "But you are trying to kill me now, because I told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham would never have done that. ⁴¹ You're doing what your father does."

"Well *we*[§] are not illegitimate," they responded. "God alone is our father!"

⁴² Jesus replied, "If God really was your father, you would love me. I came from God and now I am here. The decision to come wasn't mine, but the one who sent me. ⁴³ Why can't you understand what I'm saying? It's because you refuse to hear my message! ⁴⁴ Your father is the Devil, and you love to follow your father's evil desires. He was a murderer from the beginning. He never stood for the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies he reveals his true character, for he's a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ So because I tell you the truth, you don't believe me! ⁴⁶ Can any one of you prove that I'm guilty of sin?"

[‡] **8:38** Or "what I have seen with the Father." **§ 8:41** The word in the original is emphasized, implying that while they were not illegitimate, Jesus was.

If I'm telling you the truth, why don't you believe me? ⁴⁷ Anyone who belongs to God listens to what God says. The reason you don't listen is because you don't belong to God."

⁴⁸ "Aren't we right to call you a Samaritan who is demon-possessed?" said the Jews.

⁴⁹ "No, I don't have a demon," Jesus replied. "I honor my Father, but you dishonor me. ⁵⁰ I'm not here looking to glorify myself. But there is one who does this for me and who judges in my favor. ⁵¹ I tell you the truth, anyone who follows my teaching will never die."

⁵² "Now we know you're demon-possessed," said the Jews. "Abraham died, and the prophets did too, and you're telling us 'anyone who follows my teaching will never die'! ⁵³ Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and the prophets died. Who do you think you are?"

⁵⁴ Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. But it is God himself who glorifies me, the one you claim, 'He is our God.' ⁵⁵ You don't know him, but I know him. If I were to say, 'I don't know him,' I'd be a liar, just like you. But I do know him, and I do what he says. ⁵⁶ Your father Abraham was delighted as he looked forward to see my coming, and was so happy when he saw it."

⁵⁷ The Jews replied, "You're not even fifty years old, and you've seen Abraham?"

⁵⁸ "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I am,"* said Jesus.

⁵⁹ At this they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus was hidden from them and he left the Temple.

9

¹ As Jesus was passing by, he saw a man born blind. ² His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, why was this man born blind? Was it him who sinned, or was it his parents?"

³ Jesus replied, "It wasn't because the man or his parents sinned. But so that what God can do may be shown in his life, ⁴ we have to keep on doing the work of the one who sent me as long as it is still daytime. The night is coming when no one can work. ⁵ While I'm here in the world I am the light of the world."

⁶ After he'd said this, Jesus spat on the ground and made some mud with the saliva which he put on the man's eyes. ⁷ Then Jesus told him, "Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam" (which means "sent"). So the man went and washed, and when he went home he could see.

⁸ His neighbors and those who had known him as a beggar, asked, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹ Some said he was, while others said "no, it's just someone who looks like him." But the man kept saying, "It is me!"

¹⁰ "So how is it you can see?" they asked him.

¹¹ He replied, "A man called Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes and told me, 'Go and wash yourself in the Pool of Siloam.' So I went and washed, and now I can see."

* **8:58** Literally, "Before Abraham was, I am." Once again Jesus uses the name of God himself given in Exodus 3:14. That the significance is not lost on his hearers is shown in their reaction of wanting to stone him for blasphemy.

¹² "Where is he?" they asked.

"I don't know," he replied.

¹³ They took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. ¹⁴ Now it was the Sabbath when Jesus had made the mud and opened the blind man's eyes. ¹⁵ So the Pharisees also asked him how he could see. He told them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see."

¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, "The man who did this can't be from God because he doesn't keep the Sabbath." But others wondered, "How could a sinner do such miracles?" So they were divided in their opinion.

¹⁷ So they went on questioning the man. "What's your opinion about him, then, since it's your eyes he opened," they asked.

"He's surely a prophet," the man replied.

¹⁸ The Jewish leaders still refused to believe that the man who had been blind could now see until they had called in the man's parents.

¹⁹ They asked them, "Is this your son whom you say was born blind? So how is it that now he can see?"

²⁰ His parents answered, "We know this is our son who was born blind. ²¹ But we've no idea how he can see now, or who healed him. Why don't you ask him, he's old enough. He can speak for himself."

²² The reason his parents said this was because they were afraid of what the Jewish leaders would do. The Jewish leaders had already announced that anyone who declared that Jesus was the Messiah would be thrown out of the synagogue. ²³ That was why his parents said, "Ask him, he's old enough."

²⁴ Once more they called in the man who had been blind, and told him, "Give God the glory! We know this man is a sinner."

²⁵ The man replied, "Whether he's a sinner or not, I don't know. All I know is that I was blind and now I can see."

²⁶ Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

²⁷ The man replied, "I already told you. Weren't you listening? Why do you want to hear it again? You don't want to become his disciples too, do you?"

²⁸ They shouted abuse at him, and said, "You're that man's disciple. ²⁹ We're disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this person, we don't even know where he comes from."

³⁰ The man answered, "That's incredible! You don't know where he comes from but he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but he does listen to anyone who worships him and does what he wants. ³² Never before in the whole of history has anyone heard of a man born blind being healed. ³³ If this man weren't from God, he could do nothing."

³⁴ "You were born totally sinful, and yet you're trying to lecture us," they replied. And they threw him out of the synagogue.

³⁵ When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he went and found the man, and asked him, "Do you trust in the Son of man?"

³⁶ The man replied, "Tell me who he is, sir, so I can put my trust in him."

³⁷ "You've already seen him. He's the one speaking with you now!" Jesus told him.

38 "I trust you, Lord!" he said, and he kneeled in worship before Jesus.

39 Then Jesus told him, "I've come into the world to bring judgment so that those who are blind may see, and those who see will become blind."

40 Some Pharisees who were there with Jesus asked him, "We're not blind too, are we?"

41 Jesus answered, "If you were blind, you wouldn't be guilty. But now that you say you see, your guilt remains."

10

1 "I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't come in through the gate of the sheepfold but climbs in some other way is a thief and a robber. 2 The one who comes in through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep respond to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. 4 After bringing them out, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they recognize his voice. 5 They won't follow strangers. In fact they run away from a stranger because they don't recognize the voice of strangers."

6 When Jesus gave this illustration those who were listening to him didn't understand what he meant. 7 So Jesus explained again, "I tell you the truth: I am the gate of the sheepfold. 8 All those who came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn't listen to them. 9 I am the gate. Anyone who comes in through me will be healed.* They will be able to come and go, and find the food they need. 10 The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. I've come to bring you life, life full to overflowing. 11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The man paid to look after the sheep is not the shepherd and he runs away when he sees the wolf coming. He abandons the sheep because they're not his, and the wolf attacks and scatters the flock 13 for the man is only working for pay and doesn't care about the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd. I know who are mine, and they know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know him. I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them too. They will listen to my voice and there will be one flock with one shepherd.

17 This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life so I may take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me; I choose to lay it down. I have the right to give it up, and I have the right to take it back. This is the command my Father gave me."

19 The Jews were again divided in their opinion about Jesus over these words. 20 Many of them said, "He's demon-possessed! He's mad! Why are you listening to him?" 21 Others said, "These aren't the words of someone who's demon-possessed. Besides, a demon can't open eyes that are blind."

22 It was winter, and the time of the Festival of Dedication in Jerusalem. 23 Jesus was walking in the Temple through Solomon's

* 10:9 Or "saved."

porch. The Jews surrounded him, asking, ²⁴ “How long are you going to keep us hanging in suspense?[†] If you are the Messiah then tell us plainly!”

²⁵ Jesus replied, “I already told you but you refuse to believe it. The miracles I do in my Father’s name prove who I am. ²⁶ You don’t believe me because you are not my sheep. ²⁷ My sheep recognize my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life; they shall never be lost, and no one can snatch them from me.[‡] ²⁹ My Father who gave them to me is greater than anyone else; no one can snatch them from him. ³⁰ I and the Father are one.”

³¹ Once again the Jews picked up stones to stone him.

³² Jesus said to them, “You’ve seen many good deeds that I’ve done from the Father. Which one are you stoning me for?”

³³ The Jews replied, “We’re not stoning you for a good deed, but for blasphemy because you are just a man but you’re claiming to be God.”

³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Isn’t it written in your law, ‘I said, you are gods’?[§] ³⁵ He called those people ‘gods,’ the people to whom the word of God came—and Scripture can’t be altered. ³⁶ So why are you saying the one whom the Father set apart and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said ‘I am the Son of God’? ³⁷ If I’m not doing what my Father does, then don’t believe me. ³⁸ But if that is what I’m doing, even though you don’t believe me, you should believe because of the evidence of what I’ve done. That way you can know and understand that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father.”

³⁹ Once again they tried to arrest him, but he escaped from them. ⁴⁰ He went back across the Jordan River to the place where John had begun baptizing, and he stayed there. ⁴¹ Many people came to him, and they said, “John didn’t perform miracles, but everything he said about this man has come true.” ⁴² Many who were there put their trust in Jesus.

11

¹ A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters* Mary and Martha. ² Mary was the one who had anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair. It was her brother Lazarus who was sick. ³ So the sisters sent a message to Jesus: “Lord, your close friend is sick.” ⁴ When Jesus heard the news he said, “The end result of this sickness will not be death. Through this God’s glory will be revealed so that the Son of God may be glorified.”

⁵ Even though Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, ⁶ and had heard that Lazarus was sick, he remained where he was for two more days. ⁷ Then he told the disciples, “Let’s return to Judea.”

⁸ The disciples replied, “Rabbi, just a few days ago the Jews were trying to stone you. Do you really want to go back there now?”

[†] **10:24** A colloquial expression that is literally “lift up our souls,” and means creating a position of uncertainty. [‡] **10:28** Literally, “out of my hand.” Similarly verse 29. [§] **10:34**

Quoting Psalms 82:6. * **11:1** In the original it states that Lazarus lived in Bethany with Mary and her sister Martha. However, in verse 2 it’s mentioned that Lazarus is Mary’s brother, so their relationship is best identified at the outset.

⁹ "Aren't there twelve hours in a day?" Jesus replied. ¹⁰ "If you walk during the day you don't stumble because you can see where you're going by the light of this world. But if you walk during the night you stumble because you have no light." ¹¹ After telling them this, he said, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I'm going to go there and wake him up!"

¹² The disciples said, "Lord, if he's sleeping then he'll get better."

¹³ Jesus had been referring to the death of Lazarus, but the disciples thought he meant actual sleep.[†] ¹⁴ So Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ For your sake I'm glad I wasn't there, because now you will be able to trust in me. Let's go and see him."

¹⁶ Thomas, the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, "Let's go too so we can die with him."[‡]

¹⁷ When he arrived, Jesus learned that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Bethany was just two miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many Jews had come to console Mary and Martha at the loss of their brother. ²⁰ When Martha found out that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you'd been here, my brother wouldn't have died. ²² But I'm certain that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

²³ Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again."

²⁴ "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day," Martha answered.

²⁵ Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who trust in me will live, even though they die. ²⁶ All who live in me and trust in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

²⁷ "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one expected to come to this world."

²⁸ When she had said this, she went and told her sister Mary in private, "The Teacher's here, and asking to see you."

²⁹ As soon as she heard, Mary quickly got up and went to see him. ³⁰ Jesus hadn't arrived in the village yet. He was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ The Jews who had been comforting Mary in the home saw how she'd got up quickly and left. So they followed her, thinking she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³² When Mary arrived at the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you'd been here, my brother wouldn't have died."

³³ When Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with her crying as well, he was very troubled[§] and upset. ³⁴ "Where have you laid him?" he asked.

They replied, "Lord, come and see."

³⁵ Then Jesus cried too. ³⁶ "See how much he loved him," the Jews said.

³⁷ But some of them said, "If he could open the eyes of a blind man, couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?"

³⁸ Very troubled, Jesus went to the tomb. It was a cave with a large stone placed at the entrance.

[†] **11:13** In the New Testament sleep often represents death. [‡] **11:16** Meaning Jesus.

[§] **11:33** The word used here expresses intense emotion, even anger. Also used in verse 38.

³⁹ "Remove the stone," Jesus told them.

But Martha, the dead man's sister, said, "Lord, by now there will be a terrible smell, for he's been dead for four days."

⁴⁰ "Didn't I tell you that if you trusted me you would see God's glory?" Jesus replied.

⁴¹ So they removed the stone. Jesus looked heavenwards, and said, "Father, thank you for listening to me. ⁴² I know you always listen to me. I said this because of the crowd standing here so that they will believe that you sent me."

⁴³ After saying this, Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!"

⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of linen, and with a cloth around his face.

"Unbind him and set him free," Jesus told them.

⁴⁵ Consequently many of the Jews who had come to comfort Mary and who saw what Jesus did put their trust in him. ⁴⁶ But others went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the ruling council. "What shall we do?" they asked. "This man is doing many miracles. ⁴⁸ If we allow him to continue, everybody will believe in him, and then the Romans will destroy both the Temple and our status as a nation."*

⁴⁹ "You don't understand anything!" said Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. ⁵⁰ "Can't you see that it's better for you that one man die for the people so that the whole nation won't be destroyed?" ⁵¹ He didn't say this on his own behalf, but as chief priest that year he was prophesying that Jesus would die for the nation. ⁵² And this was not just for the Jewish nation, but for all the scattered children of God so that they might be gathered together and be made into one.

⁵³ From that time on they plotted how they might kill Jesus. ⁵⁴ So Jesus did not travel openly among the Jews but went to a town called Ephraim in the region near the desert and stayed there with his disciples.

⁵⁵ It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover, and many people went from the countryside to Jerusalem to purify[†] themselves for the Passover. ⁵⁶ People were looking for Jesus and talking about him as they stood in the Temple. "What do you think?" they asked each other. "Isn't he coming to the festival?" ⁵⁷ The chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who knew where Jesus was should report it so they could arrest him.

12

¹ Six days before the Passover Jesus went to Bethany, to the home of Lazarus who had been raised from the dead. ² There a dinner was arranged in his honor. Martha helped serve the food while Lazarus sat at the table with Jesus and the others guests. ³ Mary brought a pint* of pure nard perfume and anointed Jesus' feet, wiping them dry with her hair. The scent of the perfume filled the whole house.

* **11:48** Literally, "the place and the nation." † **11:55** By a series of religious rituals. * **12:3** A *litra*, about 12 ounces, or half a liter.

⁴ But one of the disciples, Judas Iscariot, who would later betray Jesus, asked, ⁵ “Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth three hundred denarii.”[†]

⁶ He wasn’t saying this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief. He was the one who looked after the disciples’ money and he often took some for himself.

⁷ “Don’t criticize her,”[‡] Jesus replied. “She did this in preparation for the day of my burial. ⁸ You’ll always have the poor here with you,[§] but you won’t always have me here.”

⁹ A large crowd had found out that he was there. They came there not just to see Jesus but because they wanted to see Lazarus, the man Jesus had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ So the chief priests planned to kill Lazarus as well, ¹¹ since it was because of him that many Jews were no longer following them but putting their trust in Jesus.

¹² The following day the crowds of people who had come for the Passover festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. ¹³ They cut off palm branches and went to welcome him, shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is the one coming in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the king of Israel.”^{*}

¹⁴ Jesus found a young donkey and rode on it, as Scripture says: ¹⁵ “Don’t be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, riding a donkey’s colt.”[†] ¹⁶ At the time, Jesus’ disciples did not understand what these things meant. It was only later when he was glorified[‡] that they realized what had happened had been prophesied and applied to him.

¹⁷ Many in the crowd had seen Jesus call Lazarus from the tomb and raise him from the dead and were telling the story. ¹⁸ That was the reason so many people went to meet Jesus—because they had heard about this miracle.

¹⁹ The Pharisees said to one other, “Look, we’re getting nowhere. Everyone’s running after him.”

²⁰ Now some Greeks had come to the festival to worship. ²¹ They came to Philip of Bethsaida in Galilee, and said, “Sir, we’d like to see Jesus.” ²² Philip went and told Andrew. Then they both went to Jesus and told him.

²³ Jesus replied, “The time has come for the Son of man to be glorified. ²⁴ I tell you the truth: unless a grain of wheat is planted in the soil and dies[§], it remains just one grain. But if it dies, it produces many more grains of wheat. ²⁵ If you love your own life you will lose it, but if you don’t love your own life in this world you will keep your life forever. ²⁶ If you want to serve me you need to follow me. My servants will be where I am, and my Father will honor anyone who serves for me.

²⁷ Now I am troubled. What should I say? ‘Father, save me from this coming time of suffering?’^{*} No, for this is why I came—to go through this time of suffering. ²⁸ Father, show the glory of your character.”[†]

[†] **12:5** About a year’s wages at one *denarius* per day. [‡] **12:7** Or “leave her alone.” **§** **12:8** See Deuteronomy 15:11. ^{*} **12:13** Quoting Psalms 118:26. [†] **12:15** Quoting Zechariah 9:9. [‡] **12:16** Glorified: in his resurrection and ascension. **§** **12:24** Meaning that it looks like it dies. ^{*} **12:27** Literally, “this hour.” [†] **12:28** Or “name.” Name is synonymous with character.

A voice came from heaven, saying, "I have shown its glory, and I will show it again." ²⁹ The crowd that was standing there heard it. Some said it thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

³⁰ Jesus told them, "This voice spoke not for my sake, but for yours. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the prince of this world will be thrown out. ³² But when I am lifted up from the earth I will attract everyone to me." ³³ (He said this to point out the kind of death he was going to die.)

³⁴ The crowd responded, "The Law[‡] tells us that the Messiah will live forever, so how can you say the Son of man must be 'lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of man'?"

³⁵ Jesus replied, "The light is here with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light so that the darkness doesn't overtake you. Those who walk in the dark don't know where they're going. ³⁶ Put your trust in the light while you still have it so that you can become children of light." When Jesus had told them this, he left and hid himself from them.

³⁷ But despite all the miracles he had done in their presence, they still did not trust in Jesus. ³⁸ This fulfilled the message of Isaiah the prophet who said, "Lord, who has believed what we told them? To whom has the Lord's power been revealed?"[§]

³⁹ They were not able to trust him, and as a result they fulfilled what Isaiah also said: ⁴⁰ "He blinded their eyes, and made their minds dull, so that their eyes would not see, and their minds would not think, and they would not turn to me—for if they did I would heal them."^{*}

⁴¹ Isaiah saw Jesus' glory and said this in reference to him.

⁴² Even so many of the leaders did trust in him. However, they did not openly admit it because they did not want the Pharisees to expel them from the synagogue, ⁴³ loving human admiration more than God's approval.

⁴⁴ Jesus called out, "If you trust in me you're not just trusting in me but also in the one who sent me. ⁴⁵ When you see me, you're seeing the one who sent me. ⁴⁶ I have come as a light shining into the world, so if you trust in me you won't remain in the dark. ⁴⁷ I don't judge anyone who hears my words but doesn't do what I say. I came to save the world, not to judge it. ⁴⁸ Anyone who rejects me and does not accept my words will be judged at the end-time judgment in accordance with what I have said. ⁴⁹ For I'm not speaking for myself but for my Father who sent me. He is the one who instructed me what to say and how to say it. ⁵⁰ I know that what he told me to say brings eternal life—so whatever I say is what the Father told me."

13

¹ It was the day before the Passover festival, and Jesus knew that the time had come to leave this world and go to his Father. He had loved those in the world who were his own, and he now demonstrated his complete and utter love for them. ² It was during supper, and the

[‡] 12:34 Referring to what we call the Old Testament. [§] 12:38 Quoting Isaiah 53:1. ^{*} 12:40 Quoting Isaiah 6:10.

devil had already put the thought of betraying Jesus into the mind of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had placed everything under his authority,* and that he had come from God and was going back to God. ⁴ So Jesus stood up from eating supper; took off his robe and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵ He poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had wrapped around him. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who asked him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷ Jesus replied, "You won't realize what I'm doing for you now. But one day you'll understand."

⁸ "No!" Peter protested. "You'll never wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "If I don't wash you, you have no part with me."

⁹ "Then, Lord, wash not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Simon Peter exclaimed.

¹⁰ Jesus responded, "Those who have had a bath only need to wash their feet and then they're clean all over. You are clean—but not all of you." ¹¹ For he knew who was going to betray him. That's why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

¹² After Jesus had washed their feet, he put his robe back on, and sat down. "Do you understand what I've done to you?" he asked them.

¹³ "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that's who I am.

¹⁴ So if I, your Teacher and Lord, washed your feet, you ought to wash

one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example, so you should do just

as I did. ¹⁶ I tell you the truth, servants are not more important than

their master, and the one sent is not greater than the sender. ¹⁷ Now

that you understand these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

¹⁸ I'm not talking about all of you—I know those I have chosen. But

this is to fulfill Scripture: 'The one who shares my food has turned

against me.'[†] ¹⁹ I'm telling you this now, before it happens, so when it

does happen you will be convinced that I am who I am. ²⁰ I tell you the

truth, whoever welcomes anyone I send welcomes me; and whoever

welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me."

²¹ After he had said this, Jesus was deeply troubled, and declared: "I

tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me." ²² The disciples

looked at each other, wondering which of them Jesus was talking about.

²³ The disciple whom Jesus loved[‡] was sitting next to Jesus at the table,

leaning close him. ²⁴ Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus which

one he was talking about. ²⁵ So he leaned over to Jesus and asked,

"Lord, who is it?"

²⁶ Jesus replied, "It's the one to whom I will give a piece of bread

after I have dipped it." ²⁷ After dipping the piece of bread, he gave it

to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. Once Judas had taken the bread, Satan

entered him. "What you're going to do, do it quickly," Jesus told him.

²⁸ No one at the table understood what Jesus meant by this. ²⁹ Since

Judas was in charge of the money some of them thought that Jesus was

telling him to go and buy what was needed for the Passover festival,

or to donate something to the poor. ³⁰ Judas left immediately after he'd

taken the piece of bread, and went out into the night.

* **13:3** Literally, "into his hands." † **13:18** Quoting Psalms 41:9. ‡ **13:23** Usually understood as John referring to himself. (See also 20:2, 21:7, 21:20.)

³¹ After he'd left, Jesus said, "Now the Son of man is glorified, and through him God is glorified. ³² If God is glorified through him, then God will glorify the Son himself, and will glorify him immediately. ³³ My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. You will look for me, but I'm telling you now just as I told the Jews: you cannot come where I'm going.

³⁴ I am giving you a new command: Love one another. Love one another in the same way I have loved you. ³⁵ If you love one another you will prove to everyone that you are my disciples."

³⁶ Simon Peter asked him, "Where are you going, Lord?" Jesus answered, "You can't follow me now where I'm going. You will follow me later."

³⁷ "Lord, why can't I follow you now?" Peter asked. "I'll lay down my life for you."

³⁸ "Are you really ready to die for me? I tell you the truth: before the cock crows you will deny me three times," Jesus replied.

14

¹ "Don't let your minds be anxious. Trust in God, trust in me as well. ² In my Father's house there are many rooms. If this wasn't so I would have told you. I'm going to prepare a place for you. ³ Once I've gone and prepared a place for you, I will come again and take you back with me, so that you can be there with me too. ⁴ You know the way to where I'm going."

⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you're going. How can we know the way?"

⁶ Jesus replied, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had known me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and you have seen him."

⁸ Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we'll be convinced."

⁹ Jesus replied, "Have I been with you such a long time, Philip, and yet you still don't know me? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" ¹⁰ Don't you believe that I live in the Father and the Father lives in me? The words I speak are not mine; it's the Father living in me who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I tell you that I live in the Father, and the Father lives in me, or at least believe because of the evidence provided by all that I've done.

¹² I tell you the truth, anyone who trusts in me will do the same things I am doing. In fact they will do even greater things[†] because I am going to the Father. ¹³ I'll do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified through the Son. ¹⁴ Whatever you ask for in my name, I will do it.

¹⁵ If you love me, you will keep my commands. ¹⁶ I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Comforter,[‡] ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth,

* **14:1** Or "You trust in God, trust in me too." † **14:12** Greater in extent. ‡ **14:16** Comforter. The word in the original (transliterated into English as "Paraclete") refers to one who is called to "come alongside" and help. See also 14:26, 15:26, 16:7, and 1 John 2:1.

who will always be with you. The world cannot accept him because it isn't looking for him and does not know him. But you know him because he lives with you and will be in you.

¹⁸ I will not abandon you like orphans: I will come back to you. ¹⁹ Soon the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you will live too. ²⁰ On that day[§] you will know that I live in the Father, you live in me, and I live in you. ²¹ Those who keep my commands are the ones who love me, those who love me will be loved by my Father. I will love them too, and will reveal myself to them."

²² Judas (not Iscariot) responded, "Lord, why would you reveal yourself to us and not to the world?"

²³ Jesus replied, "Those who love me will do as I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with them. ²⁴ Those who don't love me don't do what I say. These words don't come from me, they come from the Father who sent me.

²⁵ I'm explaining this to you while I'm still here with you. ²⁶ But when the Father sends the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, in my place,* he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.

²⁷ Peace I leave you; my peace I'm giving you. The peace I give you is nothing like what the world gives. Don't let your minds be anxious, and don't be afraid.

²⁸ You've heard me tell you, 'I am going away, but I will come back to you.' If you really loved me, you would be happy because I'm going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ I've explained this to you now before it happens so that when it does happen you will be convinced. ³⁰ I can't talk to you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no power to control me, ³¹ but I'm doing what my Father told me to do so that the world will know that I love the Father. Now get up. Let's go."

15

¹ "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every one of my branches that doesn't bear fruit. He prunes every branch that bears fruit so it can bear even more. ³ You are already pruned and made clean* through what I've told you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you.† Just as a branch cannot produce fruit unless it remains part of the vine, so it is for you: you cannot bear fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵ I'm the vine, you're the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit—for apart from me you can't do anything. ⁶ Anyone who doesn't remain in me is like a branch that is thrown out and dries up. Such branches are gathered together, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, then you can ask for whatever you

§ 14:20 Referring to verse 18, primarily referencing his coming to them after his resurrection.

* 14:26 Literally, "in my name." This phrase can mean "with my authority," "through me," "for me," "belonging to me" etc. It really is a way of referring to the person and their character.

* 15:3 The word for pruning in this context is Literally, "to cleanse." † 15:4 Obviously the word "in" should be taken as "in connection with" as the rest of the verse makes clear.

want, and it will be given you. ⁸ My Father is glorified as you produce much fruit, proving you are my disciples.

⁹ As the Father loved me, so I have loved you. Remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you do what I say, you will remain in my love, just as I do what my Father says and remain in his love. ¹¹ I've explained this to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

¹² This is my command: love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ There is no greater love than to give your life for your friends. ¹⁴ You're my friends if you do what I tell you. ¹⁵ I don't call you servants any longer, for servants are not taken into their master's confidence.‡ I call you friends, for everything my Father told me I've explained to you. ¹⁶ You didn't choose me, I chose you. I have given you the responsibility to go and produce lasting fruit. So the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ¹⁷ This is my command to you: love one another.

¹⁸ If the world hates you, remember that it hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were part of this world, it would love you as its own. But you're not part of the world, and I chose you out of the world—that's why the world hates you.

²⁰ Remember what I told you: servants aren't more important than their master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you too. If they did what I told them, they will do what you tell them too. ²¹ But everything they do to you will be because of me, for they don't know the one who sent me. ²² If I hadn't come and spoken to them, they wouldn't be guilty of sin—but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ Anyone who hates me hates my Father as well. ²⁴ If I had not given them such a demonstration through things that no one had ever done before, they wouldn't be guilty of sin, but despite seeing all this they hated both me and my Father. ²⁵ But this just fulfilled what Scripture says, "They hated me for no reason at all."§

²⁶ But I will send you the Comforter from the Father. When he comes, he will give evidence about me. He is the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father. ²⁷ You will also give evidence about me because you were with me from the beginning.

16

¹ I've told you this so you won't give up your trust in me. ² They will expel you from the synagogues—in fact the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing God a service. ³ They'll do this because they have never known the Father or me. I've told you this so that when these things happen, you'll remember what I told you. ⁴ I didn't need to tell you this right at the beginning because I was going to be with you. ⁵ But now I'm going to the one who sent me, and yet not one of you is asking me, "Where are you going?" ⁶ Of course, now that I've told you, you're full of grief.

⁷ But I'm telling you the truth: it's better for you that I go away, for if I don't the Comforter won't come to you. If I go away, I will send

‡ **15:15** Literally, "a servant doesn't know what his master is doing." § **15:25** Quoting Psalms 35:19 or Psalms 69:5.

him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will convince those in the world that they have wrong ideas regarding sin, about what is right, and about judgment: ⁹ Sin, for they don't trust in me. ¹⁰ What is right, for I'm going to the Father and you won't see me any longer. ¹¹ Judgment, for the ruler of this world has been condemned.*

¹² There's much more I want to explain to you, but you couldn't stand it now. ¹³ However, when the Spirit of truth comes, he will teach you the whole truth. He doesn't speak for himself, but he only says what he hears, and he will tell you what's going to happen. ¹⁴ He brings me glory for he teaches you whatever he receives from me. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. This is why I said that the Spirit teaches you whatever he receives from me. ¹⁶ In a little while you won't see me anymore, but then a little while after that you will see me."

¹⁷ Some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean, 'In a little while you won't see me, but a little while after that you will see me'? and 'For I'm going to the Father'?" ¹⁸ They were asking, "What does he mean by 'in a little while'? We don't know what he's talking about."

¹⁹ Jesus realized that they wanted to ask him about this. So he asked them, "Are you wondering about my comment, 'In a little while you won't see me, but a little while after that you will see me'? ²⁰ I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will turn into joy. ²¹ A woman in labor suffers pain because her time has come, but once the baby is born, she forgets the agony because of the joy that a child has been brought into the world. ²² Yes, you're grieving now, but I will see you again; and you will rejoice, and no one can take away your joy.

²³ When that time comes you won't need to ask me for anything. I tell you the truth, the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ²⁴ Until now you haven't asked for anything in my name, so ask and you shall receive, and your happiness will be complete. ²⁵ I've been talking to you using picture language. But soon I won't use such picture language any more when I speak to you. Instead I'll explain the Father to you very plainly.

²⁶ At that time you will ask in my name. I'm not saying to you that I will plead with the Father on your behalf, ²⁷ for the Father himself loves you—because you love me and believe that I came from God. ²⁸ I left the Father and came into the world; now I leave the world and return to my Father."

²⁹ Then the disciples said, "Now you're talking very plainly and not using picture language. ³⁰ Now we're certain that you know everything, and that in order to know what questions people are thinking you don't need to ask them.† This convinces us that you came from God."

³¹ "Are you really convinced now?" Jesus asked. ³² "The time is coming—in fact it's just about to happen—when you will be scattered, each of you to your own homes, leaving me all alone. But I'm not really alone, for the Father is with me. ³³ I've told you all this so that you may have peace because you are one with me.‡ You will suffer in

* **16:11** Or "judged." † **16:30** Referring back to what happened in 16:19. ‡ **16:33** Literally, "peace in me."

this world, but be brave—I have defeated the world!”

17

¹ When Jesus finished saying this he looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you. ² For you gave him authority over all people so that he might give eternal life to all those you have given to him. ³ Eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you sent. ⁴ I have brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ Now Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the beginning of the world.

⁶ I have revealed your character* to those you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you; you gave them to me; and they have done what you said. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸ I have given them the message that you gave me. They accepted it, completely convinced that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. ⁹ I’m praying for them—not for the world, but for those you gave me, for they belong to you. ¹⁰ All who belong to me are yours, and those who belong to you are mine, and I have been glorified through them.

¹¹ I am leaving the world, but they will remain in the world; I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name, the name that you gave to me, so that they may be one, just as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you gave to me. I watched over them so that no one was lost except the ‘son of the lost,’ so Scripture was fulfilled.

¹³ Now I’m coming to you, and I say these things while I am still here in the world so they may share completely in my joy. ¹⁴ I gave them your message, and the world hated them because they are not of the world, just as I’m not of the world. ¹⁵ I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but for you to protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I’m not of the world. ¹⁷ Make them holy by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ Just as you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ I dedicate† myself for them so that they may also be truly holy.

²⁰ I’m not only praying for them, I’m also praying for those who trust in me because of their message. ²¹ I pray that they all may be one, just as you, Father, live in me, and I live in you, so that they too may live in us so that the world will believe you did send me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, so that they may be one, just as we are one. ²³ I live in them, and you live in me. May they be completely one, so the whole world will know that you did send me, and that you love them, just as you love me.

²⁴ Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so they can see the glory which you gave to me—for you loved me before the world was created. ²⁵ Good Father,‡ the world does not know you, but I know you, and these here with me know that you sent

* **17:6** Or “name.” † **17:19** “Dedicate”: this is the same word translated “make holy” in verse 17. ‡ **17:25** Literally, “Father Right.”

me. ²⁶ I have revealed your character to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love you have for me will be in them, and I will live in them.”

18

¹ After Jesus had finished speaking, he and his disciples crossed over the Kidron brook and went into an olive grove. ² Judas the betrayer knew the place, for Jesus had often gone there with his disciples. ³ So Judas took with him a troop of soldiers together with guards from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They arrived there carrying torches, lanterns, and weapons.

⁴ Jesus knew everything that was going to happen to him. He went to meet them, and asked, “Who are you looking for?”

⁵ “Are you Jesus of Nazareth?” they asked.

“I am,” Jesus told them.* Judas the betrayer was standing with them.

⁶ When Jesus said “I am,” they fell back and dropped to the ground.

⁷ So he asked them again, “Who are you looking for?”

“Are you Jesus of Nazareth?” they asked again.

⁸ “I already told you I am,” Jesus replied. “So if I’m the one you’re looking for, let these others go.” ⁹ These words fulfilled what he had previously said: “I have not lost any of those you gave me.”

¹⁰ Then Simon Peter drew a sword and struck Malchus, the high priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear.

¹¹ Jesus told Peter, “Put the sword away! Do you think† I shouldn’t drink the cup the Father has given me?”

¹² Then the soldiers, their commander, and the Jewish guards arrested Jesus and tied his hands. ¹³ First they took him to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the current high priest. ¹⁴ Caiaphas was the one who had told the Jews, “It’s better that one man die for the people.”‡

¹⁵ Simon Peter followed Jesus, and another disciple did so too. This disciple was well-known to the high priest, and so he entered the high priest’s courtyard with Jesus. ¹⁶ Peter had to remain outside by the door. So the other disciple who was known to the high priest went and spoke to the servant girl watching the door and brought Peter inside. ¹⁷ The girl asked Peter, “Aren’t you one of that man’s disciples?”

“Me? No, I’m not,” he replied. ¹⁸ It was cold, and the servants and guards were standing by a fire they had made, warming themselves. Peter went and stood with them, warming himself.

¹⁹ Then the chief priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and what he had been teaching. ²⁰ “I’ve spoken openly to everyone,”§ Jesus replied. “I always taught in the synagogues and in the Temple where all the Jewish people meet. I haven’t said anything in secret. ²¹ So why are you questioning me? Ask the people who heard me what I told them. They know what I said.”

* **18:5** Jesus’ words are not only an affirmation of his identity but also echo the name of God from Exodus. † **18:11** “Do you think”—implied. ‡ **18:14** See 11:50. § **18:20** Literally, “to the world.”

²² When he said this, one of the guards standing nearby slapped Jesus, saying, "Is that any way to speak to the high priest?"

²³ Jesus replied, "If I said something wrong, tell everyone what was wrong with it. But if what I said was right, why did you hit me?"

²⁴ Annas sent him, his hands still tied, to Caiaphas the high priest.

²⁵ As Simon Peter stood warming himself by the fire, the people there asked him, "Aren't you one of his disciples?"

Peter denied it and said, "No, I'm not."

²⁶ One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked Peter, "Didn't I see you in the olive grove with him?" ²⁷ Peter denied it again, and immediately a cock crowed.

²⁸ Early in the morning they took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. The Jewish leaders* didn't enter the palace because if they did they would be ceremonially defiled, and they wanted to be able to eat the Passover meal.

²⁹ So Pilate came out to meet them. "What charge are you bringing against this man?" he asked.

³⁰ "If he wasn't a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you," they answered.

³¹ "Then you take him and judge him according to your law," Pilate told them.

"We're not permitted to execute anyone," the Jews answered. ³² This fulfilled what Jesus had said about how he would die.

³³ Pilate went back into the governor's palace. He summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

³⁴ "Did you think of this question yourself, or did others talk to you about me?" Jesus responded.

³⁵ "Am I a Jew?" Pilate countered. "It was your own people and high priests who handed you over to me. What is it that you've done?"

³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it was of this world, my subjects would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from here."

³⁷ Then Pilate asked, "So you are a king, then?"

"You say that I'm a king," Jesus replied. "The reason why I was born and I came to the world was to give evidence for the truth. All those who accept the truth pay attention to what I say."

³⁸ "What is truth?" Pilate asked.

Having said this Pilate went back out to the Jews and told them, "I find him not guilty of any crime. ³⁹ However, it is customary for me to release a prisoner to you at Passover. Do you want me to release the King of the Jews?"

⁴⁰ "No, not him! We want Barabbas instead!" they shouted back. Barabbas was a rebel.†

19

¹ Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ² Soldiers made a crown of thorns and placed it on his head, and put a purple robe on

* **18:28** Implied. † **18:40** Usually translated "robber." It may be that Barabbas had taken part in some insurrection.

him. ³ Time and again they went up to him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and slapped him.

⁴ Pilate went outside once more and said to them, "I'm bringing him out here to you so you'll know I find him not guilty of any crime."

⁵ Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. "Look, here's the man," said Pilate.

⁶ When the chief priests and the guards saw Jesus, they shouted out, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

"You take him and crucify him," Pilate answered. "I find him not guilty."

⁷ The Jewish leaders replied, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die because he claimed to be the Son of God."

⁸ When Pilate heard this he was more afraid than ever, ⁹ and he went back into the governor's palace. He asked Jesus, "Where do you come from?" But Jesus didn't respond.

¹⁰ "Are you refusing to talk to me?" Pilate said to him. "Don't you realize that I have the power to have you released or to crucify you?"

¹¹ "You would have no power over me unless it had been given to you from above," Jesus answered. "Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of the greater sin."

¹² When Pilate heard this he tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders shouted, "If you set this man free you're not Caesar's friend. Anyone who sets himself up as a king is rebelling against Caesar."

¹³ When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus outside and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called Stone Pavement (Gabbatha in Hebrew). ¹⁴ It was around noon on the preparation day before the Passover.

"Look, here is your king," he said to the Jews. ¹⁵ "Kill him! Kill him! Crucify him!" they screamed out.

"Do you want me to crucify your king?" Pilate asked.

"The only king we have is Caesar," the chief priests replied.

¹⁶ So he handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

¹⁷ They led Jesus away, who carried his own cross, and went out to the "Place of the Skull," (Golgotha in Hebrew). ¹⁸ They crucified him there, and two others with him: one on either side, with Jesus between them.

¹⁹ Pilate had a notice made and placed on the cross which said, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." ²⁰ Many people read the notice because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek.

²¹ Then the chief priests came to Pilate and asked him, "Don't write 'the King of the Jews,' but 'This man said I am the King of the Jews.'" "

²² Pilate replied, "What I have written I have written."

²³ When the soldiers had crucified Jesus they took his clothes and divided them in four so that each soldier had his share. There was also his robe, made without seams, woven in one piece. ²⁴ So they said to each other, "Let's not tear it, but let's decide who will have it by rolling dice." This fulfilled the Scripture that says, "They divided my garments among them and rolled dice for my clothing."* ²⁵ So that is what the soldiers did.

* 19:24 Quoting Psalms 22:18.

Standing near the cross was Jesus' mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene.† 26 When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Mother,‡ this is your son." 27 Then he said to the disciple, "This is your mother." From then on the disciple took her into his home.

28 Jesus now realized that he had finished all that he had come to do. In fulfillment of Scripture, he said, "I'm thirsty."§ 29 A jar of wine vinegar was standing there, so they soaked a sponge in the vinegar, put it on a hyssop stick, and held it to his lips.* 30 After he'd had the vinegar, Jesus said, "It's finished!"† Then he bowed his head and breathed his last.

31 It was preparation day, and the Jewish leaders didn't want to leave the bodies on the crosses during the Sabbath day (in fact this was a special Sabbath), so they asked Pilate to break the legs, so that the bodies could be removed. 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first one and then the other of those crucified with Jesus, 33 but when they came to Jesus they saw he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs. 34 However, one of the soldiers stuck a spear into his side, and blood mixed with water came out. 35 The one who saw this has given this evidence, and his evidence is true. He's certain that what he says is true so you can believe it too. 36 It happened like this so Scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken,"‡ 37 and as another Scripture says, "They will look at the one they pierced."§

38 After this Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate if he could take down the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave his permission. Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but in secret because he feared the Jews. So Joseph came and took the body away. 39 He was joined by Nicodemus, the man who had first visited Jesus at night. He brought with him a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about seventy-five pounds. 40 They took Jesus' body and wrapped it in linen cloth together with the mixture of spices, in accordance with Jewish burial customs. There was a garden near where Jesus was crucified; 41 and in the garden was a new, unused tomb. 42 Since it was the Jewish day of preparation and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus to rest there.

20

1 Early on the first day of the week,* while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been moved from the entrance. 2 So she ran to tell Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, "They've taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they've put him." 3 Then Peter and the other disciple went to the tomb. 4 The two of them were running together,

† 19:25 It is not clear whether there were three women present or four. Some believe Mary's sister is the same person as Mary, wife of Clopas. ‡ 19:26 Literally, "woman," but this does not work in English. § 19:28 Quoting Psalms 69:21. * 19:29 See Psalms 69:21. † 19:30 "Finished": this can also mean "completed" or "fulfilled." ‡ 19:36 Quoting Psalms 34:20. § 19:37 Referring to Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:12, or Psalms 34:20. * 20:1 That is, Sunday.

but the other disciple ran faster and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent down, and looking in he saw the grave-clothes lying there, but he didn't go in.

⁶ Then Simon Peter arrived after him and went right into the tomb. He saw the linen grave-clothes lying there, ⁷ and that the cloth that had been on Jesus' head wasn't with the other grave-clothes but had been folded and placed on its own.

⁸ Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first went inside as well. ⁹ He looked around and believed it was true[†]—for up till then they hadn't understood the Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

¹¹ But Mary stayed outside the tomb crying, and as she was crying, she bent down and looked into the tomb. ¹² She saw two angels in white, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of where Jesus' body had been lying.

¹³ "Why are you crying?" they asked her.

She answered, "Because they've taken my Lord away, and I don't know where they've put him." ¹⁴ After she'd said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she didn't realize it was Jesus.

¹⁵ "Why are you crying?" he asked her. "Who are you looking for?"

Assuming he was the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you've taken him away, tell me where you've put him so I can go and get him."

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

She turned to him and said, "Rabboni," which means "Teacher" in Hebrew.

¹⁷ "Don't hold onto me,"[‡] Jesus said to her, "for I haven't yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brothers and tell them I am ascending to my Father and your Father, my God and your God." ¹⁸ So Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples, "I've seen the Lord," and she explained to them what he had said to her.

¹⁹ That evening, on the first day of the week, as the disciples were meeting together behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "May you have peace." ²⁰ After this greeting he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were full of joy to see the Lord.

²¹ "May you have peace!" Jesus told them again. "In the same way the Father sent me, so I'm sending you." ²² Saying this, he breathed on them, and told them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you hold them unforgiven, unforgiven they remain."

²⁴ One of the twelve disciples, Thomas, who was called the Twin, wasn't with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We've seen the Lord."

But he replied, "I won't believe it unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger in them, and put my hand in his side."

²⁶ One week later the disciples were together inside the house; and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, and Jesus came and stood among them.

[†] **20:9** That Jesus had risen from the dead. [‡] **20:17** Meaning "don't detain me by holding me back."

“May you have peace!” he said. ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand in the wound on my side. Stop doubting and trust in me!”

²⁸ “My Lord and my God!” Thomas responded.

²⁹ “You trust in me because you’ve seen me,” Jesus told him. “Happy are those that haven’t seen me yet still trust in me.”

³⁰ Jesus did many other miraculous signs while he was with his disciples that are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written down here so that you may trust that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by trusting in him as he is[§] you will have life.

21

¹ Later Jesus appeared again to the disciples by the Sea of Galilee.* This is how it happened. ² Simon Peter, Thomas the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and Zebedee’s sons, and two other disciples were together.

³ “I’m going fishing,” Simon Peter said to them. “We’ll come with you,” they replied. So they left and went out in the boat, but all night they caught nothing.

⁴ When dawn came Jesus was standing on the shore, but the disciples didn’t know it was him. ⁵ Jesus called to them, “My friends, haven’t you caught anything?”

“No,” they replied.

⁶ “Throw the net out on the right side of the boat, and you’ll find some,” he told them. So they threw out the net, and they weren’t able to haul it in because it had so many fish. ⁷ The disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, “It’s the Lord.” When Peter heard it was the Lord, he put some clothes on since he was naked, and jumped into the sea. ⁸ The other disciples followed in the boat, pulling the net full of fish, because they were not far from the shore, only about a hundred yards. ⁹ Once they’d landed they saw a fire with fish cooking on it, and some bread.

¹⁰ Jesus told them, “Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught.” ¹¹ Simon Peter went aboard and pulled the net full of fish ashore. There were 153 large fish, yet even so the net hadn’t torn.

¹² “Come and eat some breakfast,” Jesus said to them. None of the disciples was brave enough to ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus took the bread and gave it to them and the fish as well. ¹⁴ This was the third time Jesus had appeared to the disciples after being raised from the dead.

¹⁵ After breakfast, Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?”†

“Yes, Lord,” he replied, “you know I love you.”

¹⁶ “Take care of my lambs,” Jesus told him. “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” he asked for the second time.

“Yes, Lord,” he answered, “you know I love you.”

§ 20:31 Literally, “in his name.” * 21:1 Literally, “Sea of Tiberias.” † 21:15 “These.” This could refer to the objects around them, meaning the fisherman’s trade, but is more likely that it refers to the other disciples. It is Peter’s love for Jesus which is in question.

¹⁷ "Look after my sheep," Jesus said to him. "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" he asked a third time.

Peter was saddened that Jesus had asked him for the third time if he loved him. "Lord, you know everything. You know I love you," Peter told him.

"Take care of my sheep," said Jesus.

¹⁸ "I tell you the truth," said Jesus, "when you were young, you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted. But when you're old, you'll hold out your hands and someone will dress you and take you where you don't want to go." ¹⁹ Jesus said this to explain the kind of death by which he would glorify God. Then he said to Peter, "Follow me."

²⁰ As Peter turned round, he saw the disciple Jesus loved following them, the one who had leaned over to Jesus during the supper and asked, "Lord, who is going to betray you?"

²¹ Peter asked Jesus, "What about him, Lord?"

²² Jesus told him, "If I want him to remain alive here until I return, why is that your concern? You follow me!"

²³ This is why the saying spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus didn't say to him that he wouldn't die, just that "If I want him to remain alive here until I return, why is that your concern?"

²⁴ This disciple confirms what happened and wrote all this down. We know that what he says is true. ²⁵ Jesus did many other things as well, and if it all was written down, I doubt the whole world could hold all the books that would be written.

Acts

¹ Dear Theophilus,* in my previous book I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning ² until the day he was taken up to heaven. This was after he'd given instructions through the Holy Spirit to his chosen apostles. ³ Over the course of forty days after the death he suffered, he showed himself to them, proving that he was alive with convincing evidence. He appeared to them, and told them about the kingdom of God. ⁴ While he was still with them[†] he instructed them, "Do not leave Jerusalem. Wait to receive what the Father promised, just as you heard it from me. ⁵ It's true that John baptized with water, but in just a few days' time you will be baptized by the Holy Spirit."

⁶ So when the disciples met with Jesus, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will re-establish Israel's kingdom?"

⁷ "You don't need to know about the dates and times that are set by the Father's authority," he told them. ⁸ "But you will be given power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest places on earth."

⁹ After Jesus had told them this, he was taken up as they were watching and a cloud hid him from their sight. ¹⁰ While they were staring intently at the sky as he ascended, two men dressed in white were suddenly standing beside them. ¹¹ "Men of Galilee, why are you standing here staring at the sky?" they asked. "This same Jesus who has been taken up from you to heaven shall come in the same way you saw him go into heaven."

¹² Then the disciples went back to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives which is about a Sabbath day's walk from Jerusalem.[‡] ¹³ When they arrived, they went upstairs to the upper room where they were staying: Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴ They all joined together in prayer, together with the women and Mary, Jesus' mother, and his brothers.

¹⁵ At this time Peter stood up and addressed a crowd of around one hundred and twenty believers who had gathered together.

¹⁶ "My brothers and sisters," he said, "The Scriptures, spoken by the Holy Spirit through David, had to be fulfilled regarding Judas, who guided those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷ He was counted as one of us, and shared in this ministry."

¹⁸ (Judas had bought a field with his ill-gotten gains. There he fell down headfirst, and his body burst apart, spilling out all his intestines. ¹⁹ Everybody who lived in Jerusalem heard about this so that the field was called in their language "Akeldama," which means, "Field of blood.") ²⁰ As it's written in the book of Psalms, "Let his home be

* **1:1** Meaning "One who loves God," either a specific person, or more generically. The "previous book" mentioned is the Gospel of Luke. [†] **1:4** Or "while he was sharing a meal with them." [‡] **1:12** In other words, a relatively short distance.

abandoned, and no-one live there;" and "Let someone else take over his position."§

²¹ "So now we have to choose someone who has been with us the whole time that Jesus was with us, ²² from the time John was baptizing up until the day Jesus was taken up to heaven from us. One of these must be chosen to join together with us as we witness, giving evidence of Jesus' resurrection." ²³ Two names were put forward: Joseph Justus, also known as Barsabbas, and Matthias. ²⁴ They prayed together and said, "Lord, you know everyone's thoughts* please show us which of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to replace Judas as an apostle in this ministry that he gave up to go to where he belongs." ²⁶ They cast lots, and Matthias was chosen. He was counted as an apostle with the other eleven.

2

¹ When the day of Pentecost came, they were all meeting together in one place. ² Suddenly a noise came from heaven like a roaring wind that filled the whole house where they were staying. ³ They saw what looked like separate tongue-shaped flames that settled on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different languages as the Spirit gave them the ability to do so.

⁵ At that time there were devout Jews from every nation on earth living in Jerusalem. ⁶ When they heard this noise, a large crowd of them gathered. They were puzzled because everyone heard their own language being spoken. ⁷ They were totally amazed, saying, "Look, these people who are speaking—aren't they all Galileans? ⁸ So how is it that we can all hear them speaking in our own mother tongue? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; people from Mesopotamia, Judaea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia; from Egypt and the area of Libya around Cyrene; visitors from Rome, both Jews and converts, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabians—we hear them speaking in our own languages about all the great things God has done."

¹² They were all amazed and confused. "What does this mean?" they asked each other. ¹³ But others jeered and said, "They've been drinking too much wine!"

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the eleven disciples and spoke in a loud voice: "Fellow Jews and everyone living here in Jerusalem: pay attention to me and I'll explain all this to you! ¹⁵ These men aren't drunk as you presume. It's only nine in the morning! ¹⁶ What's happening is what was predicted by the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ God says, 'In the last days I will pour out my Spirit on everyone. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ I will pour out my Spirit on my servants, both male and female, and they will prophesy. ¹⁹ I will also give you miraculous signs in the heavens above and on the earth below—blood, fire, and swirling smoke! ²⁰ The sun will become dark, and the moon

§ 1:20 Citing Psalms 69:25 and Psalms 109:8.

* 1:24 "You know everyone's thoughts"—literally, "heart-knower."

will become red like blood before the great and glorious day of the Lord. ²¹ But whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’*

²² People of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man confirmed by God to you by the powerful miracles and signs that God performed through him, right here among you—as you well know.

²³ God, knowing beforehand what would happen, followed his plan and resolved to hand him over to you. By means of the hands of wicked men, you killed him by nailing him to a cross. ²⁴ But God raised him back to life, freeing him from the burden of death, because death did not have the power to keep him a prisoner.

²⁵ David says of him, ‘I saw the Lord always in front of me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me. ²⁶ That’s why I’m so happy! That’s why my words are full of joy! That’s why my body lives in hope! ²⁷ For you will not abandon me in the grave,† nor will you allow your Holy One to experience decay. ²⁸ You have revealed to me the ways of life. You will fill me with joy with your presence.’‡

²⁹ My brothers and sisters, let me tell you plainly that our ancestor David died and was buried, and his tomb is here with us to this day. ³⁰ But he was a prophet, and knew that God had promised on oath to place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ David saw what would happen and spoke about the resurrection of Christ—for Christ was not abandoned to the grave nor did he experience decay.

³² God has raised this Jesus from the dead, and we’re all witnesses of that. ³³ Now he’s been exalted to God’s right hand, and has received from the Father the Holy Spirit whom he promised, and has poured out what you’re seeing and hearing. ³⁴ For David didn’t ascend into heaven, but he did say: the Lord told my Lord, ‘Sit down here at my right hand ³⁵ until I have made your enemies a stool to put your feet on.’§ ³⁶ Now let everyone in Israel be totally convinced of this: God has made this Jesus, who you killed on a cross, both Lord and Messiah!***

³⁷ When the people heard this they were conscience-stricken.† They asked Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

³⁸ “Repent!” Peter told them. “All of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ This promise is given to you, to your children, and to all who are far away—everyone the Lord our God calls.”

⁴⁰ Peter went on speaking, giving them much more evidence. He warned them, “Save yourselves from this perverted generation.”

⁴¹ Those who accepted what he’d said were baptized, adding about three thousand people to the group of believers that day.

⁴² They committed themselves to what the apostles had taught them, and to the fellowship of the believers, “breaking bread”‡ and praying together. ⁴³ Everyone was in awe, and many miracles and signs were done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together

* **2:21** Quoting Joel 2:28-32. † **2:27** Literally, “Hades,” the place of the dead. Also verse 31.

‡ **2:28** Quoting Psalms 16:8-11. § **2:35** Quoting Psalms 110:1. A sign of victory. * **2:36** Messiah (Hebrew) is equivalent to Christ (Greek). † **2:37** Literally, “cut to the heart.” ‡ **2:42** This is probably a reference to the Lord’s Supper, and not just ordinary meals, though they would also be included.

and shared everything they had. ⁴⁵ They sold their property and belongings, sharing the proceeds with everyone as they needed. ⁴⁶ Day after day they continued to meet together in the Temple, and ate together in their homes. They enjoyed their meals humbly and happily. They praised God, and everyone thought favorably of them. ⁴⁷ Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

3

¹ Peter and John were on their way up to the Temple at the time of the afternoon prayer, around 3 p.m. ² A man who had been lame from birth was being carried there. Every day he was placed beside the Temple gate called “Beautiful” so he could beg from the people going into the Temple. ³ He saw Peter and John as they were about to enter the Temple and asked them for some money. ⁴ Peter looked right at him. John did, too.

“Look at us!” Peter said. ⁵ The lame man gave them his full attention, expecting to get something from them. ⁶ “I don’t have any silver or gold,” Peter told him, “but I’ll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk!”

⁷ Peter took him by the right hand and helped him up. Right away his feet and ankles became strong. ⁸ He jumped to his feet, and then began to walk. He went with them into the Temple, walking and jumping and praising God. ⁹ Everyone there saw him walking around and praising God. ¹⁰ They recognized him as the beggar who used to sit by the Temple’s Beautiful Gate, and they were surprised and amazed at what had happened to him. ¹¹ He held on tightly to Peter and John while everyone ran to them by Solomon’s Porch* in complete astonishment at what had happened.

¹² When Peter saw this opportunity he told them, “People of Israel, why are you surprised at what’s happened to this man? Why are you staring at us as if it was by our own power or faith that we made him walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the God of our forefathers—has glorified his servant Jesus. He was the one you betrayed and rejected in the presence of Pilate, even after Pilate had decided to release him. ¹⁴ You rejected the one who is holy and good, and demanded a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵ You killed the author of life, the one God raised from the dead—and we are witnesses to this. ¹⁶ By trusting in Jesus’ name this man was healed by him. You see this man here; you know him. Through trusting in Jesus this man has received complete healing right in front of all of you.

¹⁷ Now I know, brothers and sisters, that you did this in ignorance, like your rulers. ¹⁸ But God fulfilled what he had prophesied through all the prophets: that his Messiah would suffer. ¹⁹ Now repent, and change your ways, that your sins can be wiped away, so the Lord can send opportunities for you to heal and recover, ²⁰ and send Jesus, the Messiah appointed for you. ²¹ For he must stay in heaven until the time when everything is restored, as God announced through his holy prophets long ago.

* **3:11** A section of the Temple, see also 5:12.

²² Moses said, “The Lord God will send you a prophet from among your own people who is like me. You must listen to everything he tells you.† ²³ Anybody who doesn’t listen to him will be totally removed from the people.’‡ ²⁴ All the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel on, prophesied about these days. ²⁵ You are the sons of the prophets, and of the agreement§ which God made with your fathers when he said to Abraham, ‘From your descendants all the families of the earth will be blessed.’* ²⁶ God prepared his Servant and sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your evil ways.”

4

¹ While they were talking to the people, the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and the Sadducees came up to them. ² They were angry that they were teaching the people, telling them that through Jesus there is resurrection from the dead. ³ They arrested them and placed them under guard until the following day since it was already evening. ⁴ But many who had heard the message believed it, and the total number of believers grew to about five thousand.

⁵ The next day, the rulers, elders, and religious leaders met together in Jerusalem. ⁶ They included the high priest Annas, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and others of the high priest’s family. ⁷ They brought Peter and John before them and asked, “By what power or by whose authority have you done this?”

⁸ Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, answered them. “Rulers of the people, and elders: ⁹ Are we being interrogated regarding a good deed done to a man who couldn’t help himself, and how he came to be healed? ¹⁰ If so, all of you should know, and all the people of Israel, that it was in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the one you killed on a cross and whom God raised from the dead—it’s because of him that this man stands before you completely healed. ¹¹ ‘He is the stone you builders rejected, but he has been made the chief cornerstone.’* ¹² There is no salvation in anyone else; there is no other name under heaven given to humanity that can possibly save us.”

¹³ When they saw Peter and John’s confidence, and realized they were uneducated, ordinary men, they were very surprised. They also recognized them as Jesus’ companions. ¹⁴ Since they could see the man who had been healed standing right there with them, they had nothing to say in response to what had happened.

¹⁵ So they instructed them to wait outside the council while they discussed the matter among themselves. ¹⁶ “What should we do with these men?” they asked. “We can’t deny a significant miracle has happened through them. Everybody living here in Jerusalem knows about it. ¹⁷ But to prevent it spreading among the people any further, we should threaten them never to speak to anybody in this name† again.”

† **3:22** Quoting Deuteronomy 18:15. ‡ **3:23** See Deuteronomy 18:19. § **3:25** Or “covenant.”

* **3:25** Quoting Genesis 22:18. * **4:11** Quoting Psalms 118:22. † **4:17** Clearly the name of Jesus, but they did not even want to mention the actual name...

18 So they called them back in and ordered them never to speak or teach in the name of Jesus again. 19 But Peter and John responded, “Whether it’s right in God’s eyes to obey you rather than God—you decide. 20 We can’t help talking about what we’ve seen and heard!”

21 After making more threats they let them go. They couldn’t work out how to punish them because everyone was glorifying God for what had happened. 22 For the man who received this miracle of healing was more than forty years old. 23 After the disciples had been released, they went to the other believers and told them everything the chief priests and elders had said to them. 24 When they heard what had happened, they prayed to God together:

“Lord, you made heaven and earth and sea, and everything that is in them. 25 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through David, our forefather and your servant, saying ‘Why did the people of the other nations become so angry? Why did they plot so foolishly against me? 26 The kings of the earth prepared for war;‡ the rulers united together against the Lord and against his Chosen One.’§

27 Now this has really happened right here in this city! Both Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the foreigners and the people of Israel, united together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed as Messiah. 28 They did whatever you had already decided because you had the power and the will to do it.

29 Now Lord: look at all their threats against us! Help us your servants to speak your word really boldly. 30 As you exercise your power to heal, may signs and miracles be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus!”

31 When they had finished praying, the building they were meeting in was shaken. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoke the word of God boldly. 32 All the believers thought and felt the same way. None of them claimed anything they had as their own, but shared everything with each other. 33 The apostles gave their testimony regarding the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with tremendous power, and God greatly blessed them all. 34 None of them needed anything because those who had lands or properties sold them. 35 They took the proceeds and presented them to the apostles to be shared with those in need. 36 Joseph, the one the apostles called Barnabas (meaning “son of encouragement”), was a Levite, a Cypriot national. 37 He sold a field that belonged to him. Then he brought the money and presented it to the apostles.

5

1 Now a man called Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold some property. 2 He kept back some of the money he received for himself, and brought the rest to present to the apostles. His wife knew what he was doing.

3 Then Peter asked him, “Ananias, why did you let Satan convince you to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back some of the money from

‡ 4:26 “For war,” implied. § 4:26 Literally, “Anointed.” The quote is from Psalms 2:1-2.

the land you sold? ⁴ While you had the land, didn't it belong to you? And after you sold it, didn't you still have control over what you did with the money? Why did you decide to do this? You haven't lied to human beings, but to God!"

⁵ Hearing these words, Ananias fell down and died. Everyone who heard what happened was terrified. ⁶ Some of the young men got up and wrapped him in a shroud. Then they carried him out and buried him.

⁷ About three hours later his wife arrived, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ Peter asked her, "Tell me, did you sell the land for this price?"

"Yes, that was the price," she replied.

⁹ Then Peter told her, "How could you agree together to swindle* the Spirit of the Lord? Look, those who buried your husband are just returning, and they'll carry you out too!"

¹⁰ Immediately she fell down dead at his feet. The young men came back in and found her dead, so they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹ Great fear spread through the whole church, as well as among everyone who heard what had happened.

¹² Many miraculous signs were performed among the people by the apostles. All the believers used to meet together in Solomon's porch.†

¹³ Nobody else dared to join them even though they were greatly respected. ¹⁴ However, many men and women came to believe in the Lord. ¹⁵ As a result, people brought those who were sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that as Peter passed by his shadow might fall on them.‡ ¹⁶ Crowds from the towns around Jerusalem brought their sick and those afflicted by evil spirits. They were all healed.

¹⁷ However, the high priest and those with him (who were Sadducees) became very jealous and decided to intervene. ¹⁸ They arrested the apostles and threw them in the public jail. ¹⁹ But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and led them out. ²⁰ "Go to the Temple and tell the people everything about this new way of life!" he told them. ²¹ They did as they were told and went into the Temple at around dawn and began teaching.

Then the high priest and his followers called a council meeting with all the leaders of Israel. He sent for the apostles to be brought from prison. ²² But when the officials went to the prison they couldn't find the apostles so they went back and told the council, ²³ "We found the prison all locked up, with guards at the doors. But when we had them open up, we couldn't find anyone inside."

²⁴ Now when the captain of the Temple guards and the chief priests heard this they were totally baffled, and wondered what was going on. ²⁵ Then someone came in and said, "Look, the men you put in prison are right there in the Temple teaching people!"

²⁶ So the captain went with his guards and brought them in, but did not use force because they were afraid that the people would stone

* 5:9 Literally, "tempt." † 5:12 See footnote for 3:11. ‡ 5:15 With the thought that even the touch of Peter's shadow could heal.

them. ²⁷ The apostles were brought in and made to stand in front of the council.

²⁸ “Didn’t we order you not to teach in this name?” the high priest demanded to know. “Now look—you’ve filled the whole of Jerusalem with your teaching, and you’re trying to blame us for his death!”

²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, “We have to obey God rather than men. ³⁰ The God of our forefathers raised Jesus from the dead—the one you killed by hanging him on a cross. ³¹ God exalted him to a position of honor at his right hand as Prince and Savior, as a way to bring repentance to Israel, and for the forgiveness of sins. ³² We are witnesses of what happened, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

³³ When the council heard this they were furious and wanted to kill them. ³⁴ But then one of the council members stood up to speak. He was Gamaliel, a Pharisee and a doctor of law who was respected by everyone. He ordered the apostles sent out for a short while.

³⁵ Gamaliel addressed the council: “Leaders of Israel, be careful what you plan to do to these men. ³⁶ Some time ago Theudas tried to make a name for himself, and about four hundred men joined him. He was killed and all who followed him were scattered and it came to nothing. ³⁷ Then after him Judas of Galilee came along at the time of the census, and he attracted some followers. He also died, and those who listened to him were dispersed. ³⁸ So in the current case I recommend that you leave these men alone, and just let them go. If what they are planning or what they are doing comes from their own human thinking, then it will be defeated. ³⁹ But if it comes from God, you won’t be able to defeat them. You could even find yourselves fighting against God!”

⁴⁰ They were convinced by what he said. So they called the apostles back in, had them whipped, and ordered them not to say anything in the name of Jesus. Then they let them go. ⁴¹ The apostles left the council, happy to be considered worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. ⁴² Every day they continued to teach and proclaim Jesus as the Messiah, in the Temple and from house to house.

6

¹ At this time, when the number of believers was increasing rapidly, the Greek-speaking believers started arguing with the Aramaic-speaking believers.* They complained that their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of food.

² The twelve apostles called all the believers together, and told them, “It’s not appropriate for us to give up spreading the word of God so we can wait at tables. ³ Brothers, choose from among you seven trustworthy men full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will hand this responsibility over to them. ⁴ We ourselves will give our full attention to prayer and the ministry of spreading the word.”

⁵ Everybody was happy with the arrangement, and they chose Stephen, (a man full of trust in God and of the Holy Spirit), Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus (originally a

* **6:1** Literally, “Hellenists” and “Hebrews.”

Jewish convert from Antioch). ⁶ These men were presented to the apostles who prayed for them and placed their hands on them in blessing. ⁷ The word of God continued to spread, and the number of disciples in Jerusalem greatly increased, with a large number of priests committing themselves to trusting in Jesus.

⁸ Stephen, full of grace and God's power, performed wonderful miracles among the people. ⁹ But some started arguing with him. They were from the synagogue called "the Free,"[†] as well as Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and people from Cilicia and Asia Minor. ¹⁰ But they weren't able to stand against Stephen's wisdom or the Spirit with which he was speaking. ¹¹ So they bribed some men to say, "We heard this man blaspheme Moses, and God too!"

¹² They stirred up the people, and together with the elders and the teachers of the law, they came and arrested him. They brought him before the council, ¹³ and called false witnesses who testified against him.

"This man is always slandering the holy Temple[‡] and the law," they said. ¹⁴ "We've heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy the Temple, and will change the laws[§] we received from Moses."

¹⁵ Everyone sitting on the council looked closely at Stephen, and his face shone like the face of an angel.

7

¹ "Are these allegations true?" the high priest asked.

² "Brothers and fathers, listen to me!" Stephen replied. "God in his glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was living in Mesopotamia, before he moved to Haran.

³ God told him, 'Leave your country and your relatives, and go to the country that I'm going to show you.'^{*} ⁴ So he left the country of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. After his father's death, God sent him here to this country where you now live. ⁵ God didn't give Abraham an inheritance here, not even one square foot. But God did promise Abraham that he would give him and his descendants possession of the land, even though he had no children. ⁶ God also told him that his descendants would live in a foreign country, and that they would be enslaved there, and would be mistreated for four hundred years. ⁷ God said, 'I will punish the nation that enslaves them. Eventually they will leave and come here to worship me.'[†] ⁸ God also gave Abraham the agreement regarding circumcision,[‡] and so when Isaac was born, Abraham circumcised him on the eighth day. Isaac was the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of the twelve patriarchs.

⁹ The patriarchs, who were jealous of Joseph, sold him into slavery in Egypt. But God was with him, ¹⁰ and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave him wisdom and helped him gain the favor of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him governor over Egypt and the royal household.

[†] **6:9** Presumably a synagogue made up of former slaves. [‡] **6:13** Literally, "this holy place," also in 6:14. [§] **6:14** Also translated "customs"; however in the context this has far more to do with legal and ceremonial requirements.

^{*} **7:3** Quoting Genesis 12:1. [†] **7:7** Quoting Genesis 15:13-14; Exodus 3:12. [‡] **7:8** Or "circumcision covenant."

¹¹ Now a famine occurred throughout Egypt and Canaan. It caused terrible misery, and our forefathers had no food. ¹² When Jacob heard there was grain in Egypt he sent our forefathers down on their first visit. ¹³ During their second visit, Joseph revealed to his brothers who he was, and Pharaoh discovered Joseph's family background. ¹⁴ Joseph sent for his father and all his relatives—seventy-five in total. ¹⁵ Jacob traveled to Egypt, and died there—as did our forefathers. ¹⁶ Their bodies were brought back to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought with silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.

¹⁷ As the time approached regarding the promise that God had made to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt increased. ¹⁸ A new king came to the throne in Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph. ¹⁹ He took advantage of our people and treated our ancestors badly, forcing them to abandon their babies so they would die. ²⁰ It was at this time that Moses was born. He was a handsome child, and for three months he was looked after in his father's home. ²¹ When he had to be abandoned, Pharaoh's daughter rescued him and took care of him as her own son.

²² Moses received instruction in all areas of Egyptian knowledge, and he became a powerful speaker and leader. ²³ However, when he was forty years old, he decided to visit his relatives, the Israelites. ²⁴ He saw one of them being mistreated, so he intervened to defend him. On behalf of the man he took revenge and killed the Egyptian. ²⁵ Moses thought his fellow Israelites would see that God was rescuing them through him, but they didn't. ²⁶ The next day when he arrived, two Israelites were fighting one another. He tried to reconcile them and stop the fight. 'Men! You are brothers!' he told them. 'Why are you attacking each other?'

²⁷ But the man who had started the fight pushed Moses away. 'Who put you in charge over us? Are you our judge now?' he asked. ²⁸ 'Are you going to kill me like you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' ²⁹ When he heard this, Moses ran away. He went and lived in exile in the land of Midian, where two sons were born to him.

³⁰ Forty years later, in the desert of Mount Sinai, an angel appeared to him in the flames of a burning bush. ³¹ When Moses saw this, he was amazed at the sight, and went over to take a closer look. The voice of the Lord spoke to him: ³² 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.'^{*} Moses shook with fear and didn't dare look up. ³³ The Lord told him, 'Take off your sandals, because where you are standing is holy ground. ³⁴ I have closely observed the suffering of my people in Egypt, and I have heard their groans. I have come down to rescue them. Now come over here, for I'm sending you to Egypt.'[†]

³⁵ This was the same Moses that the people had rejected when they said, 'Who made you a ruler and judge over us?'[‡] God sent him to be both a ruler and a liberator, by means of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. ³⁶ Moses led them out after performing miraculous signs in Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and continued to do so in the

§ 7:28 Quoting Exodus 2:13-14. * 7:32 Quoting Exodus 3:6. † 7:34 Quoting Exodus 3:5-10.
‡ 7:35 Quoting Exodus 2:14.

desert for forty years. ³⁷ This is the same Moses who promised the Israelites, 'God will send you a prophet like me from among your people.' § ³⁸ Moses was with God's assembled people in the desert when the angel spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and there with our forefathers he received God's living word to give to us. ³⁹ He was the one our fathers wouldn't listen to. They rejected him and decided to return to Egypt. ⁴⁰ They told Aaron, 'Make gods for us to lead us, because we don't know what's happened to this Moses who led us out of the land of Egypt.'* ⁴¹ Then they made an idol in the shape of a calf, sacrificed to it, and celebrated what they themselves had made!

⁴² So God gave up on them. He left them to their worship of the stars in the sky. This is what the prophets wrote, 'Were you giving offerings or making sacrifices to me during the forty years in the desert, you Israelites?' ⁴³ No, you carried the Tabernacle of the god Moloch and the image of the god Rephan's star, images that you made so you could worship them. So I will banish you in exile beyond Babylon.†

⁴⁴ Our ancestors had the Tabernacle of Testimony‡ in the desert. God had told Moses how he should make it following the blueprint he had seen. ⁴⁵ Later on, our forefathers carried it with them when they went in with Joshua to occupy the land taken from the nations the Lord drove out before them. It stayed there until the time of David. ⁴⁶ David found favor with God and asked to make a more permanent home for the God of Jacob. ⁴⁷ But it was Solomon who built a Temple§ for him. ⁴⁸ Of course the Almighty doesn't live in temples we make. As the prophet said, ⁴⁹ 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth the place I put my feet. What kind of dwelling could you build for me?' the Lord asks. 'What bed could you make for me to rest in?' ⁵⁰ Didn't I make everything?*

⁵¹ You arrogant, hard-hearted people! You never listen!† You always fight against the Holy Spirit! You act just like your fathers did! ⁵² Was there ever a prophet your fathers didn't persecute? They killed those who prophesied about the coming of the one who is truly good and right. He is the one you betrayed and murdered— ⁵³ you who received the law by means of the angels, but refused to keep it."

⁵⁴ When they heard this, the council members became mad with rage, and snarled at him, grinding their teeth. ⁵⁵ But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed up into heaven and saw God's glory, with Jesus standing at God's right hand. ⁵⁶ "Look," he said, "I see heaven open, and the Son of Man standing at God's right hand."

⁵⁷ But they held their hands over their ears and shouted as loudly as they could. They rushed together at him, ⁵⁸ dragged him out of the city, and began to stone him. His accusers laid their coats down beside a young man called Saul. ⁵⁹ As they went on stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰ He kneeled down, calling

§ 7:37 Quoting Deuteronomy 18:15. * 7:40 Quoting Exodus 32:1. † 7:43 Quoting Amos 5:25-27. ‡ 7:44 Meaning that it gave God's message, and provided evidence of his presence.

§ 7:47 Literally, "house." * 7:50 Quoting Isaiah 66:1-2. † 7:51 Literally, "uncircumcised in heart and ears."

out, “Lord, please don’t hold this sin against them!” And after he said this, he died.‡

8

¹ Saul approved of his killing. On that very day terrible persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and everyone except for the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. ² (Some faithful followers of God buried Stephen, with great mourning.) ³ But Saul set about destroying the church, going from house to house, dragging both men and women off to prison.

⁴ Those who had been scattered spread the word wherever they went. ⁵ Philip went to the town of Samaria, and told them about the Messiah. ⁶ When the crowds heard what Philip was saying and saw the miracles he did they all paid attention to what he was telling them. ⁷ Many were freed from possession by evil spirits that screamed as they came out, and many who were lame or disabled were healed. ⁸ The people who lived in the city were overjoyed.

⁹ Now there was a man named Simon who lived in the city. He practiced sorcery. He claimed that he was someone very important, and had astounded the people of Samaria ¹⁰ so they all paid attention to him. From the lowest to the highest in society they said, “This man is ‘God the Great Power.’ ” ¹¹ They were impressed by him because he had amazed them with his magic for so long.

¹² But when they believed in what Philip told them about the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ¹³ Simon too believed and was baptized. He accompanied Philip, amazed at the miraculous signs and wonders he saw.

¹⁴ When the apostles back in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to visit them. ¹⁵ When they arrived they prayed for the converts in Samaria to receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ The Holy Spirit hadn’t come to any of these converts yet—they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ The apostles placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸ When Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given when the apostles placed their hands on people, he offered them money. ¹⁹ “Give me this power, too,” he asked them, “so that anyone I place my hands on will receive the Holy Spirit.”

²⁰ “May your money be destroyed together with you for thinking God’s gift is something that can be bought!” Peter replied. ²¹ “You’re not part of any of this. None of this work belongs to you, because in God’s eyes your attitude is totally wrong. ²² Repent of your evil ways! Pray to the Lord and ask forgiveness for thinking like this. ²³ I can see that you are full of bitter envy, and chained down by your sin.”

²⁴ “Please pray for me, that nothing you’ve said may happen to me!” Simon replied.

‡ **7:60** Literally, “fell asleep.” Death is often spoken of as a sleep in the New Testament.

²⁵ After they had given their testimony and shared the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, sharing the good news in many Samaritan villages along the way.

²⁶ An angel of the Lord told Philip, “Get ready and go south to the desert road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza.” ²⁷ So Philip set out, and met an Ethiopian man, a eunuch who had a high position in the service of the Kandake,* Queen of Ethiopia. He was her chief treasurer. He had gone to Jerusalem to worship there, and ²⁸ was returning from his trip, sitting in his chariot. He was reading out loud from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, “Go over close to the chariot.” ³⁰ So Philip ran over, and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah.

“Do you understand what you’re reading?” Philip asked him.

³¹ “How can I, unless someone explains it?” the man replied. He invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³² The Scripture passage he was reading was this: “He was led like a sheep to be slaughtered. Like a lamb is silent in front of his shearer, he didn’t say a word. ³³ He was humiliated and denied justice. No one can speak of his descendants, for his life came to an end.”†

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, who is the prophet talking about? Is it himself, or someone else?” ³⁵ Philip started explaining, beginning from this Scripture, telling him about Jesus. ³⁶ As they continued on, they came to a stretch of water. The eunuch said, “Look, there’s water here—why shouldn’t I be baptized?” ³⁷ ‡ ³⁸ He ordered that the chariot be stopped. Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water and Philip baptized him. ³⁹ When they came out of the water the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again, but he continued on his way full of joy. Philip found himself at Azotus. ⁴⁰ He spread the good news in all the towns along the way until he arrived at Caesarea.

9

¹ But meanwhile Saul was making violent threats against the disciples of the Lord, wanting to kill them. He went to the high priest ² and asked for letters of authorization to take with him to the synagogues in Damascus, giving him permission to arrest any believers in the Way* that he found, men or women, and bring them back to Jerusalem as prisoners.

³ As Saul approached Damascus, suddenly he was surrounded by a light that blazed down from heaven. ⁴ He fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”

⁵ “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked.

“I am Jesus, the one you’re persecuting,” he replied. ⁶ “Get up, go on into the city, and you’ll be told what to do.”

* **8:27** Kandake is not the personal name of the Queen, but her title, like “Pharaoh.” † **8:33** Literally, “his life was taken from the earth.” The quotation is from Isaiah 53:7-8. ‡ **8:37**

This verse is not found in the earliest manuscripts. * **9:2** “Believers in the Way,” one early term referring to followers of Jesus.

⁷ The men who were traveling with Saul stood there speechless. They heard the voice speaking, but they didn't see anyone. ⁸ Saul got to his feet, and when he opened his eyes, he couldn't see anything. His companions took him by the hand and led him into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he couldn't see, and he didn't eat or drink anything.

¹⁰ A follower of Jesus called Ananias lived in Damascus, and the Lord spoke to him in a vision.

"Ananias!" he called.

"I'm here, Lord," Ananias responded.

¹¹ "Get up, and go to Straight Street," the Lord told him. "Ask at Judas' house for someone called Saul, from Tarsus. He's praying. ¹² He's seen in vision a man called Ananias come and place his hands on him so he can regain his sight."

¹³ "But Lord," Ananias replied, "I've heard a lot about this man—about all the evil things he did to the believers in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ The chief priests have given him the power to arrest everyone here that worships and follows you."

¹⁵ But the Lord told him, "Get on your way, because he is the person I have chosen to take my name to foreigners and kings, as well as to Israel. ¹⁶ I will show him what he'll have to suffer for my name's sake."

¹⁷ So Ananias left and went to the house. He placed his hands on Saul. "Brother Saul," he said, "The Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were traveling here, has sent me so you can regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. He got up and was baptized. ¹⁹ He also had something to eat and felt stronger.

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. ²⁰ He immediately started speaking in the synagogues, saying, "Jesus is the Son of God." ²¹ All who heard him were amazed, and asked, "Isn't this the man who caused so much trouble in Jerusalem for those who believed in Jesus? Wasn't he coming here to have the believers arrested and taken in chains to the chief priests?" ²² Saul grew more and more confident, proving Jesus was the Messiah so convincingly that the Jews who lived in Damascus could not refute him.

²³ Some time later the Jews plotted together to kill him, ²⁴ but Saul learned of their intentions. Day and night they waited by the city gates looking for the chance to murder him. ²⁵ So during the night his followers took him and lowered him down in a basket from an opening in the city wall. ²⁶ When Saul arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to meet with the disciples, but they were all afraid of him because they were not convinced he was really a disciple. ²⁷ However, Barnabas took him to meet the apostles, and explained to them how Saul had seen the Lord on the road and how the Lord had spoken to Saul. Barnabas also explained how in Damascus Saul had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus.

²⁸ Saul stayed with the apostles and accompanied them all over Jerusalem, ²⁹ speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. He talked and debated with the Greek-speaking Jews, but they tried to kill him. ³⁰ When the brothers learned of this they took him to Caesarea, and sent him to Tarsus.

³¹ During this time the whole church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria was left in peace. The church grew strong and increased rapidly in numbers as the believers lived reverently for the Lord,[†] encouraged by the Holy Spirit.

³² Peter was traveling around and went to visit the believers who lived in Lydda. ³³ There he met a man called Aeneas who was paralyzed and had been confined to his bed for eight years. ³⁴ Peter told him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you! Get up and pick up your mat!" Immediately Aeneas got up. ³⁵ Everyone living in Lydda and Sharon saw him, and became believers in the Lord.

³⁶ In Joppa lived a follower called Tabitha, (Dorcas in Greek).[‡] She was always doing good and helping the poor. ³⁷ However, about this time she became sick, and died. After washing her body, they laid her out in an upstairs room. ³⁸ Lydda was near Joppa, so the disciples in Joppa, hearing that Peter was in Lydda, sent two men to him with the message, "Please come to us right away." ³⁹ So Peter got ready and left with them. When he arrived they took him upstairs. All the widows were there crying, and they showed him the coats and clothes that Dorcas had made while she was with them. ⁴⁰ Peter told them all to leave, knelt down, and prayed. He turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and lifted her up. He called in the believers and the widows, and presented her to them alive. ⁴² The news spread through the whole of Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. ⁴³ Peter spent a long time in Joppa, staying at the house of Simon the tanner.

10

¹ In Caesarea lived a man named Cornelius who was a Roman centurion of the Italian battalion. ² He was a religious man who, together with everyone in his household, had great reverence for God. He gave generously to the poor, and prayed regularly to God. ³ At about 3 p.m. one day he had a vision in which he saw very clearly an angel of God who came to him and called to him, "Cornelius!"

⁴ Frightened, Cornelius stared at him and asked, "What do you want, Lord?"

"God has paid attention to your prayers, and recognized your generosity to the poor," he told Cornelius. ⁵ "Now send some men to Joppa, and fetch Simon, also called Peter, ⁶ who is staying at Simon the tanner's house down by the sea-shore."

⁷ When the angel who had spoken to him had left, Cornelius called in two of his house-servants and a soldier of his personal guard, a religious man. ⁸ After he'd explained to them all that had happened he sent them to Joppa.

⁹ The next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up onto the top of the house* to pray. It was about noon, ¹⁰ and he was getting hungry, wanting to eat. But while the meal was

[†] **9:31** Literally, "in the fear of the Lord." [‡] **9:36** Tabitha/Dorcas means "gazelle." * **10:9** Houses of the time had flat roofs, and served as open-air rooms.

being prepared, he fell into a trance, and ¹¹ he saw heaven opened. He saw something coming down that looked like a large sheet held by its four corners, being lowered onto the earth. ¹² Inside were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds. ¹³ He heard a voice say, "Get up Peter, kill and eat!"

¹⁴ But Peter replied, "Certainly not, Lord! I have never eaten anything that is impure and unclean."

¹⁵ He heard the voice speak again, "Don't you call unclean what God has made clean!" ¹⁶ This happened three times, and then the sheet was quickly taken back into heaven.

¹⁷ While Peter was puzzling over what the vision he'd seen really meant, the men sent by Cornelius had found out where Simon's house was and were standing at the gate. ¹⁸ They called out, asking whether Simon, also called Peter, was staying there. ¹⁹ While Peter was still wondering about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Look, there are three men looking for you. ²⁰ Get up, go downstairs, and go with them. Don't worry at all because I'm the one who sent them."

²¹ So Peter went downstairs to meet the men. "I'm the one you're looking for," he said. "Why are you here?"

²² "We come from Cornelius, a good, religious man who has reverence for God and is widely respected among the Jewish people," they replied. "A holy angel instructed him to send for you to come to his house so he can hear what you have to tell him." ²³ So he invited them in and they stayed there.

The next day he got up and left with them. Some of the brothers from Joppa went with them too. ²⁴ The following day they arrived in Caesarea where Cornelius was waiting for them with his relatives and close friends whom he'd called together. ²⁵ When Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. ²⁶ But Peter pulled him back up, telling him, "Stand up! I'm only a man!"

²⁷ Peter spoke with Cornelius, and then went on in where he found many other people waiting for him. ²⁸ He said to them, "You certainly know that it's not permitted for a Jew to be associated with or to visit foreigners. But God has shown me that it's not for me to call anyone impure or unclean. ²⁹ That's why I came without any argument when I was sent for. So now I want to know the reason why you sent for me."

³⁰ "Four days ago, at about this time—three in the afternoon—I was praying in my house," Cornelius explained. "Suddenly I saw a man standing in front of me, dressed in clothes that shone brightly. ³¹ He told me, 'Cornelius, your prayers have been heard, and God has recognized your generosity to the poor. ³² Send someone to Joppa for Simon Peter. He's staying at Simon the tanner's house, down by the sea-shore.' ³³ So immediately I sent for you, and it was good of you to come. That's why we're all here, meeting together before God, ready to hear everything the Lord has told you."

³⁴ Peter replied, "I'm totally convinced that God has no favorites. ³⁵ In every nation God accepts those who respect him, and do what is good and right. ³⁶ You know the message he sent to Israel, sharing

the good news of peace that comes from Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know that this good news spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee, following John's call to baptism. ³⁸ It's about Jesus of Nazareth—how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how he went around doing good, healing all those who were under the devil's control, for God was with him.

³⁹ We can testify to all that he did in Judea and Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross. ⁴⁰ But God raised him back to life on the third day, and had him appear, ⁴¹ not to everyone, but to those witnesses chosen by God—including us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² He gave us the responsibility of publicly telling this to the people, to testify that he is the one God chose as the Judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ He is the one all the prophets spoke about, that everyone who trusts in him will receive forgiveness through his name.”

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on all of them who were listening to the message. ⁴⁵ The Jewish believers[†] who had come with Peter were astonished, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was also poured out on the foreigners. ⁴⁶ They heard them speaking in tongues, glorifying God. ⁴⁷ Then Peter asked, “Is anybody going to prevent them being baptized in water, since they have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸ He gave orders for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they pleaded with him to spend some time with them.

11

¹ The apostles and brothers in Judea heard that foreigners had also accepted the word of God. ² When Peter arrived back in Jerusalem, those who believed circumcision* was still essential argued with him. ³ “You went into the homes of uncircumcised men, and ate with them,” they said.

⁴ Peter began to explain to them everything that had happened. ⁵ “While I was in the town of Joppa I was praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. Something that looked like a large sheet was being let down by its four corners from heaven, and it came down to me. ⁶ When I looked inside I saw animals, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds.

⁷ Then I heard a voice that told me, ‘Get up, Peter, kill and eat.’

⁸ But I replied, ‘Absolutely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth!’

⁹ The voice from heaven spoke again, and said, ‘Don't you call unclean what God has made clean!’ ¹⁰ This happened three times, and then it was all taken back into heaven. ¹¹ At that very moment three men were standing in front of the house where we were staying. They had been sent from Caesarea to see me. ¹² The Spirit told me to go with them, and not to worry about who they were. These six brothers here also went with me, and we went into the man's house. ¹³ He

[†] **10:45** Literally, “those of the circumcision that believed.” * **11:2** Literally, “those of the circumcision,” which could mean simply “Jews.” However, from the context it would appear that these were Jewish Christians concerned over relationships with “foreigners.”

explained to us how an angel had appeared to him in his house, who told him, 'Send someone to Joppa, and fetch Simon, also called Peter, ¹⁴ who will tell you what you need to hear so you can be saved—you and your whole household.'

¹⁵ When I started speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as happened to us in the beginning. ¹⁶ Then I remembered what the Lord said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷ Since God gave them the same gift as he gave us when we trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ, what power did I have to oppose God?"

¹⁸ After they had heard this explanation, they didn't argue with him anymore, and praised God, saying, "Now God has granted the opportunity to repent and have eternal life to foreigners as well."

¹⁹ Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that happened when Stephen was killed, traveled all the way to Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. They only spread the good news among the Jews. ²⁰ But when some of them who were from Cyprus and Cyrene arrived in Antioch, they shared the good news with the Greeks too, telling them about the Lord Jesus. ²¹ The power of the Lord was with them and a large number trusted in the Lord and turned to him. ²² News about what had happened reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ When he arrived and saw for himself how God's grace was working, he was delighted. He encouraged all of them to completely dedicate themselves to God and to stay true. ²⁴ Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit, and put his whole trust in God. Many people were brought to the Lord. ²⁵ Then Barnabas went on to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶ and when he found him, he took Saul back with him to Antioch. Over the course of the next year they worked together with the church, teaching the message to crowds of people. It was in Antioch that the believers were first called "Christians."

²⁷ It was during this time that some prophets went from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸ One of them called Agabus stood up and gave a prophetic warning by the Spirit that there would be a terrible famine that would affect the known world.† (This came true in the reign of Emperor Claudius.) ²⁹ The believers decided to send funds to help the brothers that lived in Judea, with everyone giving according to what they had. ³⁰ So they did this and sent the money with Barnabas and Saul to the church leaders there.

12

¹ Around this time King Herod began to persecute some members of the church. ² He had James, John's brother, executed by sword. ³ When he saw that the Jews were pleased by this, he had Peter arrested too. (This was during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.) ⁴ After having Peter arrested, he threw him in prison, with four squads of four soldiers each to guard him. He planned to have Peter brought out for a public trial after the Passover.

† **11:28** Literally, "the inhabited world," basically referring to the Roman Empire.

⁵ While Peter was kept in prison the church prayed earnestly to God for him. ⁶ The night before Herod was to have him put on trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, chained to each of them, and with guards at the door keeping watch. ⁷ Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell. The angel shook Peter awake, saying “Quick! Get up!” The chains fell from his wrists, ⁸ and the angel told him, “Get dressed, and put on your sandals.” So he did. Then the angel told him, “Put on your coat and follow me.” ⁹ So Peter followed the angel out. He didn’t realize that what the angel was doing was actually happening—he thought he was seeing a vision.

¹⁰ They passed the first and second sets of guards, and came to the iron gate that led into the city. This opened for them by itself. They went out and down the street, when suddenly the angel left him. ¹¹ When Peter came to his senses, he said, “Now I realize this really happened! The Lord sent an angel to rescue me from Herod’s power, and from everything that the Jewish people had planned.”

¹² Now that he was conscious of what had happened, Peter went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark. Many believers had gathered there, and were praying. ¹³ When he knocked on the gateway door, a servant girl called Rhoda came to open up. ¹⁴ But recognizing Peter’s voice, in her excitement she didn’t open the door. Instead she ran back inside shouting, “Peter’s at the door!”

¹⁵ “You’re mad!” they told her. But she kept on insisting it was true. So they said, “It must be his angel.”* ¹⁶ Peter continued knocking. When they did eventually open the door, they saw it was him, and were totally shocked.

¹⁷ Peter held up his hand for them to be quiet, and then explained to them how the Lord had led him out of the prison. “Let James and the brothers know about this,” he told them, and then left to go somewhere else.

¹⁸ When daylight came the soldiers were totally confused as to what had happened to Peter. ¹⁹ Herod had a thorough search made for him, but he couldn’t be found. After interrogating the guards, Herod ordered that they should be executed.† Then Herod left Judea and went to stay in Caesarea.

²⁰ Now Herod had become furious with the people of Tyre and Sidon. They sent a joint delegation to see him and managed to win Blastus, the king’s personal assistant, over to their side. They pleaded for peace with Herod because they were dependent on the king’s territory for food. ²¹ When the day came for their appointment with the king, Herod put on his royal robes, sat on his throne, and gave a speech to them. ²² The audience shouted in response, “This is the voice of a god, not that of a man!” ²³ Immediately the angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory. He was consumed by worms and died.

* **12:15** “His angel.” Some at the time believed people had a spiritual equivalent that existed whether the individual was alive or dead. Perhaps today the expression would be, “It’s his ghost!” † **12:19** The Greek actually says, “that they be led away.” However, most commentators understand this to mean “led away to their deaths,” since the punishment for allowing prisoners to escape was execution.

²⁴ But the word of God spread, and more and more people believed. ²⁵ Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem once they had finished their mission, taking John Mark with them.

13

¹ The church at Antioch had prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (the childhood friend of Herod the tetrarch), and Saul. ² While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart* Barnabas and Saul to do the work I've called them to." ³ After they had fasted, prayed, and placed their hands on them in blessing, they sent them on their way.

⁴ So Barnabas and Saul, directed by the Holy Spirit, went to Seleucia. From there they sailed to Cyprus. ⁵ Arriving at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John[†] was with them as their assistant. ⁶ They traveled throughout the island and eventually came to Paphos. There they found a Jewish magician, a false prophet by the name of Bar-jesus. ⁷ He was close to the governor, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. Sergius Paulus invited Barnabas and Saul to come and visit him since he wanted to hear the word of God. ⁸ But the magician Elymas (his Greek name) opposed them, trying to prevent the governor from trusting in God.

⁹ Saul, also called Paul, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and looked straight at him. ¹⁰ "You are full of deception and all kinds of evil, you son of the devil, you enemy of all that is right! Will you never give up perverting the Lord's true ways?" ¹¹ Look, the Lord's hand is on you and you will become blind. You will not see the sun for some time." Immediately mist and darkness fell on him, and he had to find someone who could lead him by the hand. ¹² When the governor saw what happened he trusted in God, amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

¹³ Then Paul and those with him sailed from Paphos and went to Perga in Pamphylia, while John left them and went back to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They went through Perga and on to Antioch of Pisidia. On the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and were seated. ¹⁵ After the readings from the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue leaders sent them a message saying, "Brothers, please share with the congregation any words of encouragement you may have."

¹⁶ Paul stood up, motioned with his hand to get their attention, and began speaking. "Men of Israel, and all of you who have reverence for God, listen to me. ¹⁷ The God of the people of Israel chose our forefathers, and gave our people prosperity during their stay in the land of Egypt. Then with his mighty power he led them out of Egypt, ¹⁸ and he patiently dealt with them in the desert for about forty years.

¹⁹ After he had overthrown seven nations living in the land of Canaan, God divided their land among the Israelites and gave it to them to inherit. This took about four hundred and fifty years. ²⁰ Then he provided them with judges as leaders until the time of the prophet Samuel. ²¹ Then the people asked for a king, and God gave them Saul,

* **13:2** Or "dedicate." † **13:5** This John is John Mark (12:25).

son of Kish from the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled for forty years. ²² Then God removed Saul, and made David their king. God approved of David, saying 'I found David the son of Jesse to be a man according to my own heart; he will do everything I intend.'[‡]

²³ Jesus is David's descendant; he is the Savior that God promised to bring to Israel. ²⁴ Before Jesus came, John announced the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ²⁵ As John was completing his mission, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not the one you're looking for. But after me one is coming whose sandals I'm not worthy to untie.'[§]

²⁶ My brothers, children of Abraham and those of you who have reverence for God: the message of this salvation has been sent to us! ²⁷ The people living in Jerusalem and their leaders didn't recognize Jesus or understand the words spoken by the prophets that are read every Sabbath. In fact they fulfilled the prophetic words by condemning him! ²⁸ Even though they couldn't find any evidence to sentence him to death, they still asked Pilate to have him killed. ²⁹ After they had fulfilled everything predicted that they would do to him, they took him down from the cross and buried him in a tomb. ³⁰ But God raised him from the dead, ³¹ and he appeared over the course of many days to those who had followed him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to the people.

³² We are here to bring to you the good news of the promise that God made to our forefathers, ³³ that he has now fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus from the dead. As it is written in Psalm 2: 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father.'^{*} ³⁴ God raised him from the dead, never to die again, as he indicated by saying, 'I will give you what is holy and trustworthy, as I promised to David.'[†] ³⁵ As another psalm says, 'You will not allow your Holy One to see decay.'[‡] ³⁶ But David died, after he had done what God wanted in his own time, and he was buried with his ancestors, and his body decayed. ³⁷ The one God raised from the dead saw no decay.

³⁸ My brothers, I want you to understand that we're telling you that through this man sins are forgiven. ³⁹ Through him everyone who trusts in him is made morally right[§] from all that is wrong—in a way that you could never be set right by the law of Moses. ⁴⁰ Make sure that what the prophets said doesn't happen to you: ⁴¹ 'You who are scornful, look in amazement, and die! For what I'm doing in your lifetime is something that you could never believe, even if someone told you!' "^{*}

⁴² As they were leaving, the people pleaded with them to tell them more the next Sabbath. ⁴³ After the meeting in the synagogue, many of the Jews and the converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas who spoke with them, encouraging them to continue to hold on to the grace of God. ⁴⁴ The following Sabbath almost the whole town turned out to hear the word of God. ⁴⁵ However, when the Jews saw the crowds,

[‡] 13:22 See 1 Samuel 13:14. [§] 13:25 Quoting Luke 3:16. ^{*} 13:33 Quoting Psalms 2:7.

[†] 13:34 Referring to Isaiah 55:3. [‡] 13:35 Quoting Psalms 16:10. [§] 13:39 "Morally right": this is far more than simply being right in the sense of "correct," so the word "morally" is added here

^{*} 13:41 Quoting Habakkuk 1:5.

they became extremely jealous, contradicting what Paul was saying and cursing him.

⁴⁶ So Paul and Barnabas spoke out strongly, saying “We had to speak the word of God to you first. But now that you’re rejecting it—you’re deciding that you’re not worthy of eternal life—well now we’re turning to the foreigners. ⁴⁷ That’s what the Lord has told us to do: ‘I’ve made you a light to the foreigners, and through you salvation will go to the ends of the earth.’”[†] ⁴⁸ When the foreigners heard this they were overjoyed, praising the Lord’s word, and all those chosen for eternal life trusted in God. ⁴⁹ So God’s word was spread throughout the region. ⁵⁰ But the Jews incited the prominent religious women and leaders of the city to persecute Paul and Barnabas, and had them expelled from their territory. ⁵¹ So they shook the dust off their feet against them as a sign of protest, and went on to Iconium. ⁵² And the believers continued to be filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

14

¹ In Iconium the same thing happened. Paul and Barnabas went to the Jewish synagogue and spoke so convincingly that many of both the Jewish and Greek-speaking worshipers trusted in Jesus. ² But the Jews that refused to believe in Jesus stirred up the feelings of the foreigners,* and poisoned them against the believers. ³ Paul and Barnabas stayed there a long time, speaking to them boldly in the Lord, who confirmed their message of grace through the miraculous signs that they were enabled to perform. ⁴ The inhabitants of the town were divided, with some supporting the Jews and some the apostles. ⁵ But then the foreigners and the Jews, together with their leaders, decided to attack and stone Paul and Barnabas. ⁶ However, they found out about it and fled to the region of Lycaonia, to the towns of Lystra and Derbe, ⁷ where they continued to share the good news.

⁸ In the town of Lystra there was a disabled man who was lame in both feet. He had been crippled from birth and had never been able to walk. ⁹ He sat there listening to Paul speaking. When Paul looked directly at him, and realized that the man was trusting in God to heal him, ¹⁰ Paul said in a loud voice, “Stand up on your feet!” The man jumped to his feet and started walking. ¹¹ When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they shouted out in the language of Lycaonia, “The gods have come down to us looking like men!” ¹² They identified Barnabas as the Greek god Zeus, and Paul as the god Hermes because he was one who did most of the talking.

¹³ The priest of the temple of Zeus that lay just outside the town, brought oxen and wreaths[‡] to the town gates. He planned to carry out a sacrifice in front of the crowds. ¹⁴ But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul learned what was happening, they tore their clothes,[‡] and rushed into the crowds, shouting out, ¹⁵ “People, what are you doing? We are human beings with the same kind of nature as you. We came

[†] **13:47** Quoting Isaiah 49:6. * **14:2** In other words, the non-Jewish population. [†] **14:13** Wreaths—these were put on animals just before they were sacrificed. [‡] **14:14** In ancient cultures a sign of great distress.

to bring you good news, so you could turn from these pointless things to a God who is truly alive. He is the one who made heaven, earth, and sea, and everything in them. ¹⁶ In past times he allowed all the nations to follow their own ways. ¹⁷ Even so he still provided evidence of himself by doing good, sending you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons, providing all the food you need, and filling you with happiness.” ¹⁸ With these words they barely managed to stop the crowds from offering sacrifices to them.

¹⁹ But then some Jews from Antioch and Iconium arrived and won over the crowds. They stoned Paul, and dragged him outside the town, thinking he was dead. ²⁰ But when the believers gathered around him, he got up, and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe. ²¹ After sharing the good news with the people in that town, and after many had become believers, they went back to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. ²² They encouraged the believers to remain firm and to continue to trust in Jesus. “We have to go through many trials to enter God’s kingdom,” they said.

²³ After they had appointed elders for every church, and had prayed and fasted with them, Paul and Barnabas left them in the Lord’s care, the one that they trusted in. ²⁴ They passed through Pisidia, and arrived in Pamphylia. ²⁵ They spoke God’s word in Perga, and then went on to Attalia. ²⁶ From there they sailed back to Antioch^S where they had started out, having been dedicated there in God’s grace to the work they had now accomplished. ²⁷ When they arrived, they called the church together. They reported everything God had done through them, and how he had opened a door for the foreigners to trust in him. ²⁸ They stayed there with the believers for a long time.

15

¹ Then some men arrived from Judea who started teaching the believers, “Unless you’re circumcised according to the rules set down by Moses, you can’t be saved.” ² Paul and Barnabas had many arguments and debates with them. So Paul and Barnabas and some others were appointed to go to Jerusalem and talk to the apostles and leaders there about this issue. ³ The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they explained how foreigners were being converted, which made all the believers very happy. ⁴ When they arrived in Jerusalem they were welcomed by the church members, the apostles, and the elders. They explained everything God had done through them. ⁵ But they were opposed by some of the believers who belonged to the Pharisee faction. They said, “These converts have to be circumcised, and instructed to observe the law of Moses.”

⁶ The apostles and elders met together to discuss the issue. ⁷ After much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that some time ago God chose me from among you so that the foreigners could hear the message of good news and trust in Jesus.

^S 14:26 Antioch in Syria, where they had begun their journey (see 13:1).

⁸ God, who knows the what we're thinking,* has shown that he accepts them, giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us. ⁹ He doesn't make any distinction between us and them—he cleansed their thoughts as they trusted in him.

¹⁰ So why do you want to oppose God and put a burden on the believers that our fathers weren't able to bear, and we can't either? ¹¹ We're convinced that we're saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way they are." ¹² Everyone listened attentively to Barnabas and Paul as they explained the miraculous signs that God had performed through them among the foreigners.

¹³ After they had finished speaking, James spoke up, saying, "Brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴ Simon† has described how God first revealed his concern for the foreigners by taking from them a people committed to him. ¹⁵ This is in accordance with the words of the prophets, as it's written, ¹⁶ 'In the future I will return, and I will rebuild the fallen house of David; I will rebuild its ruins and set it straight. ¹⁷ I will do this so that those who are left may come to the Lord, including the foreigners who call on my name. ¹⁸ This is what the Lord says, who revealed these things long ago.'‡

¹⁹ So my decision is that we shouldn't make it difficult for foreigners who turn to God. ²⁰ We should write to them and tell them to avoid food sacrificed to idols,§ sexual immorality, meat of animals that have been strangled, and from consuming blood. ²¹ For the law of Moses has been taught in every town for a long, long time—it's read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

²² Then the apostles and elders, together with the whole church, decided it would be good to choose some representatives and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas Barsabbas and Silas, leaders among the brothers, ²³ and sent them with this letter:

"Greetings from us, the apostles and elders and brothers, to the non-Jewish* brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: ²⁴ We have heard that some from our group have confused you with their teachings, causing you trouble. We certainly didn't tell them to do this! ²⁵ So we have agreed to choose some representatives and send them to you together with our much-loved brothers Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶ who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

²⁷ So we are sending to you Judas and Silas who can verbally confirm what we're saying. ²⁸ It seemed best to the Holy Spirit and to us not to place on you any heavier burden than these important requirements. ²⁹ You should avoid: anything sacrificed to idols; blood; meat from strangled animals; and sexual immorality. You will do well to observe these requirements. God bless you."

³⁰ The men were sent on their way to Antioch. When they arrived they called everybody together and delivered the letter. ³¹ After they had read it, the people were so happy for the encouraging message. ³² Judas and Silas, who were also prophets, encouraged the brothers, explaining many things, and strengthening them. ³³ After spending some time there they were sent back by the brothers with their blessing

* 15:8 Or "knows the way we think." † 15:14 Simon Peter. ‡ 15:18 Quoting Amos 9:11-12.

§ 15:20 Literally, "pollutions of idols." * 15:23 Literally, "Gentile."

to the believers in Jerusalem. ³⁴ † ³⁵ But Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch, teaching and proclaiming the word of God along with many others.

³⁶ Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's go back and visit the believers in every town where we shared the word of the Lord, and see how they're doing." ³⁷ Barnabas planned to take along John Mark too. ³⁸ But Paul didn't think it was a good idea to take him with them, since he'd left them in Pamphylia and hadn't continued working with them. ³⁹ They had such a strong disagreement that they separated. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed to Cyprus. ⁴⁰ Paul chose Silas, and as they left, the believers committed them to the grace of the Lord. ⁴¹ Paul traveled through Syria and Cilicia, encouraging the churches there.

16

¹ Paul went first to Derbe, and then on to Lystra, where he met a believer by the name of Timothy. He was the son of a Jewish Christian mother, and his father was Greek. ² The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. ³ Paul wanted Timothy to travel with him, so he circumcised him because the Jews in the area all knew that Timothy's father was Greek. ⁴ As they went through the different towns they gave them the requirements the apostles and elders in Jerusalem had said should be observed. ⁵ The churches were strengthened in their trust in the Lord and every day their numbers increased.

⁶ They traveled through the districts of Phrygia and Galatia, since the Holy Spirit prevented them from going to the province of Asia to speak the word. ⁷ When they arrived at the border of Mysia they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to enter. ⁸ So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.

⁹ There Paul saw in vision during the night a man from Macedonia standing up, pleading with him, "Please come over to Macedonia and help us!" ¹⁰ After Paul saw this vision, we* immediately made arrangements to go to Macedonia, since we concluded that God had called us to share the good news with them.

¹¹ We set sail from Troas and made straight for Samothrace. The next day we went on to Neapolis, ¹² and from there to Philippi, the most important town in Macedonia, and also a Roman colony. We stayed in this city for several days. ¹³ On the Sabbath day we went out of the town gates down to the riverside where we thought people would come to pray. We sat down and talked with the women that had gathered there.

¹⁴ One of them was called Lydia, who sold purple cloth from the town of Thyatira. She worshiped God, and she listened to us. The Lord opened her mind to what Paul was saying, and she accepted what he told her. ¹⁵ After she and all her household were baptized, she pleaded with us, "If you really think that I'm truly committed to the Lord, then come and stay at my house." She kept on insisting until we agreed!

† **15:34** Verse 34 is not thought to be part of the original. indicates that the writer, Luke, had joined them.

* **16:10** The change to "we"

¹⁶ One day when we were going down to the place of prayer we met a slave girl possessed by an evil spirit.[†] She earned her masters a great deal of money by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ This girl followed Paul and the rest of us around, shouting, “These men are the servants of Almighty God. They are telling you how to be saved!” ¹⁸ She went on doing this for several days. This bothered Paul so he turned around and told the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to leave her!” The spirit immediately left her.

¹⁹ But when her masters saw they had lost their means of making money, they grabbed hold of Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities at the marketplace. ²⁰ They brought them in front of the magistrates, and accused them: “These Jewish men are causing a great disturbance in our town,” they said. ²¹ “They’re advocating things that are illegal for us as Romans to accept or to practice.” ²² The crowd joined together in an attack on them. The magistrates tore off Paul and Silas’ clothes, and ordered them beaten with rods. ²³ After giving them a severe beating, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them locked up. ²⁴ The jailer followed his orders. He threw Paul and Silas into the inner cell and shackled their feet in the stocks.

²⁵ Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly a tremendous earthquake shook the foundations of the prison. Immediately all the doors flew open and everyone’s chains fell off.

²⁷ The jailer woke up and saw the doors of the prison wide open. He drew his sword and was about to kill himself, thinking that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul shouted out, “Don’t hurt yourself—we’re all still here!”

²⁹ The jailer asked for lights to be brought and rushed in. Shaking with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ He escorted them out and asked them, “Sirs, what do I have to do so I can be saved?”

³¹ “Trust in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your whole household,” they replied. ³² Then they shared the word of the Lord with him and everyone who lived in his house. ³³ Even though it was late at night he bathed their wounds, and he was baptized right away, along with all his family. ³⁴ He took them home and had a meal prepared for them. The jailer and his whole family were full of joy because they trusted in God.

³⁵ Early the next day the magistrate sent officials to the jailer, telling him, “Release those men.” ³⁶ The jailer told Paul, “The magistrates have sent word to release you. So you can leave, and go in peace.”

³⁷ But Paul told them, “They publicly beat us without a trial—and yet we’re Roman citizens! Then they threw us in prison. Now they want to quietly let us go? No, they should come themselves and release us!”

³⁸ The officials went back and reported this to the magistrates. When they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens they were really worried, ³⁹ and went to apologize to them.[‡] They escorted them out and begged them to leave town. ⁴⁰ So Paul and Silas left the prison and

[†] **16:16** Literally, “python spirit,” a spirit of divination. [‡] **16:39** It was illegal to punish a Roman citizen without a trial.

went to Lydia's house. There they met with the believers, encouraged them, and then went on their way.

17

¹ After Paul and Silas had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia they arrived at Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ² As usual, Paul went into the synagogue and over the course of three Sabbaths he debated with them using the Scriptures. ³ He explained what the Scriptures meant, proving that the Messiah had to die and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I'm telling you about—he is the Messiah," he told them. ⁴ Some of them were convinced and joined Paul and Silas, along with many Greek-speaking worshipers* and some leading women of the town.

⁵ But the Jews became jealous and with some rabble-rousers they gathered from the marketplace† they formed a mob. They rioted in the town, and attacked Jason's house. They tried to find Paul and Silas so they could bring them before the people. ⁶ When they couldn't find them they dragged Jason and some of the other believers before the town leaders, shouting, "These people are famous for causing trouble, turning the world upside down. Now they've come here, ⁷ and Jason has made them welcome in his house. They all defy Caesar's decrees, committing treason by saying there is another king called Jesus." ⁸ The people and the leaders of the town were very disturbed when they heard this. ⁹ So they made Jason and the others post bail before they let them go.

¹⁰ The believers had Paul and Silas leave for Berea that very night. When they arrived in Berea they went to the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹ The people there had a better attitude than those in Thessalonica in that they were very quick to accept the word, and every day they examined the Scriptures to make sure what they were told was right. ¹² As a result many of them became believers, along with some highly-placed Greek women and men.

¹³ But when the Jews in Thessalonica heard that Paul was also spreading the word of God in Berea, they went there and caused the same kind of trouble, stirring up the crowds. ¹⁴ Immediately the believers sent Paul to the coast, while Silas and Timothy remained behind. ¹⁵ Those escorting Paul took him as far as Athens, and then returned with instructions from Paul to Silas and Timothy that they should join him there as soon as possible.

¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them in Athens he was very troubled to see all the idolatry in the city. ¹⁷ He debated in the synagogue with the Jews and those who worshiped God,‡ as well as in the marketplace with those he happened to meet from day to day. ¹⁸ Some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also argued with him. "What is he going on

* **17:4** Greek-speaking worshipers: the term is usually applied to "heathen" who had come to accept the belief in the one God of Judaism but had not become Jews by circumcision. † **17:5** Literally, "evil men from the market." ‡ **17:17** Presumably the same "class" of believers mentioned in 17:4: foreigners who had accepted the God of Israel but had not become Jews.

about?"[§] they wondered. Others concluded, "He seems to be teaching about some foreign gods," because he was speaking about Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹ So they took him to the Areopagus*, and asked him, "Please tell us about this new teaching that you're promoting. ²⁰ We're hearing from you things that sound odd to us, so we'd like to know what they mean." ²¹ (All the Athenians, including foreigners who lived there, spent their whole time doing nothing except explaining or listening to something new.)

²² Paul stood up right in the middle of the Areopagus and said, "People of Athens, I notice you are very religious about everything. ²³ As I was walking along, looking at your shrines, I found an altar that had the inscription, 'To an Unknown God.' This unknown God whom you worship is the one I'm describing to you. ²⁴ The God who created the world and everything in it, the Lord of heaven and earth, doesn't live in temples we make. ²⁵ He doesn't need to be served by us as if he needed anything, since he is the source of all life for every living being. ²⁶ From one man he made all the peoples who live on the earth, and decided beforehand when and where they should live. ²⁷ God's purpose was that they should seek him, hoping they would reach out for him and find him—though he isn't far from any one of us. ²⁸ In him we live, move, and exist. Just as one of your own poets wrote, 'We are his family.'

²⁹ Since we are his family we shouldn't think that God is like gold, or silver, or stone, shaped by human artistry and thinking. ³⁰ God disregarded people's ignorance in the past, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent. ³¹ For he has set a time when he will rightly judge the world by the man he has appointed, and he proved to everyone that he is the one by raising him from the dead."

³² Some of them laughed when they heard about the resurrection of the dead, while others said, "Please come back so we can hear more about this later." ³³ So Paul left them. ³⁴ A few men joined him and trusted in God, including Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, as well as a woman called Damaris, and some others.

18

¹ Paul then left Athens and went to Corinth ² where he met a Jew named Aquila. Aquila was originally from Pontus, and had just arrived from Italy with his wife Priscilla because Claudius* had ordered all Jews expelled from Rome. Paul went to see them, ³ and because they were in the same business of tent-making, he stayed with them. ⁴ He debated in the synagogue every Sabbath, convincing both Jews and Greeks. ⁵ When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul felt he had to become more direct in what he said, and told the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. ⁶ When they opposed him and cursed him, he shook out his clothes† and told them, "Your blood is on your own

[§] **17:18** Literally, "What is this seed-collector trying to say?" "Seed-collector" referred to chattering birds picking up seeds in the marketplace; otherwise translated "babbler." * **17:19** A kind of discussion forum of philosophers. * **18:2** The Roman Emperor. † **18:6** A symbolic act declaring innocence.

heads! I am innocent of any guilt, and from now on I will go to the foreigners.”

⁷ He left and went to stay with Titius Justus, who worshiped God and whose house was next door to the synagogue. ⁸ Crispus, leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord together with his whole household. Many of the people of Corinth who heard the message became believers and were baptized.

⁹ The Lord told Paul in a vision at night: “Don’t be afraid. Speak up, don’t keep quiet— ¹⁰ because I am with you, and no-one will attack you, for many people in this city are mine.” ¹¹ Paul stayed there for eighteen months, teaching the people the word of God.

¹² However, during the time when Gallio[‡] was the governor of Achaia, the Jews united in an attack against Paul and brought him before the court. [§] ¹³ “This man is persuading people to worship God illegally,” they declared.

¹⁴ But just as Paul was about to defend himself, Gallio told the Jews, “If you Jews were bringing criminal charges or some serious legal offense, there would be a reason for me to listen to your case. ¹⁵ But since you’re only arguing over words and names and your own law, then you deal with it yourselves. I won’t rule on such matters.” ¹⁶ Then Gallio had them ejected from the court. ¹⁷ Then the crowd turned on Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, and beat him right outside the court, but Gallio wasn’t concerned about this at all.

¹⁸ Paul stayed on for a while. Then left the believers and sailed for Syria, taking Priscilla and Aquila along with him. He had his head shaved while in Cenchrae, because he had taken a vow.*

¹⁹ They arrived in Ephesus, where Paul left the others behind. He went to the synagogue to reason with the Jews. ²⁰ They asked him to stay longer, but he refused. ²¹ He said his goodbyes, and set sail from Ephesus, telling them, “I’ll come back and see you if it’s God’s will.”

²² After landing at Caesarea he went to greet the church members,† and then carried on to Antioch. ²³ He spent some time there and then went from town to town through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, encouraging all the believers.

²⁴ In the meantime a Jew named Apollos, originally from Alexandria, arrived in Ephesus. He was a gifted speaker who knew the Scriptures well. ²⁵ He had been taught the way of the Lord. He was spiritually passionate, and in his speaking and teaching he presented Jesus accurately, but he only knew about John’s baptism. ²⁶ He started speaking openly in the synagogue. So when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to join them and explained the way of God to him more fully. ²⁷ When he decided to go to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples there telling them to welcome him. When he arrived he was very helpful to those who through grace trusted God, ²⁸ because he was able to strongly refute

[‡] **18:12** Gallio was the brother of Seneca, the Roman Stoic philosopher. [§] **18:12** Literally, “judgment seat,” or “judge’s bench.” Also in 18:16-17. * **18:18** Vow: probably a Nazirite vow (see Numbers 6). † **18:22** Possibly the church members in Jerusalem.

the Jews in public debate, demonstrating from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.

19

¹ While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul took the inland route and arrived in Ephesus where he found some believers. ² “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” he asked them.

“No, we haven’t heard anything about a Holy Spirit,” they told him.

³ “So what baptism did you receive?” he asked.

“John’s baptism,” they replied.

⁴ “John baptized with the baptism of repentance,” said Paul. He told the people that they should trust in the one who would come after him—that is, they should trust in Jesus. ⁵ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ After Paul had placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. ⁷ There were about twelve of them in total.

⁸ Paul went to the synagogue and over the course of the next three months spoke boldly to those who were there, discussing with them and trying to convince them about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But some of them were stubborn, and refused to accept. They denounced the Way* to the crowd. So Paul gave up on them and left the synagogue, taking the believers with him. Then he had discussions every day at the hall of Tyrannus.

¹⁰ This went on for the next two years, with the result that everyone who lived in the province of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord. ¹¹ God performed unusual miracles through Paul, ¹² so much so that they took handkerchiefs or aprons Paul had touched to heal the sick and to drive out evil spirits.

¹³ Some Jews who were going around exorcising decided to use the name of the Lord Jesus when they drove out evil spirits. They’d say, “I command you to leave in the name of the Jesus that Paul talks about.” ¹⁴ The ones doing this were the seven sons of Sceva, a Jew and a chief priest.

¹⁵ But one day an evil spirit responded, “I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but who are you?” ¹⁶ The man with the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered all of them. He beat them so severely that they ran out of the house, naked and badly injured.

¹⁷ People living in Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks, heard about this. They were all in awe at what had happened, and the name of the Lord Jesus gained great respect. ¹⁸ Many came to trust in the Lord and confessed their sins, openly admitting their evil practices. ¹⁹ A number of those who used to practice sorcery collected their books on magic and brought them to be burned publicly. They worked out how much the books were worth, and the total was fifty thousand silver coins. ²⁰ In this way the word of the Lord grew strong and spread widely.

²¹ Some time after this Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing first through Macedonia and Achaia. “After I’ve been there, I’ll have to go

* **19:9** “The Way”: another early term for Christianity.

to Rome,” he said. ²² He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed on for a while in the province of Asia.

²³ It was about this time that serious problems occurred regarding the Way. ²⁴ A man called Demetrius, a silversmith, was producing small silver replicas of the temple of the goddess Artemis. This business brought in a great deal of work for such craftsmen. ²⁵ Demetrius called them together, along with others who worked in similar trades, and said, “Fellow-workers, you know that it's through this business we make our money. ²⁶ As you're no doubt aware from what you've seen and heard—not just here in Ephesus, but throughout almost the whole of Asia—this man Paul has convinced and misled many people, telling them that there are no such things as gods made by human hands. ²⁷ It's not just a question that our business will be in danger of losing respect, but that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be considered worthless. Artemis herself would be dethroned from her high position as the one whom everyone in Asia and the whole world worships.”

²⁸ When they heard this they became furious, and shouted out, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” ²⁹ The city was in complete chaos. People rushed towards the amphitheatre, dragging along with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions who were from Macedonia. ³⁰ Paul thought he should confront the mob, but the other believers would not let him. ³¹ Some of the provincial officials,[†] who were Paul's friends, also sent a message begging him not to go into the amphitheatre.

³² Some were shouting one thing, and some something else, for the crowd that had gathered was in total confusion—most of them had no idea why they were there. ³³ The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander to the front. Alexander motioned with his hand for them to be quiet, wanting to explain things to the people. ³⁴ But when they realized he was a Jew, they all took up a chant that lasted for about two hours, shouting “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

³⁵ After the town clerk had managed to quiet the mob down, he told them, “People of Ephesus, who doesn't know that the city of the Ephesians is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image that fell from heaven? ³⁶ Since these facts can't be denied, you should stay calm—don't do anything rash. ³⁷ You have brought these men here, but they haven't robbed any temples or blasphemed against our goddess. ³⁸ So if Demetrius and the other craftsmen have a complaint against anyone, then go to the authorities[‡] and the courts. They can press charges there. ³⁹ If there's anything else, it can be taken to the legal assembly. ⁴⁰ In fact we ourselves are in danger of being accused of being responsible for this riot today, since there was no reason for it, and we can't justify why it happened.” ⁴¹ When he had finished speaking, he dismissed the crowd.

20

¹ Once the uproar had died down, Paul called the believers together

[†] 19:31 Literally, “Asiarchs.” [‡] 19:38 Literally, “proconsuls.”

and encouraged them. Then he said goodbye, and left for Macedonia. ² He passed through the area, sharing many words of encouragement with the believers there, and then traveled on to Greece. ³ After he had spent three months there and just as he was about to sail to Syria, it was discovered that the Jews were plotting against him. So he decided to return through Macedonia. ⁴ These were the people who traveled with him: Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus; Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica; Gaius from Derbe; Timothy; Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. ⁵ They went on ahead and waited for us at Troas. ⁶ After the Feast of Unleavened Bread we sailed from Philippi, and met them five days later in Troas, where we spent a week.

⁷ Paul was speaking on the first day of the week as we gathered together to break bread. He was planning to leave in the morning, and went on speaking until midnight. ⁸ (The upstairs room where we were meeting was lit by many lamps.)

⁹ A young man called Eutychus was sitting in the window, and he began feeling very sleepy. As Paul went on speaking he fell sound asleep and tumbled down from the third story. When they picked him up they found he was dead.

¹⁰ Paul went down, stretched himself out upon him, and hugged him. "Don't worry, he's alive," he said.

¹¹ Paul went back upstairs, broke bread, and ate together with them. He went on talking with them until dawn came, and then he left. ¹² They took the young man home alive and well, and were very thankful for this.

¹³ We went on ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos. There we were due to pick up Paul, since that was what he had planned as he decided to travel on foot. ¹⁴ He did indeed meet us at Assos. We picked him up, and went on to Mitylene. ¹⁵ Sailing on from there we arrived off Kios, and the next day we stopped briefly at Samos, and the following day we arrived at Miletus. ¹⁶ Paul had planned to sail on past Ephesus so he wouldn't have to spend time in the province of Asia. He was keen to get to Jerusalem in time for the Day of Pentecost.

¹⁷ From Miletus Paul sent a message to the elders of the church in Ephesus. ¹⁸ When they arrived, he told them, "You know how I always behaved while I was with you from the first day I arrived in the province of Asia. ¹⁹ I served the Lord in humility and in tears. I put up with the troubles and stress caused by the plots of the Jews. ²⁰ However, I never held back from sharing with you anything that would be to your benefit, and I taught you in public, going from house to house. ²¹ I witnessed both to Jews and Greeks that it was essential to repent and turn to God, and to trust in our Lord Jesus Christ. ²² Now the Spirit is insisting that I go to Jerusalem, and I have no idea what will happen to me there. ²³ All I know is that in every city I visit the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and suffering are waiting for me. ²⁴ But I don't consider my life as worth anything to me. I only want to finish my mission and the ministry that the Lord Jesus gave to me, to witness to the good news of the grace of God.

²⁵ Now I am certain that you will not see my face again, you among whom I shared the news of the kingdom. ²⁶ So I declare to you today that I am not responsible if anyone is lost.* ²⁷ I didn't hesitate to tell you everything God wants you to know. ²⁸ Take care of yourselves and of all the flock, which the Holy Spirit has given to you to supervise. Feed the Lord's church which he bought with his own blood. ²⁹ I know that after I leave vicious wolves will come among you, and won't spare the flock. ³⁰ From among your own group men will rise up perverting what is right and good so they can lead believers to follow them. ³¹ So watch out! Don't forget that for three years I went on instructing all of you night and day, often crying over you. ³² Now I commit you in God's care and to the message of his grace, which is able to build you up and provide you with the inheritance that belongs to all who are kept right with him. ³³ I never had any desire for anyone's silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴ You know that I worked with my own hands to provide for my own needs, as well as for those who were with me. ³⁵ I have given you an example in everything: work to help those who are weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

³⁶ When he finished speaking, he knelt down and prayed with all of them. ³⁷ They all wept as they hugged and kissed him. ³⁸ What upset them the most was what he said about never seeing him again... Then they walked down to the ship with him.

21

¹ After we had said goodbye to them, we sailed directly to Cos, and the next day on to Rhodes. From there we went to Patara ² where we found a ship going to Phoenicia. We went on board and set sail. ³ We passed within sight of Cyprus on the left, and continued on to Syria where we landed at Tyre, where the ship's cargo was to be unloaded. ⁴ We found the believers and stayed there for a week. Through the Holy Spirit the believers told Paul not to go to Jerusalem. ⁵ When the time was up, we left and went back to the ship to continue our journey. All the believers, and wives and children, accompanied us as we left the city. We knelt down on the beach and prayed, and said our goodbyes. ⁶ Then we boarded the ship, and they went back home. ⁷ Our voyage from Tyre ended at Ptolemais where we greeted the believers and stayed with them for a day.

⁸ The next day we left and went to Caesarea. We stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist (one of the Seven).* ⁹ Philip had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. ¹⁰ After we'd stayed there for several days, a prophet called Agabus arrived from Judea. ¹¹ Approaching us, he took Paul's belt, and bound his own hands and feet. Then he said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'This is how the Jews in Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt, and will hand him over to the foreigners.' "

* **20:26** Literally, "I am not guilty of the blood of anyone." Probably referencing Ezekiel 33:8-9. * **21:8** One of the seven chosen to help with food distribution (6:5).

¹² When we heard this, we and the believers there pleaded with Paul not to go to Jerusalem. ¹³ However, Paul answered, "What are you doing, crying and breaking my heart? I'm ready not only to be bound in Jerusalem, but to die in Jerusalem for the sake of the Lord Jesus." ¹⁴ Since he couldn't be persuaded otherwise we gave up, and said, "May the Lord's will be done."

¹⁵ After this we packed our bags and headed for Jerusalem. ¹⁶ Some of the believers from Caesarea came with us, and they took us to the home of Mnason, where we were going to stay. He came from Cyprus and was one of the early believers.

¹⁷ When we arrived in Jerusalem, the believers there welcomed us warmly. ¹⁸ The next day Paul went with us to see James, and all the church leaders were there. ¹⁹ After greeting them, Paul went through in detail everything God had done for the foreigners through his ministry.

²⁰ When they heard what had happened they praised God and told Paul, "Brother, you can see how many thousands of Jews have come to trust in the Lord, and they all keep the Law very carefully. ²¹ They have been told that you teach Jews living among the foreigners to ignore the Law of Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children and not to follow our customs.

²² So what should we do about it? People will certainly get to hear that you've arrived here. ²³ This is what we want you to do: Four men among us have taken a vow. ²⁴ Go with them and perform the purification rituals with them, paying for them to have their heads shaved. That way everyone will know there's no truth to the rumors they've heard about you, but that you yourself observe the Law in the way that you live. ²⁵ As to the foreigners who have trusted the Lord, we already wrote a letter regarding our decision that they should refrain from eating food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from any animal that is strangled, and from sexual immorality."

²⁶ So Paul took the men with him, and the next day went and purified himself with them. Then he went to the Temple to give notice regarding the end of the time of purification and the offering which would be made for each of them.

²⁷ The seven days were almost over when some Jews from Asia saw Paul in the Temple and incited the crowd against him and seized him. ²⁸ "Men of Israel, help!" they shouted. "This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere to oppose our people, the Law, and the Temple. He's also brought Greeks into the Temple, defiling this holy place." ²⁹ (They said this because they had seen him previously in the city with Trophimus the Ephesian and presumed that Paul had brought him into the Temple.) ³⁰ The whole city was shocked by this and people came running. They grabbed hold of Paul and dragged him out of the Temple. Immediately the doors were shut. ³¹ As they tried to kill him, news came to the Roman troop commander that the whole of Jerusalem was in an uproar.

³² Immediately the commander took some centurions and soldiers and ran down to the mob. When the mob saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. ³³ Then the commander came

over and arrested Paul, and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He asked who he was, and what he had done. ³⁴ Some in the mob were shouting one thing and some another. Since the commander couldn't find out the truth due to all the noise and confusion, he ordered Paul brought into the fortress.

³⁵ When Paul got to the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers because the mob was so violent. ³⁶ People in the crowd that was following were shouting, "Get rid of him!" ³⁷ Just as he was about to be taken inside the fortress, Paul asked the commander, "Can I tell you something?"

"Do you know Greek?" asked the commander. ³⁸ "Aren't you the Egyptian who recently incited a rebellion and led four thousand Assassins into the desert?"

³⁹ "I am a Jew, a citizen of Tarsus in Cilicia, an important city," Paul replied. "Please let me talk to the people."

⁴⁰ The commander gave Paul permission to speak. So Paul stood on the stairs and motioned for silence. When it was quiet he spoke to them in Aramaic.

22

¹ "Brother and fathers," he said, "Please listen as I give my defense before you." ² When they heard him speaking to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet.

³ "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia," he began. "However, I was brought up here in this city, and sat at the feet of Gamaliel. I was taught to strictly observe the law of our fathers. I was zealous for God, just like all of you here today, ⁴ and I persecuted the people of this Way—having them put to death, and imprisoning both men and women.

⁵ As the high priest and the council of the elders can also verify, I received from them letters of authorization addressed to the Jewish brothers in Damascus, and went there to arrest these people and bring them as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

⁶ At around noon, while I was on my way and approaching Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven shone all around me. ⁷ I fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?'

⁸ 'Who are you, Lord?' I answered.

'I am Jesus of Nazareth, the one you are persecuting,' he told me.

⁹ Those who were traveling with me did see the light, but they didn't hear the voice that spoke to me.

¹⁰ 'What shall I do, Lord?' I asked.

The Lord told me, 'Get up and go into Damascus, and there you'll be told everything that's arranged for you to do.'

¹¹ Since I couldn't see because of the brightness of the light, those who were with me led me by the hand into Damascus. ¹² There a man called Ananias came to see me. He was a religious man who observed the law, and was highly respected by the Jews who lived in the town. ¹³ He stood in front of me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive back your sight.' At that very moment I could see again, and I looked at him.

14 He told me, ‘The God of our fathers has appointed you to know his will, to see the one who is truly good and right,* and to listen to what he has to say to you. 15 You will testify for him to everyone about what you have seen and heard. So what are you waiting for? 16 Get up, be baptized, and wash away your sins as you call on his name.’

17 I returned to Jerusalem, and as I was praying in the Temple, I fell into a trance. 18 I saw a vision of the Lord telling me, ‘Hurry! You need to leave Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept what you are telling them about me.’

19 I replied, ‘Lord, they certainly know that I went from synagogue to synagogue, beating and imprisoning those who trusted in you. 20 When Stephen was killed for testifying about you I was standing there in full agreement with those who killed him, holding their coats for them.’

21 The Lord told me, ‘Leave now, for I am sending you far away to the foreigners.’ ”

22 Up until this point they had listened to what he was saying, but then they started shouting, “Get rid of this man from the earth—he doesn’t deserve to live!” 23 They screamed and tore off their coats and threw dust into the air. 24 The commander ordered Paul brought into the fortress, and gave orders for him to be interrogated by flogging so he could find out the reason people were shouting so much against Paul. 25 As they stretched him out and tied him down to flog him, Paul asked the centurion standing there, “Is it legal to flog a Roman citizen who hasn’t had a trial?”

26 When the centurion heard what Paul said, he went to the commander and asked him, “What are you doing? This man is a Roman citizen.” 27 The commander came, and asked Paul, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?”

Paul replied, “Yes I am.”

28 “I paid a lot of money to buy Roman citizenship,” said the commander.

“But I was born a citizen,” Paul replied.

29 Those who were about to interrogate Paul left immediately. The commander was worried when he found out that Paul was a Roman citizen because he had placed him in chains.†

30 The next day, wanting to find out the reason why the Jews were accusing Paul, he had him released and taken before the chief priests and the whole council which he ordered to assemble. He had Paul brought down and placed him before them.

23

1 Paul, looking straight at the council, said, “Brothers, right up to now I have always conducted myself before God with a clear conscience.”

2 Ananias the high priest ordered the officers standing beside Paul to hit him on the mouth.

3 Paul said to him, “God will hit you, you whitewashed wall! You’re sitting there to judge me according to the law, and you order me to be hit in contravention of the law!”

* 22:14 Referring to Jesus. † 22:29 It was illegal to place a Roman citizen in chains who had not first been found guilty.

⁴ The officers standing beside Paul said, "How dare you insult the high priest!"

⁵ "Brothers, I didn't know that he was the high priest," Paul replied. "As Scriptures say, 'You must not speak evil of any ruler of your people.' "*"

⁶ When Paul realized that some of the council were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, he shouted out, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee! I'm on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead!"

⁷ When he said this, a tremendous argument broke out between the Pharisees and Sadducees that split the council. ⁸ (The Sadducees say there is no resurrection from the dead, no angels, and no spirits, but Pharisees believe in all of these.)

⁹ A great commotion erupted and some of the Pharisee teachers of the law stood up and argued fiercely, saying, "We find this man not guilty! Maybe a spirit spoke to him, or an angel!"

¹⁰ The argument was getting out of hand, so the commander, concerned that they would tear Paul to pieces, ordered the soldiers to go and rescue him from them by force, and take him back into the fortress. ¹¹ Afterwards, during the night, the Lord stood by Paul, and told him, "Keep up your courage! Just as you have given your testimony about me in Jerusalem, so you must be my witness in Rome as well."

¹² Next day some Jews plotted together, and they took an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. ¹³ Over forty were part of this conspiracy.

¹⁴ They went to the chief priests and leaders and said, "We have taken a solemn oath not to eat anything until we have killed Paul. ¹⁵ So you and the council should send word to the commander that he should bring Paul down to meet with you, as if you wanted to examine his case in more detail. We're ready to kill him along the way."

¹⁶ But Paul's nephew (his sister's son) heard about their planned ambush, and he went into the fortress and told Paul about it. ¹⁷ Paul called over one of the centurions, and told him, "Take this young man to the commander, because he has some information to share with him."

¹⁸ So the centurion took Paul's nephew and brought him to the commander and told him, "The prisoner Paul called me over and asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to tell you." ¹⁹ The commander took the young man by the hand and drew him aside. "What do you have to tell me?" he asked quietly.

²⁰ "The Jews have arranged to ask you to bring Paul to the council tomorrow, as if they wanted to ask more detailed questions about his case," he explained. ²¹ "Please don't listen to them, because they have planned to ambush him with more than forty men who have taken an oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They're ready right now, waiting for you to agree to the request."

²² The commander sent the young man on his way, warning him, "Don't tell anyone that you've told me about this." ²³ He summoned two centurions and told them, "Get two hundred soldiers ready to

* 23:5 Quoting Exodus 22:28.

go to Caesarea, together with seventy cavalry-men and two hundred spearmen. Be ready to leave at nine p.m. tonight. ²⁴ Provide horses for Paul to ride to make sure he gets to Governor Felix safely.”

²⁵ He also wrote a letter that went like this:

²⁶ “From Claudius Lysias to His Excellency Governor Felix, greetings!
²⁷ This man was seized by the Jews and they were about to kill him, when I arrived on the scene with soldiers and rescued him, because I had found out he was a Roman citizen. ²⁸ I wanted to know the reason for their accusations, so I took him before their council. ²⁹ I found out the charges against him had to do with issues regarding their law, but he was not guilty of anything that merited death or imprisonment. ³⁰ When I discovered a plot against this man I sent him to you right away, ordering his accusers to make their complaints before you.”

³¹ So the soldiers followed their orders and took Paul overnight to Antipatris. ³² The next morning they sent him on with the cavalry, and went back to the fortress.

³³ When the cavalry arrived at Caesarea they delivered the letter to the governor and brought Paul before him. ³⁴ After reading the letter, the governor asked Paul what province he came from. When he learned he was from Cilicia he told Paul, ³⁵ “I will investigate your case when your accusers arrive.” He ordered Paul detained in Herod’s palace.

24

¹ Five days later Ananias the high priest arrived with some of the Jewish leaders, and with a lawyer called Tertullus. They presented formal charges against Paul to the governor. ² When Paul was summoned, Tertullus began making his case against him. He said, “Your Excellency Governor Felix, we have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and as a result of your wise judgment reforms have been enacted for the benefit of the nation. ³ All of us throughout the country are so very grateful to you for this.

⁴ But in order not to bore you, please be so kind as to give us your attention for a short while. ⁵ We discovered that this man is a real pest,* stirring up rebellions among Jews all over the world, a ringleader of the Nazarene sect. ⁶ He tried to defile the Temple, so we arrested him. ⁷ † ⁸ By interrogating him yourself you will discover the truth of our accusations.” ⁹ The Jews joined in, saying that this was all true.

¹⁰ The Governor motioned for Paul to respond. “Recognizing you have been a judge over this nation for many years, I gladly make my defense,” Paul began. ¹¹ “You can easily verify that I arrived in Jerusalem to worship just twelve days ago. ¹² Nobody found me arguing in the Temple with anyone, or inciting people to riot in any synagogue or anywhere in the city. ¹³ Nor can they prove to you any of their accusations against me.

¹⁴ But I will admit this to you: I serve the God of our fathers following the beliefs of the Way, which they call a heretical sect. I

* 24:5 Literally, “plague.” † 24:7 There is doubt as to the originality of verses 24:6b-8a and are omitted from the standard Greek text.

believe everything the law teaches and what is written in the books of the prophets. ¹⁵ I have the same hope in God that they do, believing that there will be a resurrection of the good and the wicked. ¹⁶ Consequently I try to make sure I always have a clear conscience before God and everyone.

¹⁷ Having been away for a few years I returned to bring some money to help the poor and to give offerings to God. ¹⁸ That's what they found me doing in the Temple—completing the ceremony of purification. There was no crowd and no disturbance. ¹⁹ But some Jews from the province of Asia were there, who should be present here before you today to bring their charges, if they have anything against me. ²⁰ Otherwise let these men here explain themselves what crime they found me guilty of when I stood before the council, ²¹ except for the time when I shouted out to them, 'I am on trial before you today because of my belief in the resurrection of the dead.' "

²² Felix who was well-informed about the Way then adjourned the trial. "When Lysias the commander comes I will make my decision regarding your case," he said. ²³ He ordered the centurion to keep Paul in custody but to allow him some measure of freedom and to let Paul's friends care for him without interference.

²⁴ Some days later Felix returned with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish. He sent for Paul and listened to him speak about trusting in Christ Jesus. ²⁵ He discussed with them about living right, self-control, and the coming judgment. Felix became alarmed and told Paul, "You can go now, and I'll send for you when I get the chance." ²⁶ Hoping that Paul would give him a bribe, Felix often sent for Paul and talked with him. ²⁷ Two years passed and Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. To stay in favor with the Jews, Felix left Paul in prison.

25

¹ Three days after Festus had arrived in the province* he left Caesarea to go to Jerusalem. ² The chief priests and Jewish leaders came to him and brought their charges against Paul. ³ They begged Festus as a favor to send Paul to Jerusalem, plotting to ambush and kill him on the way. ⁴ But Festus replied that Paul was in custody at Caesarea and that he himself would be there shortly. ⁵ "Your leaders can come with me, and make their accusation against this man, if he has done anything wrong," he told them.

⁶ After staying there with them for no more than eight or ten days, Festus returned to Caesarea. The following day he took his seat as judge, and ordered that Paul be brought before him. ⁷ When he came in the Jews that had come from Jerusalem surrounded him and brought many serious charges against him that they couldn't prove.

⁸ Paul defended himself, telling them, "I have not sinned at all against the Jewish law, the Temple, or Caesar." ⁹ But Festus, who was looking to gain favor with the Jews, asked Paul, "Are you willing to go to Jerusalem and be tried before me there about these matters?"

* 25:1 The Roman province of Judea.

¹⁰ "I'm standing before Caesar's court to be tried, right where I should be," Paul replied. "I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you very well know. ¹¹ If I've committed a crime and have done something that deserves death, I do not ask to be pardoned from a death sentence. But if there's no substance to these accusations they're making against me, then nobody has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!" ¹² Festus then conferred with the council, and replied, "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you shall go!"

¹³ Several days later, King Agrippa and his sister Bernice arrived in Caesarea and came to pay their respects to Festus. ¹⁴ They were staying some time so Festus presented Paul's case to the king, explaining, "There's a man that Felix left as a prisoner here. ¹⁵ When I was in Jerusalem, the Jewish chief priests and leaders came and made accusations against him and asked me to sentence him. ¹⁶ I replied that it is not according to Roman law to convict anyone without having them face their accusers and giving them the opportunity to defend themselves against the charges. ¹⁷ So when his accusers arrived here, I wasted no time and convened the court the very next day. I ordered the man to be brought in. ¹⁸ However, when the accusers got up they didn't bring charges of criminal acts as I expected. ¹⁹ Instead they brought up controversies over religious questions, and over a man called Jesus who was dead but whom Paul insisted was alive. ²⁰ Since I was undecided as to how to proceed in investigating such matters, I asked him if he was willing to go to Jerusalem and be tried there. ²¹ However, Paul appealed for his case to be heard by the emperor, so I ordered him detained until I could send him to Caesar."

²² "I would like to hear the man myself," Agrippa told Festus.

"I'll arrange for you to hear him tomorrow," Festus replied.

²³ The next day Agrippa arrived with Bernice in great ceremonial splendor and entered the auditorium with the commanders and leading citizens. Then Festus ordered Paul to be brought in.

²⁴ "King Agrippa, and everyone who is present here with us," Festus began, "you see before you this man whom all the Jewish people, both here and in Jerusalem, have complained to me about, shouting that he shouldn't be allowed to live. ²⁵ However, I discovered he has not committed any crime that deserves death, and since he has appealed to the emperor I decided to send him there. ²⁶ But I don't have anything specific to write about him to His Imperial Majesty. That's why I have brought him before you so I can have something definite to write. ²⁷ It doesn't seem fair to me to send on a prisoner without explaining the charges made against him."

26

¹ Agrippa then said to Paul, "You are free to speak on your own behalf."

With a sweep of his arm, Paul began his defense. ² "I am delighted, King Agrippa, to make my defense before you today regarding everything I am accused of by the Jews, ³ particularly because you are an expert in all Jewish issues and customs. I beg your patient indulgence as you listen to what I have to say.

⁴ All the Jews know my life story—from my earliest days beginning in my own country and then in Jerusalem. ⁵ They have known me for a long time and can verify, if they choose to, that I have followed the religious school that observes our faith in the strictest way—I lived as a Pharisee.

⁶ Now I am standing here to be judged regarding the promised hope God gave to our fathers ⁷ that our twelve tribes hoped to receive as they continually dedicated themselves in God's service. Yes, it's because of this hope that I'm accused by the Jews, Your Majesty! ⁸ Why should any of you think it's unbelievable that God raises the dead?

⁹ Previously I was sincerely convinced I should do as much as I could to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ This is what I did in Jerusalem. I threw many of the believers in prison, having been given authority to do this by the chief priests. When they were sentenced to death I cast my vote against them. ¹¹ I had them punished in all the synagogues, trying to make them recant. I was so furiously opposed to them that I went to cities outside our country to persecute them.

¹² That's why one day I was on my way to Damascus with the authority and orders from the chief priests. ¹³ At about noon as I was on my way, Your Majesty, I saw a light from heaven that blazed brighter than the sun. It shone around me and those who were traveling with me. ¹⁴ All of us fell to the ground. Then I heard a voice speaking to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It's hard for you to fight against me!'^{*}

¹⁵ 'Who are you, Lord?' I asked.

'I am Jesus, the one you're persecuting,' the Lord replied. ¹⁶ 'But pick yourself up and get to your feet. The reason why I've appeared to you is to appoint you as my servant, to be a witness for me, telling others how you have seen me and everything I will reveal to you. ¹⁷ I will save you from your own people and from the foreigners. I am sending you to them ¹⁸ to open their eyes so they can turn from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, and so that they can receive forgiveness for their sins and a place with those who are set right as they trust in me.'

¹⁹ Clearly, King Agrippa, I could not disobey this vision from heaven. ²⁰ First in Damascus, then in Jerusalem, and then all over Judea and also to the foreigners I shared the message of repentance: how they should turn to God, demonstrating their repentance through their actions. ²¹ That's why the Jews seized me in the Temple and tried to kill me.

²² God has looked after me so I can stand here today as a witness to everyone, both to ordinary people and to those who are important. I am only repeating what Moses and the prophets said would happen—²³ how the Messiah had to suffer, and that by being the first to rise from the dead he would announce the light of God's salvation† to both Jews and foreigners."

²⁴ Festus interrupted Paul as he made his defense, shouting out, "Paul, you've gone mad! All your knowledge is driving you insane!"

^{*} **26:14** Literally, "kick against the goads"—the image of the prods used to direct livestock.

† **26:23** Implied. The original simply says "light."

²⁵ “I’m not mad, Festus your Excellency,” Paul replied. “What I am saying is true and makes sense. ²⁶ The king recognizes this, and I’m explaining it very clearly. I am sure that he is aware of what’s been happening, because none of this took place as if it were hidden in a corner.

²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe what the prophets said? I’m sure you do!”

²⁸ “Do you think you can convince me to become a Christian so quickly?” Agrippa asked Paul.

²⁹ “Whether it takes a short time or a long time doesn’t matter,” Paul answered. “But my prayer to God is that not just you, but everybody listening to me today would become like me—except for these chains!”

³⁰ The king stood up, along with the governor and Bernice, and everyone who had been sitting with them. ³¹ They conferred together after they had left. “This man hasn’t done anything that deserves death or imprisonment,” they concluded. ³² Agrippa told Festus, “He could have been freed if he hadn’t appealed to Caesar.”

27

¹ When the time came for us to sail to Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion called Julius of the Imperial Regiment. ² We boarded a ship based in Adramyttium that was headed to the coastal ports of the province of Asia, and we set sail. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, went with us. ³ The next day we had a brief stop at Sidon, and Julius was kind enough to let Paul go ashore and visit his friends so they could provide what he needed.

⁴ We set out from there and sailed to the leeward of Cyprus because the winds were against us. ⁵ Then we sailed directly across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, arriving at the port of Myra in Lycia. ⁶ There the centurion found a ship from Alexandria that would be sailing to Italy, and arranged for us to join it.

⁷ We sailed slowly for several days and eventually arrived off Cnidus. But since the winds wouldn’t allow us to continue we sailed across to the lee of Crete, near to Salmone. ⁸ With some difficulty we made our way along the coast until we arrived at a place called Fair Havens, near to the town of Lasea. ⁹ We’d lost a lot of time, and the voyage was becoming dangerous because it was now after the Fast.* Paul warned them, ¹⁰ “Men, I predict that this voyage will result in much hardship and loss—not just of the cargo and the ship, but also our very lives.” ¹¹ But the centurion paid more attention to the advice of the ship’s captain and its owner than to what Paul said.

¹² Since the harbor was not large enough to over-winter in, the majority were in favor of leaving and trying if possible to reach Phoenix and spend the winter there—a harbor in Crete that faces northwest and southwest.

¹³ When a moderate south wind began to blow, they thought they could do what they planned. They pulled up the anchor and sailed close inshore along the coast of Crete. ¹⁴ But it wasn’t long before a

* **27:9** “The Fast”: The Day of Atonement, probably in October, so sailing at this season would be problematic.

hurricane-force wind called a “northeaster” blew from the land. ¹⁵ The ship was forced out to sea and could not face into the wind. So we had to give in and allow ourselves to be driven before the wind. ¹⁶ We were eventually able to run into the lee of a small island called Cauda, and managed with some difficulty to secure the ship's boat[†] on board. ¹⁷ After hoisting it aboard, the sailors bound ropes around the hull to strengthen it. Then, worried that they would be wrecked on the Syrtis banks, they lowered the sea anchor and allowed the ship to be driven along.

¹⁸ The following day as we were violently thrown about by the storm, the crew started throwing the cargo overboard. ¹⁹ On the third day they grabbed the ship's gear and tossed it into the sea. ²⁰ We hadn't seen the sun or the stars for many days as the storm beat down on us; so any hope of our being saved was lost.

²¹ Nobody had eaten anything for a long time. Then Paul stood before them and told them, “Men, you should have listened to me and not sailed from Crete. Then you could have avoided all this hardship and loss. ²² But now I advise you keep up your courage, because nobody is going to be lost, just the ship. ²³ Last night an angel of my God[‡] and whom I serve, stood beside me.

²⁴ ‘Don't be afraid, Paul,’ he told me. ‘You have to stand trial before Caesar. See, God has graciously given to you everyone who is sailing with you.’ ²⁵ So men, have courage! I trust God, and I'm convinced things will happen just as I was told. ²⁶ However, we will be wrecked on some island.”

²⁷ At around midnight on the fourteenth night of the storm, still being blown over the Sea of Adria, the crew suspected they were getting close to land. ²⁸ They checked the depth and found it was forty meters, and a little while later they checked again and it was thirty meters.

²⁹ They were concerned that we might be wrecked on rocks, so they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for daylight to come.

³⁰ The crew tried to leave the ship, and had lowered the ship's boat into the water with the pretext that they were going to drop anchors from the ship's bow. ³¹ But Paul told the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless the crew stays with the ship, you will be lost.” ³² So the soldiers cut the ropes holding the ship's boat, and let it loose.

³³ At daybreak Paul urged all of them to eat something. “It's been fourteen days now that you haven't eaten anything because you've been so worried and preoccupied,” he told them. ³⁴ “Please do what I say and eat some food. This will help give you strength. For not even a hair from anyone's head is going to be lost!” ³⁵ When he'd finished speaking he picked up a loaf of bread, and gave thanks to God for it in front of everyone. Then he broke the bread, and began to eat. ³⁶ Everyone was encouraged and they ate too. ³⁷ The total number of people on board was two hundred and seventy-six.

³⁸ Once they'd had enough to eat, the crew made the ship lighter by throwing the supplies of wheat overboard. ³⁹ When dawn came they didn't recognize the coastline, but they saw a bay that had a beach.

[†] **27:16** “Ship's boat”—a small boat like a dinghy or lifeboat, sometimes towed behind a ship, sometimes tied down on deck. Also in verse 30. [‡] **27:23** Literally, “the God to whom I belong.”

They planned to try running the ship aground there. ⁴⁰ So they cut the anchor ropes, leaving the anchors in the sea. At the same time they untied the ropes holding the rudders, raised the foresail to the wind, and made for the beach.

⁴¹ But they struck a sandbar and the ship grounded. The bow hit, and stuck so firm it couldn't be moved, while the stern began to be broken apart by the pounding surf.

⁴² The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners so none of them could swim away and escape. ⁴³ But the centurion, because he wanted to save Paul's life, prevented them from doing this, and ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for land. ⁴⁴ The rest grabbed hold of planks and other wreckage, so that everyone was able to reach land safely.

28

¹ When we were safe ashore, we discovered that we were on the island of Malta. ² The people there were very kind—they started a fire and called all of us over so we could warm up from the rain and the cold. ³ Paul collected a bundle of firewood and threw it on the fire. But a poisonous snake was driven out of the bundle because of the heat and bit him, fastening itself on his hand. ⁴ When the people there saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer. Even though he escaped death from the sea, Justice won't let him live."

⁵ However, Paul shook the snake off into the fire, and suffered no ill-effects. ⁶ They were expecting him to swell up, or suddenly fall down dead. But after waiting a long time, they saw that nothing bad had happened to him so they changed their minds and decided he must be a god.

⁷ Nearby were lands that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us and looked after us for three days very hospitably. ⁸ Now Publius' father was sick, lying in bed suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him, and prayed for him, placed his hands on him, and healed him. ⁹ After this happened, everyone else who was sick on the island came and was healed. ¹⁰ They presented us with many gifts, and when we had to sail they provided everything we needed for the voyage.

¹¹ After a three month stay we set sail aboard a ship from Alexandria having a figurehead of the Heavenly Twins* that had spent the winter at the island. ¹² We stopped at Syracuse, and spent three days there. ¹³ From there we sailed on to Rhegium. The following day a south wind blew, and on the second day we arrived at the port of Puteoli, ¹⁴ where we discovered some believers. They asked us to stay with them for a week.

So we came to Rome. ¹⁵ When some of the believers from Rome heard we had arrived they came to meet us at the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns. When Paul saw them, he was thankful to God and much encouraged. ¹⁶ When we entered Rome, Paul was permitted to stay under house arrest with a soldier to guard him.

* **28:11** Named after the twin gods Castor and Pollux.

¹⁷ Three days later Paul invited the Jewish leaders there to come to see him. When they were all together he told them, “Brothers, even though I had not done anything wrong against the people or the customs of our forefathers, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Roman authorities. ¹⁸ After they had interrogated me they wanted to release me because I had done nothing that warranted execution. ¹⁹ But the Jewish leaders opposed this, so I was forced to appeal to Caesar—not that I had any accusations against my own people. ²⁰ That’s why I asked to see you, and talk to you, because it is on account of the hope of Israel that I am chained up like this.”

²¹ “We have not received any letters from Judea about you, and none of our people have come here with reports against you or to speak badly of you,” they told him. ²² “But we do want to hear from you what you believe—especially regarding this sect, which we know is condemned everywhere.”

²³ They made an appointment to meet with him. On that day many people came to where he was staying. From morning till night Paul was explaining to them, telling them about the kingdom of God. He tried to convince them about Jesus using the writings of the law of Moses and the prophets. ²⁴ Some accepted what Paul said, but some refused to believe. ²⁵ They couldn’t agree among themselves, and they left after Paul told them this: “The Holy Spirit said it well through Isaiah the prophet to your forefathers, ²⁶ ‘Go to these people and tell them: Even though you hear, you won’t ever understand, and even though you see, you won’t ever comprehend. ²⁷ For the minds of these people have become calloused and hard, their ears cannot hear, their eyes are shut, in case they might see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their minds, and might come back to me and I would heal them.’[†]

²⁸ Consequently you should know that this salvation that comes from God has been sent to the foreigners and they will listen.” ²⁹ ‡

³⁰ For two full years Paul stayed there in the house he rented, welcoming everyone who came to see him. ³¹ He spoke of the kingdom of God, and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ very boldly. No one prevented him.

[†] **28:27** Quoting Isaiah 6:9-10. [‡] **28:29** This verse is not in all manuscripts, and some commentators think it may have been added.

Romans

¹ This letter comes from Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ. I was called to be an apostle by God. God appointed me to announce the good news ² that he had previously promised through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures. ³ The good news is about his Son, whose human forefather was David, ⁴ but who was revealed as God's Son by his resurrection from the dead through the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus Christ our Lord. ⁵ It was through him that I received the privilege of becoming an apostle to call all nations to obedient trust in him. ⁶ You are also included among those who were called to belong to Jesus Christ.

⁷ I'm writing to all of you in Rome who are loved by God, and called to be his special people. Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

⁸ Let me begin by saying that I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because the way in which you trust in God is spoken about all over the world. ⁹ I'm always praying for you, as God can confirm—the God I serve with the whole of my being as I share the good news about his Son. ¹⁰ In my prayers I'm always asking that I might eventually come and see you, if that's what God wants. ¹¹ I really want to visit you and share with you a spiritual blessing to strengthen you. ¹² In this way we can be encouraged together by each others' trust in God, both your trust and mine. ¹³ I want you to know, my brothers and sisters, I often planned to visit you, but I was kept from coming up till now. I want to see some good spiritual results among you just as I've seen among other people.* ¹⁴ For I have an obligation to work for both the civilized and the uncivilized, both the educated and the uneducated. ¹⁵ That's why I'm really keen to come to Rome and share the good news with you.

¹⁶ I'm certainly not ashamed about the good news, for it's God's power to save everyone who trusts in him—to the Jewish people first, and then to everyone else as well. ¹⁷ For in the good news God is revealed as good and right,† trustworthy from start to finish. As Scripture says, “Those who are right with God live by trusting him.”‡

¹⁸ God's hostility§ is revealed from heaven against those who are godless and who are not morally right,* those who suppress the truth through the evil that they do. ¹⁹ What can be known about God is obvious, because he has made it very clear to them. ²⁰ Ever since the creation of the world, the invisible aspects of God—his eternal power and divinity—are clearly visible in what he has made. Such people have no excuse, ²¹ because even though they knew God, they did not praise him or thank him, but instead their thinking about God turned into complete foolishness, and darkness filled their empty minds.

* **1:13** Literally, “Gentiles.” † **1:17** Literally, “God's righteousness.” ‡ **1:17** The actual words in the original are, “the right (one) from trust will live.” The quotation is from Habakkuk 2:4. § **1:18** Literally, “anger.” There are issues in ascribing negative human emotions to God. * **1:18** “Right”: throughout Romans, Paul is speaking about moral rightness, not about being simply correct.

²² Even though they claimed to be wise, they became foolish. ²³ They exchanged the glory of the immortal God for idols, images of mortal human beings, birds, animals, and reptiles. ²⁴ So God abandoned them to the evil desires of their depraved minds, and they did shameful, degrading things to each other. ²⁵ They exchanged God's truth for a lie, worshipping and serving creatures instead of the Creator, who deserves praise forever. Amen.

²⁶ That's why God abandoned them to their evil desires. Their women exchanged natural sex for that which is unnatural, ²⁷ and in the same way the men gave up sex with women and burned with lust for each other. Men did indecent things to each other, and as a result they suffered the inevitable consequences of their perversions. ²⁸ Since they didn't consider it worthwhile to get to know God, he abandoned them to their worthless, distrustful way of thinking, doing things that should never be done. ²⁹ They filled themselves with all that's wrong: evil, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malice, and gossip. ³⁰ They're back-stabbers and God-haters. They're arrogant, proud, and boastful. They devise new ways of sinning. They rebel against their parents. ³¹ They don't want to understand, they don't keep their promises, they don't show any kindness or compassion. ³² Even though they realize exactly what God requires, they do things that deserve death. Not only do they do such things themselves, they also support others in doing them.

2

¹ So if you judge others you don't have any excuse, whoever you are! For in whatever way you condemn others, you're judging yourself, because you're doing the same things. ² We know that God's judgment on those who do such things is based on truth. ³ When you judge them do you really think that you however can avoid God's judgment? ⁴ Or is it that you're treating his wonderful kindness, tolerance, and patience with contempt, not realizing that God in his kindness is trying to lead you to repent? ⁵ Due to your hard-hearted attitude and your refusal to repent, you're making things far worse for yourself on the day of retribution when God's judgment is demonstrated to be absolutely right. ⁶ God will make sure everyone receives what they deserve according to what they've done.* ⁷ Those who have kept on trying to do what is good and right will receive glory and honor, immortality and eternal life. ⁸ But those who think only of themselves, rejecting the truth and deliberately choosing to do evil, will receive punishment and furious hostility. ⁹ Everyone who does evil will have trouble and suffering—the Jewish people first, and the foreigners too. ¹⁰ But everyone who does good will have glory, honor, and peace—the Jewish people first, and the foreigners too. ¹¹ God has no favorites.

¹² Those who sin even though they don't have the written law[†] are still lost, while those who sin that do have the written law will be

* **2:6** Quoting Psalms 62:12. † **2:12** Referring to the law written down by Moses. Those who don't have the written law are the "foreigners," while those who have the written law are the Jews.

condemned by that law. ¹³ Just listening to what the law says doesn't make you right in God's sight. It's those who *do* what the law says who are made right. ¹⁴ The foreigners don't have the written law, but when they instinctively do what it says, they are following the law even without having the written law. ¹⁵ In this way they show how the law works that's written in their minds. As they think about what they're doing, their conscience either accuses them for doing wrong or defends them for doing what is good and right. ¹⁶ The good news I share is that a day is coming when God will judge, through Jesus Christ, everyone's secret thoughts.

¹⁷ What about you who call yourself a Jew? You rely on the written law and boast about having a special relationship to God. ¹⁸ You know what he wants; you do what's right because you've been taught from the law. ¹⁹ You're absolutely sure that you can guide the blind, and that you are a light to those in the dark. ²⁰ You think you can set ignorant people straight, a teacher of "children," because you know from the law all the truth there is to know. ²¹ So if you're busy teaching others, why don't you teach yourself? You tell people not to steal, but are you stealing? ²² You tell people not to commit adultery, but are you committing adultery? You tell people not to worship idols, but do you profane temples?‡

²³ You boast about having the law, but don't you misrepresent God by breaking it? ²⁴ As Scripture says, "God's character is defamed among the foreigners because of you."§ ²⁵ Being circumcised* has value only if you do what the law says. But if you break the law, your circumcision is as worthless as those who are not circumcised at all. ²⁶ If a man who is not circumcised† keeps the law, he should be considered as being circumcised even though he's not. ²⁷ The uncircumcised foreigners who keep the law will condemn you if you break the law, even though you have the written law and circumcision. ²⁸ It's not what's on the outside that makes you a Jew; it's not the physical sign of circumcision. ²⁹ What makes you a Jew is on the inside, a "circumcision of the heart" that doesn't follow the letter of the law but the Spirit. Someone like that is looking for praise from God, not from people.

3

¹ So does a Jew have any advantage? Does circumcision have any benefits? ² Yes, there are many benefits! First of all, God's message was entrusted to them. ³ What if some of them didn't trust in God? Does their lack of trust in God obliterate the trustworthiness of God? ⁴ Of course not! Even if everyone else is proved to be lying, God always tells the truth. As Scripture says, "What you say will be proved right, and you will win your case* when you are judged."†

⁵ But if the fact that we're wrong helps to show that God is right, what should we conclude? That God is wrong to pronounce judgment

‡ 2:22 Or "rob temples." § 2:24 Quoting Isaiah 52:5. Literally, "the name of God," which has primarily to do with his character. * 2:25 Circumcision, given by God to Israel in the Old Testament, was a sign that they were his special people. † 2:26 Not circumcised, meaning a non-Jew or "foreigner." * 3:4 Or "you will be vindicated." † 3:4 Quoting Psalms 51:4.

on us? (I'm talking from a human perspective here.) ⁶ Of course not! How else could God judge the world? ⁷ Someone could say, "Why am I still condemned as a sinner if my lies make the truth of God and his glory more obvious in contrast?" ⁸ Is it a case of, "Let's sin to bring about good"? That's what some people have slanderously accused us of saying. They should be rightly condemned!

⁹ So then, are we Jews better than others? Definitely not! Remember that we've already argued that both Jews and foreigners are under the control of sin. ¹⁰ As Scripture says, "No one does what is right, not even one. ¹¹ No one understands; no one seeks God. ¹² Everyone has turned their backs on him; everyone does what is totally wrong. No one does what is good, not a single one. ¹³ Their throats are like an open grave; their tongues spread deceit; their lips ooze with the venom of snakes. ¹⁴ Their mouths are full of bitterness and curses, ¹⁵ and they are quick to cause pain and death. ¹⁶ Their way leads to disaster and misery; ¹⁷ they don't know how to live in peace. ¹⁸ They don't care about respecting God at all."[‡]

¹⁹ It's clear that everything in the law applies to those who live under the law so that no one could have any excuses, and to make sure everyone in the whole world is answerable to God. ²⁰ For no one is made right before God by doing what the law requires. The law only helps us recognize what sin really is.

²¹ But now God's character of goodness and right[§] has been demonstrated. It has nothing to do with law-keeping, even though it was spoken of by the law and the prophets. ²² This character of God that is good and right comes to everyone who trusts in Jesus Christ, those who place their confidence in him. It doesn't matter who we are: ²³ We have all sinned, and we fall far short of God's glorious ideal. ²⁴ Yet through the free gift of his grace God makes us right through Christ Jesus who sets us free. ²⁵ God openly presented Jesus as the gift that brings peace* to those trusting in him, the one who shed his blood. God did this to demonstrate he is truly good and right, for previously he would hold back and pass over sins, ²⁶ but now at this present time God proves he is fair and does what is right, and that he makes right those who trust in Jesus.

²⁷ So do we have anything to boast about then? Absolutely not, there's no place for that! And why's that? Is it because we follow the law of observing requirements? No, we follow the law of trusting in God. ²⁸ We conclude that people are made right with God through their trust in him, and not from legal observance. ²⁹ Is God only the God of the Jews? Isn't he the God of other people as well? Of course he is! ³⁰ There is only one God, and he makes us morally right through our trust in him, whoever we are, Jew or foreigner. ³¹ Does that mean that by trusting in God we do away with the law? Of course not! In fact we affirm the importance of the law.

[‡] **3:18** This passage from verses 12 to 18 includes references to Psalms 14:1-3, Psalms 5:9, Psalms 140:3, Psalms 10:7, Isaiah 59:7-8, Proverbs 1:16, Psalms 36:1. **§ 3:21** See under 1:17.

Also 3:22. * **3:25** "The gift that brings peace": the way in which God forgives, heals, and restores harmony.

4

¹ Let's take Abraham as an example. From a human viewpoint he is the father of our nation. Let's ask, "What was his experience?" ² For if Abraham was set right by what he did, he would have had something to boast about—but not in God's eyes. ³ However, what does Scripture say? "Abraham trusted God, and so he was considered as being a good person who did right."^{*} ⁴ Whoever works gets paid—it's not considered as a gift, but because they've earned their wages. ⁵ But God, who makes sinners right, considers them as right not because they've worked for it but because they trust in him. This is why ⁶ David speaks of the happiness of those whom God considers as right, and not because they worked for it: ⁷ "How happy are those whose wrongs are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. ⁸ How happy are those the Lord does not consider sinful."[†]

⁹ Now is this blessing just for the Jews, or is it for others too? We've just stated that Abraham was accepted as good and right because he trusted God. ¹⁰ But when did this happen? When Abraham was a Jew or before? ¹¹ It was actually before he became a Jew by being circumcised, which was a confirmation of his trust in God to make him right. This happened before he was circumcised, so he is the father of everyone who trusts in God and are considered as right by God, even though they may not be circumcised Jews. ¹² He is also the father of circumcised Jews not merely because they're circumcised, but because they follow the example of the trust in God our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

¹³ God's promise to Abraham and his descendants that the world would belong to him was not based on his keeping of the law, but because he was made right through his trust in God. ¹⁴ For if the promised inheritance is based on keeping the law, then the issue of trusting God is not necessary, and the promise is pointless. ¹⁵ For the law results in punishment[‡]—but if there's no law then it cannot be broken.

¹⁶ So the promise is based on trusting God. It is provided as a free gift, guaranteed to all the children of Abraham—not merely to those who follow the law,[§] but also to those who trust like Abraham, the father of us all. ¹⁷ As Scripture says, "I've made you the father of many nations."^{*} For in the presence of God, Abraham trusted in the God who makes the dead alive and speaks into existence what didn't previously exist. ¹⁸ Against all hope Abraham in hope trusted God, so he could become the father of many peoples, just as God had promised him: "This is how many descendants you'll have!"[†] ¹⁹ His trust in God didn't weaken even though he thought his body was practically dead (he was around a hundred years old), and knew that Sarah was too old to have children. ²⁰ He held on to God's promise—he didn't doubt it. Instead his trust in God grew stronger, and he gave glory to God. ²¹ He

^{*} **4:3** Quoting Genesis 15:6. [†] **4:8** Quoting Psalms 32:1-2. [‡] **4:15** Punishment for law-breaking, which of course includes everyone. [§] **4:16** Paul is not saying here that those who obey the Mosaic law are consequently made right with God—he has already dealt with that issue. He is simply pointing out that those who are not following the Mosaic law are not excluded by God. ^{*} **4:17** Quoting Genesis 17:5. [†] **4:18** Referring to Genesis 15:5.

was totally convinced that what God had promised he had the power to deliver. ²² That's why Abraham was considered right by God.

²³ The words "Abraham was considered right"[‡] weren't just written down for his benefit. ²⁴ They were for us too, those of us who will be considered as right, since we trust in God who raised our Lord Jesus from the dead. ²⁵ Jesus was handed over to die because of our sins,[§] and was raised to life to make us right.

5

¹ Now that we have been made right by God by trusting in him, we have peace with him through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² It's through Jesus, trusting in him, that we've gained access to this position of grace where we now stand, looking forward with happiness and confidence to sharing in God's glory. ³ Not only this—we also remain confident when problems come, because we know that experiencing problems develops spiritual stamina.* ⁴ Spiritual stamina in turn develops a mature character, and this mature character results in confident hope. ⁵ Since we have this hope we're never disappointed, for God's love has been poured into us through the Holy Spirit he's given us. ⁶ When we were completely helpless, at just the right time Christ died for us ungodly people. ⁷ Who would die for anybody else, even someone who does what's right? (Though perhaps somebody would be brave enough to die for someone really good.) ⁸ But God demonstrates his love for us in that Christ died for us while we were still sinners.

⁹ Now that we are made right by his death,[†] we can be absolutely sure we'll be saved by him from the coming judgment. ¹⁰ While we were his enemies, God made us his friends through the death of his Son, and so we can be absolutely sure that he will save us through the life of his Son. ¹¹ In addition to this we now celebrate what God has done through our Lord Jesus Christ to reconcile us and make us his friends. ¹² For through one man sin entered the world, and sin led to death. In this way death came to everyone, for everyone sinned. ¹³ Even before the law was given, sin was in the world, however it wasn't counted as sin because there was no law. ¹⁴ But death still ruled from Adam until Moses, even over those who didn't sin in the same way as Adam did.

Now Adam prefigured the one to come.[‡] ¹⁵ But the gift of Jesus is not like the sin of Adam.[§] Though many people died because of one man's sin, God's grace is so much greater and has been shared with so many through his gracious gift in the person of Jesus Christ. ¹⁶ The result of the gift is not like that of the sin. The result of Adam's sin was judgment and condemnation, but the gift sets us right with God, despite our many sins. ¹⁷ As a result of one man's sin, death ruled because of him. But God's grace is so much greater and his gift sets us right, for everyone who receives it will rule in life through the person of Jesus Christ! ¹⁸ Just as one sin brought condemnation on everyone, in the same way one right act gave everyone the opportunity to live right.

[‡] **4:23** Quoting Genesis 15:6. **§** **4:25** See Isaiah 53:4-5 * **5:3** Or "endurance." [†] **5:9** Literally, "blood." [‡] **5:14** In other words, Adam was a symbol or type of Jesus who was to come. **§** **5:15** Supplying for clarity "of Jesus" and "of Adam," making explicit what is meant by gift and sin.

¹⁹ Just as through one man's disobedience many became sinners, in the same way through one man's obedience many are made right with God. ²⁰ When the law was introduced, sin became even more obvious. But while sin became much more obvious, grace became even more obvious! ²¹ Just as sin ruled us and brought us death, now grace rules by making us right with God, bringing us eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

6

¹ So what's our response? Should we continue to sin so we can have even more grace? ² Of course not! * Since we're already dead to sin, how can we continue to live in sin? ³ Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ Through baptism we were buried with him in death so that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father we too can live a new life. ⁵ If we've become one with him in dying like he did, then we'll be raised like him too.

⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him to dispose of the dead body of sin so that we wouldn't be enslaved by sin any longer. ⁷ Anyone who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸ Since we died with Christ, we have confidence that we will also live with him, ⁹ for we know that because Christ has been raised from the dead he won't ever die, because death has no longer any power over him. ¹⁰ In dying, he died to sin once and for all, but now he lives, and he lives for God! ¹¹ In just the same way you should consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus. ¹² Don't let sin have control over your mortal body, don't give in to its temptations, ¹³ and don't use any parts of your body as evil tools of sin. Instead dedicate yourselves to God as those who have been brought back from death to life, and use all parts of your body as tools to do something good for God. ¹⁴ Sin won't rule over you, because you're not under law but under grace.

¹⁵ So then, should we sin because we're not under law, but under grace? Of course not! ¹⁶ Don't you realize that if you make yourselves someone's slaves, obeying their orders, then you are slaves to the one you obey? If you are slaves of sin, the result is death; if you obey God, the result is you are made right with him. ¹⁷ Thank God that though you once were slaves to sin, you whole-heartedly chose to follow the truth about God that you learned. ¹⁸ Now that you've been freed from sin, you've become slaves of doing what is morally right.

¹⁹ I'm using this everyday example because your human thinking is limited. Just as you once enslaved yourselves to immorality, piling up sin upon sin, now you must enslave yourselves to what is pure and right. ²⁰ When you were slaves to sin you were not required to do what's right. ²¹ But what were the results back then? Aren't you ashamed of the things you did? Such things that lead to death! ²² But now that you're set free from sin, and have become God's slaves, the results will be a pure life—and in the end, eternal life. ²³ The wage sin

* **6:2** Literally, "may it not be so!" This vigorous reaction is variously translated: Certainly not! By no means! God forbid! Also in 6:15 etc.

pays is death, but God's free gift is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

7

¹ Brothers and sisters, (I'm speaking here to people who know the law),* don't you see that the law has authority over someone only while they're alive? ² For example, a married woman is bound by the law to her husband while he's alive, but if he dies, she's released from this legal obligation to him. ³ So if she lives with another man while her husband is alive, she would be committing adultery. However, if her husband dies and then she marries another man, she wouldn't be guilty of adultery.

⁴ In the same way, my friends, you've become dead to the law through the body of Christ, and so now you belong to someone else—Christ, who was raised from the dead so that we could live a productive life[†] for God. ⁵ While we were controlled by old nature, our sinful desires (as revealed by the law) were at work within us and resulted in death. ⁶ But now we've been set free from the law, and have died to what kept us in chains, so that we can serve in the newness of the spirit and not the old letter of the law.

⁷ So what do we conclude? That the law is sin? Of course not! I wouldn't have known what sin was unless the law defined it. I wouldn't have realized that wanting to have other people's things for myself was wrong without the law that says, "Don't desire for yourself what belongs to someone else."[‡] ⁸ But through this commandment sin found a way to stir up in me all kinds of selfish desires—for without law, sin is dead. ⁹ I used to live without realizing what the law really meant, but when I understood the implications of that commandment, then sin came back to life, and I died. ¹⁰ I discovered that the very commandment that was meant to bring life brought death instead, ¹¹ because sin found a way through the commandment to deceive me, and used the commandment to kill me!

¹² However, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, right, and good. ¹³ Now would something that is good kill me? Of course not! But sin shows itself to be sin by using good to cause my death. So by means of the commandment, it's revealed how evil sin really is. ¹⁴ We realize that the law is spiritual; but I'm all-too-human,[§] a slave to sin. ¹⁵ I really don't understand what I'm doing. I do the things I don't want to do, and what I hate doing, that's what I do! ¹⁶ But if I'm saying that I do what I don't want to, this shows that I admit the law is good and right. ¹⁷ So it's no longer me who does this, but sin living in me— ¹⁸ for I know that there's nothing good in me as far as my sinful human nature is concerned. Even though I want to do good, I'm just not able to do it. ¹⁹ The good I want to do, I don't do; while the evil I don't want to do, that's what I end up doing! ²⁰ However, if I'm doing what I don't want to, then it's no longer me doing it, but sin living in me.

* **7:1** Paul's use of the word for law can have various meanings, but usually refers to the whole system of Jewish belief. Much of this has to do with rule-keeping. † **7:4** Literally, "bear fruit for God." ‡ **7:7** Quoting Exodus 20:17 or Deuteronomy 5:21. § **7:14** Literally, "flesh."

²¹ This is the principle I've discovered: if I want to do what's good, evil is always there too. ²² My inner self is delighted with God's law, ²³ but I see a different law at work within me that is at war with the law my mind has decided to follow, making me a prisoner of the law of sin that is within me. ²⁴ I'm totally miserable! Who will rescue me from this body that's causing my death? * Thank God—for he does this through Jesus Christ our Lord! ²⁵ Here's the situation: while I myself choose with my mind to obey God's law, my human nature obeys the law of sin.

8

¹ So there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. ³ What the law couldn't do because it was powerless due to our sinful nature, * God was able to do! By sending his own Son in human form, God dealt with the whole problem of sin† and destroyed sin's power in our sinful human nature. ⁴ In this way we could fulfill the good requirements of the law by following the Spirit and not our sinful nature. ⁵ Those who follow their sinful nature are preoccupied with sinful things, but those who follow the Spirit concentrate on spiritual things. ⁶ The sinful human mind results in death, but having the mind led by the Spirit results in life and peace. ⁷ The sinful human mind is hostile to God because it refuses to obey the law of God—in fact it never can, ⁸ and those who follow their sinful nature can never please God. ⁹ But you're not following your sinful nature, but the Spirit—if it's true that the Spirit of God is living in you. For those that don't have the Spirit of Christ in them don't belong to him.

¹⁰ However, if Christ is in you, even though your body is going to die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you're now right with God. ¹¹ The Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you. He who raised Jesus from the dead will also give life to your dead bodies through his Spirit that lives in you. ¹² So brothers and sisters, we don't have to follow‡ our sinful nature that operates according to our human desires. ¹³ For if you live under the control of your sinful nature, you're going to die. But if you follow the way of the Spirit, putting to death the evil things you do, then you will live. ¹⁴ All those who are led by the Spirit of God are God's children. ¹⁵ You were not given a spirit to enslave and terrify you once more. No, what you received was the spirit that makes you children in God's family. Now we can shout out, "God is our Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit himself agrees with us§ that we're God's children. ¹⁷ If we're his children, then we're his heirs. We are heirs of God, and heirs together with Christ. But if we want to share in his glory we must share in his sufferings.

¹⁸ Yet I'm convinced that what we suffer in the present is nothing compared to the future glory that will be revealed to us. ¹⁹ All of

* **7:24** Literally, "body of death." * **8:3** "Sinful nature," Literally, "flesh," meaning the sinful, fallen, physical nature of humanity. This word is used frequently in the following verses in contrast to the spiritual nature. † **8:3** Or "by making a sacrifice of himself for sin." ‡ **8:12** Or "have no obligation to." § **8:16** Literally, "our spirit."

creation is patiently waiting, longing for God to reveal his children. ²⁰ For God allowed the purpose of creation to be frustrated. ²¹ But creation itself waits in hope for the time when it will be set free from the slavery of decay and share the glorious freedom of God's children. ²² We know that all creation groans with longing, suffering birth-pains even up till now. ²³ Not only creation, but we too, who have a foretaste of the Spirit, we groan inwardly as we wait for God to "adopt" us—the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For we were saved by hope. Yet hope that's already seen isn't hope at all. Who hopes for what they can already see? ²⁵ Since we're hoping for what we haven't yet seen, we wait for it patiently.

²⁶ Similarly the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We don't know how to speak with God, but the Spirit himself intercedes with and through us by groans that can't be put into words. ²⁷ The one who examines the minds of everyone knows the Spirit's motives,* because the Spirit pleads God's cause on behalf of the believers. ²⁸ We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, those who he has called to be part of his plan. ²⁹ For God, choosing them in advance, set them apart to be like his Son, so that the Son would be the first of many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ Those that he chose, he also called; and those that he called, he also made right; and those that he made right, he also glorified.

³¹ So what's our response to all this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² God, who did not hold back his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, won't he also freely give us everything? ³³ Who can accuse God's special people of anything? It's God who sets us right, ³⁴ so who can condemn us? It's Christ Jesus who died—more importantly, who was raised from the dead—who stands at God's right-hand, presenting our case.

³⁵ Who can separate us from Christ's love? Can oppression, distress, or persecution? Or hunger, poverty, danger, or violence? ³⁶ Just as Scripture says, "For your sake we're in danger of being killed all the time. We're treated like sheep to be slaughtered."[†] ³⁷ No—in all that happens to us we're more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ I'm absolutely convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor devils, neither the present nor the future, nor powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, in fact nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

9

¹ I am in Christ, and what I say is true. I'm not lying! My conscience and the Holy Spirit confirm ² how terribly sad I am, how I have never-ending pain in my heart, ³ for my own people, my brothers and sisters. I would rather be cursed myself, separated from Christ, if that would help them. ⁴ They are my fellow-Israelites, God's chosen people. God revealed to them his glory and made agreements* with them, giving them the law, true worship, and his promises. ⁵ They are

* **8:27** Or "the mind of the Spirit." † **8:36** Quoting Psalms 44:22. * **9:4** Literally, "covenants."

our forefathers—ancestors of Christ, humanly-speaking, the one who rules over everything, the eternally-blessed God. Amen.

⁶ It's not that God's promise has failed. For not every Israelite is a true Israelite, ⁷ and all those who are descended from Abraham are not his true children. For Scripture says, "Your descendants will be counted through Isaac,"[†] ⁸ so it's not Abraham's actual children who are counted as God's children, but only those children of God's promise who are considered his true descendants.

⁹ This is what the promise was: "I will return next year and Sarah will have a son."[‡] ¹⁰ In addition Rebecca's twin sons had the same father, our forefather Isaac. ¹¹ But even before the children were born, and before they'd done anything right or wrong, (so that God's purpose could continue, proving God's calling of people is not based on human performance), ¹² she was told, "The older brother will serve the younger one."[§] ¹³ As Scripture says, "I chose Jacob, but rejected Esau."^{*}

¹⁴ So what should we conclude? That God was unjust? Certainly not! ¹⁵ As he said to Moses, "I will be merciful to whoever I should show mercy, and I will have compassion on whoever I should show compassion."[†] ¹⁶ So it does not depend on what we want, or our own efforts, but the merciful nature of God. ¹⁷ Scripture records God saying to Pharaoh: "I put you here for a reason—so that through you I could demonstrate my power, and so that my name could be made known throughout the earth."[‡] ¹⁸ So God is merciful to those he wishes to be, and hardens the attitude of those he wants to.[§] ¹⁹ Now you'll argue with me and ask, "So why does he still blame us then? Who can resist the will of God?"^{*} ²⁰ That's no way to speak, for who are you—a mere mortal—to contradict God? Can something that is created say to its creator, "Why did you make me like this?" ²¹ Doesn't a potter have the right to use the same batch of clay to make both a decorative bowl and an everyday pot?[†]

²² It's as if God, wanting to demonstrate his opposition to sin[‡] and to reveal his power, bears patiently with these "pots destined for destruction," ²³ so that he might reveal the greatness of his glory through these "pots of mercy" which he has prepared in advance for glory. ²⁴ This is who we are—people he has called, not just from among the Jews, but from among the foreigners too...

²⁵ As God said in the book of Hosea, "Those who are not my people I will call my people, and those who are not loved I will call the ones I love,"[§] ²⁶ and, "It will happen that at the place where they were told,

[†] **9:7** Quoting Genesis 21:12. [‡] **9:9** Quoting Genesis 18:10-14. **§ 9:12** Quoting Genesis 25:23.

^{*} **9:13** Quoting Malachi 1:2-3. [†] **9:15** Quoting Exodus 33:19. [‡] **9:17** Quoting Exodus 9:16.

§ 9:18 In the Old Testament, this expression is used to describe obstinate rejection of God, such as the experience of the Pharaoh of the Exodus. In Exodus 9 Pharaoh is variously described as choosing a stubborn attitude, or that God gave him a stubborn attitude, or in the passive that he had a stubborn attitude. So this verse in Romans should not be taken to mean that God deliberately hardens people's attitudes and then punishes them for it. The stubborn attitude is a rejection of divine grace.

^{*} **9:19** Quoting Isaiah 29:16; Isaiah 45:9.

[†] **9:21** Literally, "pots of value and dishonor." [‡] **9:22** Literally, "show anger." **§ 9:25** Quoting Hosea 2:23.

'You're not my people,' there they will be called the children of the living God."*

²⁷ Isaiah cries out regarding Israel: "Even if the children of Israel have become as numerous as the sands of the sea, only a small number[†] will be saved. ²⁸ For the Lord is going to quickly and completely finish his work of judgment on the earth."[‡] ²⁹ As Isaiah previously said, "If the Lord Almighty had not left us some descendants, we would have become just like Sodom and Gomorrah."§

³⁰ What shall we conclude, then? That even though the foreigners were not even looking to do right, they did grasp what is right, and through their trust in God did what was morally right. ³¹ But the people of Israel, who looked to the law to make them right with God, never succeeded. ³² Why not? Because they relied on what they did rather than trusting in God. They tripped on the stumbling-block, ³³ just as Scripture predicted: "Look, I'm placing in Zion a stumbling-block, a rock that will offend people. But those who trust in him won't be disappointed."*

10

¹ My brothers and sisters, my heart's desire—my prayer to God—is for the salvation of the people of Israel! ² I can testify to their passionate dedication to God, but it's not based on knowing him as he truly is. ³ They don't understand how God makes us right with him, and they try to make themselves right. They refuse to accept God's way of making people right. ⁴ For Christ is the fulfillment of the law. All those who trust in him are made right. ⁵ Moses wrote, "Whoever does what is right by obeying the law will live."* ⁶ But the attitude of doing right that comes from trust says this: "Don't ask 'who'll go to heaven?' (asking to bring Christ down)," ⁷ or " 'who'll go to the place of the dead?'[†] (asking to bring Christ back from the dead)."[‡] ⁸ What Scripture actually says is: "The message is very close to you—it's what you talk about and what's in your mind."§ In fact it's this message based on trust that we're presenting. ⁹ For if you declare that you accept Jesus as Lord, and you are convinced in your mind that God raised him from the dead, then you will be saved. ¹⁰ Your trust in God makes you right and good, and your declaration of accepting God saves you. ¹¹ As Scripture says, "Those who trust in him will not be disappointed."*

¹² There's no difference between Jew and Greek—for the same Lord is Lord of everyone, and he gives generously to everyone who asks him. ¹³ For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."[†]

* **9:26** Quoting Hosea 1:10. [†] **9:27** Literally, "remnant." [‡] **9:28** Quoting Isaiah 10:22-23.

§ **9:29** Quoting Isaiah 1:9. * **9:33** Combining Isaiah 28:16 and Isaiah 8:14. * **10:5** Quoting Leviticus 18:5. [†] **10:7** Literally, "the abyss," bottomless pit. [‡] **10:7** See Deuteronomy 30:12.

§ **10:8** These allusions are to Deuteronomy 30:11-14. They were originally applied to the law, and were to indicate that the law was not distant and unapproachable, clearly denying it was difficult to observe. Paul now applies this to the person of Christ, making it clear that this "message of the law" was fulfilled in him. * **10:11** Quoting Isaiah 28:16. Disappointed: or "ashamed." [†] **10:13** Quoting Joel 2:32.

¹⁴ But how can people call on someone they don't trust? How can they trust someone they haven't heard about? How can they hear unless they're told? ¹⁵ How can they go out and tell others unless they're sent? Just as Scripture says, "Those who come bringing the good news are truly welcome!"‡ ¹⁶ But not everyone has accepted the good news. As Isaiah asks: "Lord, who trusted in the news they heard from us?"§ ¹⁷ Trusting in God comes from hearing—hearing the message of Christ.

¹⁸ It's not that they haven't heard. Quite the opposite: "The voices of those speaking for God* have been heard all over the earth—their message went out to the whole world."† ¹⁹ So my question is, "Didn't Israel know?" First of all Moses says, "I'll make you jealous by using people who aren't even a nation; I will make you angry by using ignorant foreigners!"‡ ²⁰ Then Isaiah said it even more strongly: "I was found by people who weren't even looking for me; I revealed myself to people who weren't even asking for me."§ ²¹ As God says to Israel, "All day long I reached out my hands to a disobedient and stubborn people."*

11

¹ But then I ask, "Has God rejected his people?" Of course not! I'm an Israelite myself, from the tribe of Benjamin. ² God has not rejected his chosen people. Don't you recall what Scripture says about Elijah? How he complained about Israel to God, saying, ³ "Lord they've killed your prophets and destroyed your altars. I'm the only one left, and they're trying to kill me too!"

⁴ How did God answer him? "I still have seven thousand left who have not worshiped Baal."* ⁵ Today it's just the same: there are still some faithful people left, chosen by God's grace. ⁶ And since it's through grace, then clearly it's not based on what people do, otherwise grace wouldn't be grace!

⁷ So what do we conclude? That the people of Israel didn't achieve what they were striving for—only the chosen, while the rest became hard-hearted. ⁸ As Scripture says, "God dulled their minds so their eyes could not see and their ears could not hear, to this very day."† ⁹ David adds, "May their feasts become a trap for them, a net that catches them, a temptation that brings punishment. ¹⁰ May their eyes become blind so they cannot see, and may their backs always be bent low in dejection."‡

¹¹ So am I saying that they stumbled and consequently failed completely? Not at all! But as a result of their mistakes, salvation came to other nations, to "make them jealous." ¹² Now if even their failure benefits the world, and their loss profits the foreigners, how much more beneficial it would be if they were to completely fulfill what they were meant to be.§

‡ **10:15** Quoting Isaiah 52:7. § **10:16** Quoting Isaiah 53:1. * **10:18** Implied. † **10:18** Quoting Psalms 19:4. ‡ **10:19** Quoting Deuteronomy 32:21. § **10:20** Quoting Isaiah 65:1. * **10:21** Quoting Isaiah 65:2. * **11:4** Quoting 1 Kings 19:10-18. † **11:8** Referencing either Deuteronomy 29:4; Isaiah 6:9-10; Isaiah 29:10. ‡ **11:10** Quoting Psalms 69:22-23. § **11:12** Implied.

¹³ Now let me speak to you foreigners. Insofar as I'm a missionary to foreigners, I promote what I'm doing ¹⁴ that somehow I might make my people jealous and save some of them. ¹⁵ If the result of God's rejection of them is that the world becomes God's friends, the result of God's acceptance of them would be like the dead coming back to life! ¹⁶ If the first part of the bread dough given as an offering is holy, then so is all the rest; if the roots of a tree are holy, then so are the branches. ¹⁷ Now if some of the branches have been broken off, and you—a wild olive shoot—have been grafted in, and have shared with them the benefit of nourishment from the olive tree's roots, ¹⁸ then you shouldn't look down on the other branches. If you're tempted to boast, remember it's not you who are supporting the roots, but the roots that are supporting you. ¹⁹ You could make the claim, "Branches were broken off so I could be grafted in." ²⁰ All well and good—but they were broken off because of their failure to trust in God, and you stay there because you trust in God. So don't think highly of yourselves, but be respectful, ²¹ because if God didn't spare the original branches, he won't spare you either. ²² You should recognize both God's kindness and toughness—he was tough on the fallen, but God is kind to you so long as you trust in his kindness—otherwise you'll be removed too. ²³ If they no longer refuse to trust in God, they can be grafted in as well, for God is able to graft them back in again. ²⁴ If you could be cut from a wild olive tree, and then be grafted artificially onto a cultivated olive tree, how much more easily they could be grafted back naturally to their own tree.

²⁵ I don't want you, my brothers and sisters to miss this previously-hidden truth, for otherwise you could become conceited. The people of Israel have become hard-hearted in part, until the process of the foreigners coming in is complete. ²⁶ This is how all Israel will be saved.* As Scripture says, "The Savior will come from Zion, and he will turn Jacob away from his opposition to God. ²⁷ My promise to them is that I'll take away their sins."†

²⁸ Though they are enemies of the good news—and this is to your benefit—they are still the chosen people, and loved because of their forefathers. ²⁹ God's gifts and his calling can't be withdrawn. ³⁰ At one time you disobeyed God, but now God has shown you mercy as a result of their disobedience. ³¹ In just the same way that they're now disobedient as you were, they will also be shown mercy like you received. ³² For God treated everyone as prisoners because of their disobedience so that he could be merciful to everyone.

³³ Oh how deep are God's riches, wisdom, and knowledge! How incredible his decisions, how unimaginable his methods! ³⁴ Who can know God's thoughts? Who can give him advice?‡ ³⁵ Who has ever given anything to God that God would be obliged to repay?§ ³⁶ Everything comes from him, everything exists through him, and everything is for him. Glory to him forever, Amen!

* **11:26** This is not teaching universal salvation, but that at this point the whole of Israel (that is made up of both foreigners and Jews who accept salvation through God's grace) will then be saved. † **11:27** Combining Isaiah 59:20-21; Isaiah 27:9. ‡ **11:34** Quoting Isaiah 40:13.

§ **11:35** Quoting Job 41:11.

12

¹ So I encourage you, my brothers and sisters, because of God's compassion* for you, to dedicate your bodies as a living offering that is holy and pleasing to God. This is the logical way to worship. ² Don't follow the ways of this world; instead be transformed by the spiritual renewal of your mind so you can demonstrate what God's will really is—good, pleasing, and perfect. ³ Let me explain to all of you, through the grace given to me, that no one should think of themselves better than they ought to. You should think about yourselves realistically, according to the degree of trust God has shared with you.

⁴ Just as there are many parts to the body, but they don't all do the same thing, ⁵ so we are one body in Christ, even though we are many—and we all belong to one another. ⁶ We each have different gifts that vary according to the grace given to us. So if it's speaking for God, then you should do so depending on how much you trust in God. ⁷ If it's the ministry of service then you should serve; if teaching then you should teach; ⁸ if encouragement then you should encourage; if giving then you should give generously; if leadership then you should lead with commitment; if being merciful then you should do so gladly.

⁹ Love must be genuine. Hate what is evil; hold on tightly to what is good. ¹⁰ Be completely dedicated to each other in your love as family; value others more than yourselves. ¹¹ Don't be unwilling to work hard; serve the Lord with an enthusiastic spirit. ¹² Remain cheerful in the hope you have, put up with the troubles that come, keep on praying. ¹³ Share in providing for the needs of God's people, and welcome strangers with hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you—bless them, and don't curse them. ¹⁵ Be happy with those who are happy; cry with those who are crying. ¹⁶ Think about one another.† Don't consider yourself more important than others; live humbly. Don't be conceited. ¹⁷ Don't pay back anyone evil for evil. Make sure you show everybody that what you're doing is good, ¹⁸ and as far as it's up to you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ My dear friends, don't seek revenge, but leave it to God to execute judgment‡—as Scripture points out, “ ‘It's for me to dispense justice, I will repay,’ says the Lord.”§ ²⁰ If those who hate you are hungry, give them food; if they're thirsty, give them a drink; for by doing so you pile fiery coals on their heads.* ²¹ Don't be defeated by evil—conquer evil with good.

13

¹ Everyone should obey government authorities, because no one has the power to rule unless God gives permission. These authorities have been put there by God. ² Whoever resists the authorities opposes what God has put in place, and those who do so shall find themselves judged accordingly. ³ For rulers don't frighten those who do right, but those who do wrong. If you don't want to live in fear of the authorities,

* **12:1** Or “mercy.” † **12:16** Or “Live in harmony with one another.” ‡ **12:19** Literally, “give room to wrath.” § **12:19** Quoting Deuteronomy 32:35. * **12:20** Meaning they will be caused great embarrassment and shame. The quotation is from Proverbs 25:21-22

then do what is right, and you'll have their approval. ⁴ Those in power are God's servants, put there for your own good. If you do wrong, you should be frightened—it's not without reason that authorities have the power to punish! They are God's servants, punishing offenders. ⁵ So it's important to do as you're told, not just because of the threat of punishment, but because of what your conscience tells you. ⁶ That's why you have to pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants taking care of such things. ⁷ Pay whatever you owe: taxes to the tax authorities, fees to the fee-collectors; give respect to those who should be respected, honor those who should be honored. ⁸ Don't owe anybody anything, except love for one another—for those who love their neighbor have kept the law.

⁹ "You must not commit adultery, you must not kill, you must not steal, you must not jealously want things for yourself"*—these and the other commandments are summed up in the statement, "Love your neighbor as yourself."† ¹⁰ Love doesn't do wrong to anyone,‡ so love fulfils the law. ¹¹ You should do this because you realize how urgent the time is—that it's high time for you to wake up from your sleep. For salvation is closer to us now than when we first put our trust in God. ¹² The night is nearly over, the day is almost here! So let's get rid of our dark deeds and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let's behave properly, showing that we're people who are living in the light. We shouldn't spend our time going to wild parties and getting drunk, or having affairs and acting immorally, or getting into fights and being jealous. ¹⁴ Instead put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and forget about following your sinful desires.

14

¹ Accept those who are still struggling to trust in God, and don't get into arguments over personal opinions. ² One person may believe they can eat anything, while another whose trust is weak only eats vegetables.* ³ Those who eat anything must not look down on those who won't, and those who won't eat must not criticize those who do—for God has accepted them both. ⁴ What right do you have to judge someone else's servant? It's their own master who decides whether they are right or wrong. With the Lord's help they will be able to take their stand for right.

⁵ Some people consider some days more important than others, while others consider each day the same. Everyone should be completely convinced in their own minds. ⁶ Those who respect a special day do so for the Lord; and those who eat without worrying† do so for the Lord since they give thanks to God; while those who avoid eating certain things do so for the Lord, and they also give thanks to God.

⁷ None of us live for ourselves, or die for ourselves. ⁸ If we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord—so whether we live

* **13:9** Literally, "covet." The quotation is from Exodus 20:13-17 or Deuteronomy 5:17-21.

† **13:9** Quoting Leviticus 19:18. ‡ **13:10** Or "doesn't harm anyone." * **14:2** This is nothing to do with the issue of vegetarianism or diet, but with food offered to idols. (Similarly in 1 Corinthians 8.) † **14:6** Eating/not eating refers to whether it was right to eat food that had previously been offered to pagan idols.

or die, we belong to the Lord. ⁹ This was the reason Christ died and came back to life—so that he could be the Lord of both the dead and the living. ¹⁰ So why do you criticize your fellow-believer? Why do you despise your fellow-believer? For all of us will stand before God's throne of judgment.

¹¹ For the Scriptures say, “ ‘As surely as I am alive,’ the Lord says, ‘Every knee shall bow before me, and every tongue will declare that I am God.’ ”[†] ¹² So every one of us will have to explain ourselves to God. ¹³ Therefore let's not judge each other anymore, but decide to do this instead—we won't put obstacles in the way of fellow-believers, or cause them to fall.

¹⁴ I'm certain—persuaded by the Lord Jesus—that nothing in itself is ceremonially unclean. But if someone considers it to be unclean, to them it is unclean. ¹⁵ If your fellow-believer is hurt by you over matters of food, then you're no longer behaving in a loving way. Don't destroy someone for whom Christ died by the food you choose to eat. ¹⁶ Don't let the good things you do be misrepresented— ¹⁷ for God's kingdom is not about eating and drinking, but about living right, having peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ Anyone who serves Christ in this way pleases God, and is appreciated by others. ¹⁹ So let's pursue the path of peace, and find ways to encourage each other. ²⁰ Don't destroy the work of God with arguments over food. Everything is clean—but it would be wrong to eat and offend others. ²¹ It's better not to eat meat or drink wine or anything else that would cause your fellow-believer to stumble. ²² What you personally believe is between you and God. Happy are those who don't condemn themselves for doing what they think is right! ²³ But if you have doubts whether it's right or wrong to eat something, then you shouldn't, because you're not convinced it's right. Whatever isn't based on conviction[§] is sin.*

15

¹ Those of us who are spiritually strong ought to support those who are spiritually weak. We shouldn't just please ourselves. ² We should all encourage others to do what's morally right, building them up. ³ Christ didn't live to please himself, but as Scripture says of him, “The insults of those who abused you have fallen on me.”* ⁴ These Scriptures were written down in the past to help us understand, and to encourage us so that we could wait patiently in hope.

⁵ May the God who gives patience and encouragement help you to be in full agreement among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that you can with one mind and with one voice together glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

⁷ So accept one another, just as Christ accepted you, and give God the glory. ⁸ I maintain that Christ came as a servant to the Jews[†] to show God tells the truth, keeping the promises he made to their forefathers. ⁹ He also came that foreigners could praise God for his mercy, as Scripture says, “Therefore I will praise you among the foreigners; I will

[†] 14:11 See Isaiah 45:23. § 14:23 Or “faith.” * 14:23 Or “Sin is doing something you don't believe is right.” * 15:3 Quoting Psalms 69:9. † 15:8 Literally, “of circumcision.”

sing praises to your name.”[‡] ¹⁰ And also: “Foreigners, celebrate with his people!”[§] ¹¹ And again: “All you foreigners, praise the Lord, let all peoples praise him.”^{*} ¹² And again, Isaiah says, “Jesse's descendant will come to rule the nations, and foreigners will put their hope in him.”[†]

¹³ May the God of hope completely fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you will overflow with hope through the power of the Holy Spirit! ¹⁴ I'm convinced that you, my brothers and sisters, are full of goodness, and that you are filled with every kind of knowledge, so you are well able to teach one another. ¹⁵ I've been blunt in the way I have written to you about some of these things, but this is just to remind you. For God gave me grace ¹⁶ to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the foreigners, like a priest sharing God's good news, so that they could become an acceptable offering, made holy by the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷ So even though I have something to boast about because of my service for God, ¹⁸ (I wouldn't dare talk about any of this except as Christ has done it through me), I have led foreigners to obedience through my teaching and demonstration, ¹⁹ through the power of signs and miracles done with the Holy Spirit's power. From Jerusalem all the way over to Illyricum, everywhere I've shared fully the good news of Christ. ²⁰ In fact I was keen to spread the good news in places that hadn't heard the name of Christ, so that I wouldn't be building on what others have done. ²¹ As Scripture says, “Those who haven't been told the good news will discover him, and those who haven't heard will understand.”[‡]

²² That's why I was prevented so many times from coming to see you. ²³ But now, as there's nowhere left here to work, and since I've looked forward to visiting you for many years, ²⁴ when I go to Spain I hope to see you when I pass through. Maybe you can give me some help for my journey once we've enjoyed some time together. ²⁵ At the moment I'm on my way to Jerusalem to help the believers there, ²⁶ because the believers in Macedonia and Achaia thought it was a good idea to send a contribution to the poor among the believers in Jerusalem. ²⁷ They were happy to do this because they're in their debt. [§] Now that foreigners are sharing their spiritual benefits, they owe it to the Jewish believers^{*} to help them in material things. ²⁸ So once I've done this, and have safely delivered this contribution to them, I'll visit you on my way to Spain. ²⁹ I know that when I come, Christ will give us his full blessing.

³⁰ I want to encourage you, my brothers and sisters through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, to join together in praying hard for me. ³¹ Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea. Pray that my work in Jerusalem will be

[‡] **15:9** Quoting Psalms 18:49. **§** **15:10** Quoting Deuteronomy 32:43. ***** **15:11** Quoting Psalms 117:1. **†** **15:12** Quoting Isaiah 11:10. “Jesse's descendant.” This refers to Jesse, the father of King David, who was the beginning of the royal line. **‡** **15:21** Quoting Isaiah 52:15 **§** **15:27** Meaning that the foreigners are indebted to the Jews for sharing the good news of God. This particular instance applies specifically to the believers in Jerusalem, so the foreigners are happy to send a gift to help them. ***** **15:27** Implied.

welcomed by the believers there. ³² Pray that I will come to you with gladness, as God wills, so we can enjoy one another's company. ³³ May the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

16

¹ I recommend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a deaconess at the Cenchræe church. ² Please welcome her in the Lord, as believers should, and help her in whatever way she needs, because she has been a great help to many people, myself included. ³ Pass on my greetings to Prisca* and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴ who risked their lives for me. It's not just me who is very thankful for them, but all the churches of the foreigners too.† ⁵ Please also give my greetings to the church that meets in their home. Pass on my best wishes to my good friend Epænetus, the first person to follow Christ in the province of Asia. ⁶ Give my greetings to Mary, who worked hard for you, ⁷ and also Andronicus and Junia, from my own country and fellow-prisoners. They are well-known among the apostles, and became followers of Christ before me. ⁸ Give my best to Ampliatus, my good friend in the Lord; ⁹ to Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ; and to my dear friend Stachys. ¹⁰ My greetings to Apelles, a trustworthy man in Christ. Greetings to Aristobulus's family, ¹¹ to my countryman Herodion, and to those from Narcissus' family who belong to the Lord. ¹² My best wishes to Tryphaena and Tryphosa, hard workers for the Lord, and to my friend Persis, who has done so much in the Lord. ¹³ Give my greetings to Rufus, an exceptional worker,‡ and his mother—who I count as my mother too. ¹⁴ Greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the fellow-believers who are with them. ¹⁵ Best wishes to Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, Olympas, and to all the believers with them. ¹⁶ Greet one another affectionately. All the churches of Christ send their greetings to you.

¹⁷ Now I'm pleading with you my fellow-believers: watch out for those who cause arguments and confuse people about the teachings you learned. Stay away from them! ¹⁸ These people are not serving Christ our Lord but their own appetites, and by their smooth-talking and pleasant words they deceive the minds of unsuspecting people.

¹⁹ Everyone knows how faithful you are. This makes me really happy. However, I want you to be wise about what's good, and innocent of anything bad. ²⁰ The God of peace will soon break the power of Satan and make him subject to you. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

²¹ Timothy my co-worker sends his greetings, as do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my fellow-countrymen. ²² Tertius—who wrote down this letter—also sends you greetings in the Lord. ²³ My host Gaius, and the whole church here, send you greetings. Erastus the city treasurer, sends his best wishes, as does our fellow-believer Quartus. ²⁴ §

²⁵ Now to him who can make you strong

* **16:3** Called Priscilla in Acts 18:2. Also 1 Corinthians 16:19. † **16:4** Referring to the non-Jewish churches. ‡ **16:13** Or "one of God's special people." § **16:24** Early manuscripts do not have verse 24.

Through the good news I share and the message of Jesus Christ,
According to the mystery* of truth that has been revealed,
The mystery of truth, hidden for eternity, ²⁶ now made visible;
Through the prophets' writings, and
Following the command of the eternal God,
The mystery of truth is made known to everyone everywhere so
they can trust and obey him;
²⁷ To the one and only wise God,
Through Jesus Christ—
To him be glory for ever. Amen.†

* **16:25** "Mystery," a term referring to secret truth or a secret plan known only to religious believers. Also verse 26. † **16:27** These last verses seem to be a poem or a song, so are set out in this form.

First Corinthians

¹ This letter comes from Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the will of God, and from Sosthenes, our brother. ² It is sent to the church of God in Corinth, those who are being made right in Christ Jesus, called to live holy lives—and to everyone who worships the Lord Jesus Christ everywhere, the Lord both of them and of us.

³ May you have grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ I'm always thanking God for you because of the grace of God given to you in Christ Jesus. ⁵ Through him you have been made rich in everything, in all that you say and every aspect of what you know. ⁶ In fact the testimony of Christ was proved valid in your experience, ⁷ so that you're not missing any spiritual gift as you wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸ He will also keep you strong to the very end, so you will be kept right until the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is trustworthy who called you to share together in fellowship with his son Jesus Christ our Lord.

¹⁰ Brothers and sisters, I plead with you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you all agree and that you're not divided. Instead develop a united attitude and purpose. ¹¹ For I have been told things about you, my brothers and sisters, by some of Chloe's people—that you are quarreling among yourselves. ¹² Let me explain what I mean. You're all making different claims: "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Peter," or "I follow Christ." ¹³ Is Christ divided? Did Paul die on a cross for you? Was it in the name of Paul that you were baptized?

¹⁴ I'm grateful to God that I didn't baptize any of you, except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ so nobody can claim they were baptized in my name. ¹⁶ (Oh, and I also baptized the Stephanas family—I can't think of anyone else.) ¹⁷ For Christ didn't send me out to baptize, but to spread the good news, and not with eloquent human wisdom, otherwise the cross of Christ would be made powerless.*

¹⁸ For the message of the cross is nonsense to those who are lost, but it's the power of God to those of us who are saved. ¹⁹ As Scripture says, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will wipe out the cleverness of the clever."[†]

²⁰ So how about the wise, the writers, and the philosophers of this age? Hasn't God turned the wisdom of this world into foolishness? ²¹ Since God in his wisdom allowed the world in its wisdom not to know God, it was God's gracious plan that by the foolishness of the good news those who trusted in him would be saved. ²² The Jews ask for miraculous signs, and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³ but our message is of Christ killed on a cross—offensive to the Jews, and foolishness to the foreigners. ²⁴ However, for those who are called by God, both Jews and foreigners, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than we are; and the weakness of God is stronger than we are.

* **1:17** Or "ineffectual." Literally, "emptied." † **1:19** Probably referencing Isaiah 29:14.

²⁶ Brothers and sisters, remember your calling—and that this did not include many who are wise, humanly speaking; not many who are powerful; not many who are important. ²⁷ Instead God chose the things the world considers foolish to humiliate those who think they are wise. He chose the things the world considers weak to humiliate those who think they are strong. ²⁸ He chose the things that are unimportant and despised by the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,[‡] ²⁹ so that nobody should boast in God's presence.

³⁰ It's because of him that you live in Christ Jesus, who God made to be wisdom for us. He sets us right, keeps us right, and frees us. ³¹ So as Scripture says, "Whoever wants to boast, let them boast in the Lord."[§]

2

¹ Brothers and sisters, when I came to you I didn't try to impress you with wonderful words or great wisdom when I told you what God had to say to you. ² I decided that while I was with you I didn't want to concentrate on anything except Jesus Christ, and that he was crucified. ³ I came to you in weakness, fearful and trembling. ⁴ I didn't speak to you with persuasive words of wisdom to convince you. I just explained it all to you through the evidence and power of the Spirit. ⁵ That way your trust in God wouldn't rely on human wisdom but on the power of God.

⁶ However, we do use words of wisdom when we speak to those who are spiritually mature, but this isn't wisdom that comes from this world, or from the rulers of this world who soon fade from the scene. ⁷ On the contrary we explain God's wisdom in terms of a revealed mystery* that was previously hidden which God planned for our glory before the creation of the worlds.

⁸ None of the rulers of this world understood anything about this—for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ But as Scripture says, "No one has ever seen, and no one has ever heard, and no one has ever imagined what God has prepared for those who love him."[†] ¹⁰ But God has revealed this to us through the Spirit, because the Spirit delves into the depths of God. ¹¹ Who knows anyone's thoughts except the actual person?[‡] In the same way no one knows God's thoughts except the Spirit of God. ¹² For we have received the Spirit from God, not the spirit of this world, so that we could understand what God so generously gave us. ¹³ That's what we speak about—not using words taught by human wisdom, but what the Spirit teaches. We explain what is spiritual using spiritual terms. ¹⁴ Of course people who are not spiritual don't accept what comes from God's Spirit. It's just foolish nonsense to them, and they can't understand it, because what is spiritual has to be properly examined. ¹⁵ People who are

[‡] **1:28** This complicated verse is really saying that God uses things and people not viewed as important by this world to demonstrate what really is important. **§ 1:31** Referencing Jeremiah 9:23. *** 2:7** When the word mystery is used in the New Testament it is normally referring to a *revealed* mystery—particularly in reference to God becoming human in the person of Jesus Christ. [†] **2:9** From Isaiah 64 and Isaiah 65. [‡] **2:11** Literally, "who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man that is in him?"

spiritual investigate everything, but are not placed under investigation themselves. § ¹⁶ For “who understands the Lord's mind, and would think to instruct him?”* But we *do* have Christ's mind!

3

¹ My brothers and sisters, I couldn't talk* with you as spiritual believers, but as worldly people—like baby Christians. ² I gave you milk—I couldn't give you solid food to eat, because you weren't ready for it. ³ Even now you're not ready for it, because you're still worldly. Since you're still jealous and argumentative, doesn't that show you're worldly, behaving just like ordinary people do? ⁴ When one of you says, “I follow Paul,” while another says, “I follow Apollos,” doesn't that show you're being so very human?

⁵ Who is Apollos, anyway? And who is Paul? We're just servants through whom you believed. Each of us does the work God gave us to do. ⁶ I did the planting, Apollos did the watering—but it was God who made you grow!

⁷ So the one who does the planting doesn't count for anything, any more than the one who does the watering. The only one who matters is God who is growing you! ⁸ The one planting and the one watering have the same goal, and both will be rewarded according to what they've done.

⁹ We are workers together with God—and you are God's field, his building. ¹⁰ Through the grace of God that he gave to me, I laid down the foundation like a skilled building supervisor. Now someone else is building on it. Whoever does the building needs to watch what they're doing. ¹¹ For no one can lay any other foundation than what's already laid—that is Jesus Christ. ¹² Those who build on that foundation may use gold, silver, precious stone, wood, hay, or straw—¹³ but whatever is used to build with will be exposed. For on the Day of Judgment fire will reveal it and test it. Everyone's work will be shown for what it is. ¹⁴ Those whose building survives will be rewarded. ¹⁵ Those whose building is burned up will lose out. They will still be saved, but it will be like passing through fire! ¹⁶ Don't you know you are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? ¹⁷ Anyone who destroys God's temple will be destroyed by God, for God's temple is holy, and you are the temple.

¹⁸ Don't deceive yourselves. If there's anyone of you who thinks they're worldly wise, they should become fools so they can become truly wise! ¹⁹ This world's wisdom is plain foolishness to God. As Scripture says, “He uses the cleverness of the wise to catch them out,”† ²⁰ and “The Lord knows the arguments of the wise are pointless.”‡ ²¹ So don't boast about people. For you have everything, ²² whether it's Paul or Apollos or Peter—or the world, or life, or death, or the present, or

§ **2:15** “Investigate/investigation”—the same word is used in the original, and can also mean to examine or to judge. It is also related to the word translated “examined” in verse 14. English does not capture the subtlety of the original. * **2:16** Quoting Isaiah 40:13. * **3:1** Presumably while he was visiting them previously. † **3:19** Quoting Job 5:13. ‡ **3:20** Quoting Psalms 94:11.

the future. You have everything—²³ and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

4

¹ So think of us as Christ's servants given the responsibility for “the mysteries of God.”* ² More than this, those who have such responsibilities are required to be trustworthy. ³ Personally it hardly matters to me if you or anyone else judges me—in fact I don't even judge myself. ⁴ I don't know of anything I've done wrong, but that doesn't make me morally right. It's the Lord who judges me. ⁵ So don't judge anything before the right time—when the Lord comes. He will bring to light all the darkest secrets that are hidden, and he will reveal people's motives. God will give everyone whatever praise they deserve.

⁶ Now, brothers and sisters, I have applied this to Apollos and myself as an example for you. That way you will learn not to go beyond what has been written, and not in arrogance prefer one over the other.† ⁷ Who made you so special? What do you have that you weren't given? Since you were given it, why do you proudly claim you weren't? ⁸ You think you have all you need. You think you're so wealthy. You think you're kings already, and don't need us.‡ I wish you were really ruling as kings, so we could rule with you! ⁹ The way I see it, God has put us apostles on display as the last in the line, condemned to die. We have been made a public show before the entire universe, to angels and to human beings. ¹⁰ We're Christ's fools, but you are so wise in Christ! We're the weak ones, but you are so strong! You have the glory, but we are despised!§ ¹¹ Right up till now we're hungry and thirsty. We have no clothes. We're badly beaten up, and we have no place to call home. ¹² We struggle on doing manual work. When people curse us, we bless them. When they persecute us, we put up with it. ¹³ When they insult us, we respond with kindness. Even now we are treated like dirt, the worst trash in the whole world.

¹⁴ I'm not writing like this to make you feel ashamed, but to caution you as my children whom I love so much. ¹⁵ Even though you may have thousands of Christian instructors, you don't have many fathers—it was in Christ Jesus that I became your father when I shared the good news with you. ¹⁶ So I'm pleading with you to imitate me!

¹⁷ That's why I sent Timothy to you, my trustworthy son in the Lord who I love so much. He will remind you about the way I follow Christ, just as I always teach in every church I visit. ¹⁸ Some among you have become arrogant, thinking I wouldn't bother coming to see you. ¹⁹ But I am coming to visit you soon, if that's what the Lord wants. Then I'll find out what these arrogant people are saying, and what kind of power they have. ²⁰ For the kingdom of God is not about mere words, but about power. ²¹ So what do you want? Shall I come with a stick to beat you, or in love and a gentle spirit?

* **4:1** Again, in the NT mysteries are the revealed truths of God. † **4:6** The meaning of original is debated. This is shown in the many differences in translations. ‡ **4:8** Literally, “without us.” § **4:10** From the context Paul appears to be speaking rather ironically.

5

¹ I hear reports that sexual immorality is happening among you, immorality that even the foreigners don't practice. A man is living with his father's wife! ² You are so proud of yourselves! Shouldn't you have wept with sadness, and excluded the man who did this? ³ Even though I'm not physically present there, I am there in spirit and just as if I were there I've already made my judgment of the one who has done this. ⁴ When you meet together in the name of the Lord Jesus I'll be there with you in spirit and with the power of our Lord Jesus. ⁵ Hand over this man to Satan so his sinful nature may be destroyed and he himself be saved on the day of the Lord.*

⁶ You shouldn't be proud about this. Don't you know that it only takes a little yeast to make the whole batch of dough rise?† ⁷ Get rid of this old yeast so that you can be a new batch of dough to make bread without yeast. Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed. ⁸ So let us celebrate this festival‡, not with old yeast or the yeast of evil and wickedness, but with the bread made without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

⁹ In my previous letter I wrote that you should not associate with immoral people. ¹⁰ I wasn't referring to the immoral people of this world, those who are greedy and cheat others, or those who worship idols, otherwise you'd have to leave this world! ¹¹ What I meant when I wrote was that you shouldn't associate with anyone who is called a Christian who is immoral or greedy or worships idols; or who is abusive or a drunkard or who cheats others. Don't even share a meal with anyone like that! ¹² It's not my place to judge those outside the church. But shouldn't you judge those who are inside the church? ¹³ God judges those that are outside the church. "Expel the wicked from among you."§

6

¹ How dare any of you file a lawsuit before pagan judges if you have a dispute with your neighbor! Instead you should bring this before other believers. ² Don't you know that Christian believers will judge the world? If you're going to judge the world, are you not fit to judge in the most minor cases? ³ Don't you know we are going to judge angels? How much more those things that relate to this life! ⁴ So if you have to judge things that relate to this life, how can you go to judges that are not respected by the church?* ⁵ I'm trying to shame you by saying this. What? You can't find one wise person among you who can settle a

* **5:5** This is not to suggest that Satan "cooperates" in the salvation process. This "handing over to Satan" is figurative language that is meant to indicate that the one involved is allowed to experience the consequences of his sin so that he may choose to return and be saved. † **5:6** In other words, it only takes a small amount of sin to infect the whole church. ‡ **5:8** At the time of the Passover the Jews ate bread made without yeast, and threw out all the yeast from their homes. Paul is using this imagery to say that the yeast of sin needs to be removed just as the symbol of sin (yeast) was removed at the time of the sacrifice of the Passover. § **5:13** This is a quotation from Deuteronomy, repeated in several places: Deuteronomy 13:5, Deuteronomy 17:7, Deuteronomy 19:19, Deuteronomy 22:24, Deuteronomy 24:7. * **6:4** Or "why not choose judges from the least respected members of the church?"

dispute that you have? ⁶ Instead one believer takes another believer to court, and places the issue before unbelievers! ⁷ The very fact you have lawsuits against each other already is a complete disaster. Wouldn't it be better to accept the injustice? Why not let yourselves be defrauded? ⁸ But you would rather cause injustice and defraud even your fellow-believers in church.

⁹ Don't you know those who are unjust will not inherit the kingdom of God? Don't be fooled! People who are immoral, worship idols, commit adultery, sexual perverts, homosexuals, ¹⁰ thieves, greedy, drunkards, abusers, or cheats, will not inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ Some of you were once like that, but you have been made clean and holy. You have been made right in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

¹² People say, "I'm free to do anything"—but not everything is appropriate! "I'm free to do anything"—but I will not let anything control me! People say, ¹³ "Food for the stomach, and the stomach for food"—but God will destroy both of them. Also, the body is not meant to be used for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us up the same way.[†] ¹⁵ Don't you know your bodies are parts of Christ's body? Should I take the parts of Christ's body and join them to a prostitute? Absolutely not! ¹⁶ Don't you realize that anyone who has sex with a prostitute becomes "one body" with her? Remember that Scripture says, "The two will become one body."[‡] ¹⁷ But whoever is joined to the Lord is one with him in spirit! ¹⁸ Stay away from sexual immorality! All other sins that people commit are outside of the body, but sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. ¹⁹ Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit that is within you, that you received from God? ²⁰ You don't belong to yourself—a price was paid for you! So glorify God in your body!

7

¹ Now about what you wrote to me: "It's good not to marry."^{*} ² However, because of the temptation to sexual immorality, it is better that each man have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. ³ The husband should meet his wife's sexual needs, and the wife her husband's. ⁴ The wife's body doesn't just belong to her, but her husband; and similarly the husband's body doesn't just belong to him but his wife. ⁵ So don't deprive each other, except by mutual consent for a while—for example because you want to spend time in prayer. Afterwards be together again so that Satan won't tempt you to sin because of your lack of self-control. ⁶ I'm telling you this not as a command, but as a concession. ⁷ However, I wish that everyone was like me, but each person has their own gift from God—one has this gift, one has another. ⁸ To those who are not yet married, or who are widowed, I would say it is better if they remain like me. ⁹ But if they

[†] **6:14** Referring to raising up the body, continuing the subject of the discussion. [‡] **6:16**

Quoting Genesis 2:24. ^{*} **7:1** It seems that some in Corinth were single and the church was writing to ask if this was permissible.

lack self-control, then they should get married—for it is better to marry than burn with desire.

¹⁰ These are my instructions to those who are married—in fact not from me but the Lord: The wife should not leave her husband ¹¹ (or if she does, she should not re-marry, or she should return to her husband); and the husband should not leave his wife.[†] ¹² Now, to the rest of you, (and this is me speaking, not the Lord), I would say, “If a Christian man has a non-Christian wife and she is willing to stay with him, he should not leave her. ¹³ And if a Christian woman has a non-Christian husband, and he is willing to stay with her, she should not leave her husband.”

¹⁴ For a husband who is not a Christian, the marriage relationship is made holy by the Christian wife, and for a wife who is not a Christian, the marriage relationship is made holy by the Christian husband.[‡] Otherwise it would mean your children were impure, but now they are holy. ¹⁵ However, if the non-Christian spouse leaves, let them leave. In such cases the Christian man or woman is not slavishly bound, for God has called us to live in peace. ¹⁶ Wives, who knows? You may save your husband! Husbands, who knows? You may save your wife!

¹⁷ Apart from such cases, each of you should remain in the situation that the Lord has placed you, and continue to live the life to which God has called you. That's my instruction to all the churches. ¹⁸ Were you circumcised when you were converted? Don't become uncircumcised. Were you uncircumcised when you were converted? Don't become circumcised. ¹⁹ Circumcision doesn't mean anything, and uncircumcision doesn't mean anything. Keeping the commandments of God is what really matters. ²⁰ Everyone should remain in the position they were in when they were called.[§] ²¹ If you were a slave when you were called, don't worry—though if you have an opportunity to become free, take it. ²² If you were a slave when the Lord called you, you are now free, working for the Lord. In the same way if you were called when you were free, you are now Christ's slave! ²³ A price has been paid for you, so don't become a slave to anyone. ²⁴ Brothers and sisters, remain in the position you were in when you were called, living with God.

²⁵ Now about “people who are not married,”^{*} I don't have a specific instruction from the Lord, so let me give you my opinion as someone who by the Lord's mercy is considered trustworthy. ²⁶ Because of the present difficult situation we are in I think it is best to just stay as you are. ²⁷ Are you already married? Don't try to get divorced. Are you unmarried? Don't look to get married. ²⁸ If you do get married, you haven't sinned. If an unmarried woman gets married, she hasn't

[†] **7:11** One particular problem in the early church was of one spouse becoming Christian, and how then to relate to the non-Christian spouse. This seems to be what is addressed here.

[‡] **7:14** Paul is not saying here that being married to a Christian the non-Christian spouse therefore becomes a Christian or experiences salvation. He is concerned to address the issue that by being married to a non-Christian spouse in some way “defiles” the marriage or the Christian in the relationship. That this is the real issue is made clear concerning children of such a marriage—they are also not “impure” but they are “holy,” and this is not any reference to the actual spiritual state of the children. **§ 7:20** “Called”—in other words, conversion.

^{*} **7:25** Literally, “virgins.” Paul here continues discussing the issues that the Corinthian church has raised. See 7:1.

sinned. But you will have many troubles in this current world and I would want to spare you these. ²⁹ I'm telling you, brothers and sisters, that time is short, and from now on for those who are married it may seem as if they are not married, ³⁰ and those who weep as if they did not weep, and those that celebrated as if they had not celebrated, and those that bought as if they did not own, ³¹ and those who are engaged with the world as if it is not fulfilling—for the present world order is passing away.†

³² I would prefer you to be free from such worries. A man who is not married pays attention to what is important to the Lord, and how he can please the Lord. ³³ But a man who is married pays attention to what is important in this world, and how he can please his wife. ³⁴ As a result his loyalties are divided. Similarly an unmarried woman or girl pays attention to what is important to the Lord, so she may live a life dedicated both in body and spirit. But a married woman pays attention to what is important in this world, and how she can please her husband. ³⁵ I'm telling you this for your benefit. I'm not trying to put a noose around your neck, but to show you the right thing to do so you can serve the Lord without being distracted.

³⁶ But if a man thinks he's behaving improperly with the woman he's engaged to, and if he thinks he will give in to his strong sexual desire, and if he thinks he ought to get married, he is not sinning by getting married. ³⁷ But if a man stays true to his principles, and there is no obligation to marry, and has the power to keep his feelings under control and stay engaged to her, he does well not to marry. ³⁸ So the man who marries the woman he's engaged to does well, while the one who does not get married does better.

³⁹ A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies,‡ she is free to marry whoever she wants in the Lord.§
⁴⁰ But in my opinion she would be happier if she didn't re-marry—and I think I too have the Spirit of God when I say this.

8

¹ Now about “food sacrificed to idols.”* So “we all have knowledge” about this subject. Knowledge makes us proud, but love strengthens us. ² If anyone thinks they know anything, they don't know as they really should know! ³ But whoever loves God is known by God...

⁴ So regarding eating food sacrificed to idols: we know that there are no such things as idols in the world, and that there is only one real God. ⁵ Even though there are some things called “gods,” whether in heaven or on earth—in fact there are many “gods” and “lords.” ⁶ But for us there is only one God, the Father, from whom everything was made,

† **7:31** In this long sentence Paul indicates that even marriage must be related to contemporary events (“time is short”). Living under persecution, expecting the end of all things, means that even marriage is viewed differently, along with everything else. ‡ **7:39** The word used here means “to fall asleep,” the usual New Testament expression for death.

§ **7:39** Meaning it must be a marriage between two Christians. * **8:1** Paul continues answering the issues the Corinthians have raised.

and he is the goal of our existence; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom everything was made, and he is the means of our existence.†

7 But not everyone has this “knowledge.”‡ Some who up to now have been so used to idols as a reality that when they eat food sacrificed to an idol, their conscience (which is weak) tells them they have defiled themselves. 8 But food doesn't gain us God's approval! If we don't eat this food, we're not bad, and if we do eat this food, we're not good. 9 Just take care not to use this freedom you have to eat food sacrificed to idols to become offensive to those with a weaker attitude. 10 If another believer sees you who have such “better knowledge”§ eating food in an idol temple, won't his weak conscience be convinced to eat food sacrificed to idols?* 11 By your “better knowledge” the weaker believer is destroyed, a believer for whom Christ died. 12 In this way you sin against other believers, wounding their weaker consciences, and you sin against Christ. 13 So if eating food sacrificed to idols would cause my fellow believer to stumble, I will never eat such meat ever again, so that I don't offend any believer.

9

1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Haven't I seen Jesus our Lord? Aren't you the results of my work in the Lord? 2 Even if I'm not an apostle to others, at least I am one to you. The proof of my being an apostle of the Lord is you!

3 Here is my reply to those who question me about this: 4 Don't we have the right to be provided with food and drink? 5 Don't we have a right to be accompanied by a Christian wife, like the rest of the apostles, the Lord's brothers, and Peter? 6 Is it only Barnabas and myself who have to work to support ourselves?* 7 Which soldier ever had to pay his own salary? Who plants a vineyard and doesn't get to eat its fruits? Who feeds a flock and doesn't consume its milk?

8 Am I just speaking from a human point of view? Doesn't the law say the same thing? 9 In the law of Moses it's written, “Don't muzzle the ox when it's threshing out the grain.”† Was God just thinking about oxen? 10 Wasn't he directing this at us? Surely this was written for us—for anyone who plows should plow in hope and anyone who threshes should hope to share in the harvest. 11 If we sowed what is spiritual with you, does it really matter if we reap some material benefit? 12 If others exercise this right over you, don't we deserve it even more? Even so we did not exercise this right. On the contrary we would rather put up with anything than hold back the gospel of Christ.

† 8:6 This is a complex verse the meaning of which is much debated. It is seen as an early “creed” or declaration, identifying God as Creator and Re-creator, the focus of our lives. It literally says, “But to us one God the Father, from whom the all and we into him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the all and we through him.” ‡ 8:7 Paul takes issue with this knowledge being misapplied, as seen in verse 10 when it could be seen as being proud and arrogant. § 8:10 See under 8:7. *

8:10 In other words, deciding to follow another's example, while still believing it is a sin. *

9:6 The original is given in terms of a double negative. The suggestion is that only Paul and Barnabas are not given the privilege of not having to work. † 9:9 Quoting Deuteronomy 25:4.

¹³ Don't you know that those who work in temples receive their meals from temple offerings, and those that serve at the altar receive their portion of the sacrifice on the altar? ¹⁴ In just the same way the Lord ordered that those who announce the good news should live from supporters of the good news. ¹⁵ But I have not made use of any of these provisions, and I'm not writing about this to suggest it should be done in my case. I'd rather die than to have anyone take away my pride in not having received any benefit.

¹⁶ I have nothing to boast about in sharing the good news because it's something I feel compelled to do. In fact it's dreadful for me if I don't share the good news! ¹⁷ If I'm doing this work because of my own choice, then I have a reward. But if it wasn't my choice, and an obligation was placed on me, ¹⁸ then what reward do I have? It's the opportunity to share the good news without charging for it, not demanding my rights as a worker for the good news.

¹⁹ Even though I am free and serve no one, I have placed myself in service to everyone so that I might gain more. ²⁰ To the Jews I behave like a Jew so that I might win Jews. To those who are under the law I behave as someone under the law (even though I am not obligated under the law), so that I might win those under the law. ²¹ To those who don't operate according to the law,[‡] I behave like them, (though not disregarding God's law, but operating under the law of Christ), so that I might gain those who don't observe the law.

²² To those who are weak,[§] I share in their weakness so that I may win the weak. I have ended up being "everyman" to everyone so that by using every possible means I might win some! ²³ I do all this for the sake of the good news so that I too may share in its blessings!

²⁴ Wouldn't you agree that there are many runners in a race, but only one gets the prize? So run your best, so you may win! ²⁵ Every competitor who participates in the games maintains a strict training discipline. Of course they do so to win a crown that doesn't last. But our crowns will last forever!

²⁶ That's why I run straight in the right direction. I fight accurately, not punching the air. ²⁷ I also treat my body severely to bring it under my control, for I don't want somehow to be disqualified after sharing the good news with everybody else.

10

¹ Now I want to explain this to you, brothers and sisters. Our forefathers lived under the cloud, and they all passed through the sea.* ² Symbolically then they were baptized "into Moses" in the cloud and in the sea. ³ They all ate the same spiritual food ⁴ and drank the same spiritual drink, for they "drank from a spiritual rock" that accompanied them. That rock was Christ. ⁵ However, God wasn't happy with most of them, and they perished in the desert.

[‡] **9:21** Meaning those who are not Jews, who do not observe the law of Moses. **§ 9:22** Probably referring to the "weaker believer" issue mentioned in 8:7 and on. *** 10:1** The cloud of God's presence, and the passage through the Red Sea.

⁶ Now these experiences are examples to us to show us we should not desire what is evil, as they did. ⁷ You must not worship idols, as some of them did, as it's recorded in Scripture: "The people feasted and drank, and indulged in pagan worship."[†] ⁸ We must not commit sexual sins, as some of them did, and as a result 23,000 died in one day. ⁹ Nor should we push God to the limit, as some of them did, and were killed by snakes. ¹⁰ Don't complain at God, as some did, and died at the hands of the destroying angel.

¹¹ All the things that happened to them are examples to us and were written down to warn us, we who are living close to the end of time. ¹² So if you think you're strong enough to stay standing—be careful you don't fall! ¹³ You won't experience any greater temptation than anyone else, and God is trustworthy. He won't allow you to be tempted more than you can bear, and when you are tempted, he will provide for you a way out so you can stay strong. ¹⁴ So my good friends, stay away from idol worship.

¹⁵ I'm talking to sensible people, so you decide whether I'm telling the truth. ¹⁶ When we give thanks for the cup we use in the Lord's Supper, don't we share in the blood of Christ? When we break the communion bread, don't we share in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ By eating from one loaf of bread, we show that even though we are many, we are one body. ¹⁸ Look at the people of Israel. Don't those who eat the sacrifices made on the altar share together? ¹⁹ What am I saying then? That anything sacrificed to idols means anything, or that an idol has any real existence? Of course not! ²⁰ The pagans are sacrificing to demons, and not to God. I don't want you to have anything to do with demons! ²¹ You can't drink the Lord's cup as well as the cup of demons; you can't eat from the Lord's table as well as the table of demons. ²² Are we trying to make the Lord jealous? Are we stronger than he is?

²³ Some say, "I'm free to do anything"—but not everything is appropriate! "I'm free to do anything"—but not everything is constructive![‡] ²⁴ You shouldn't look out for yourself, but for your neighbor. ²⁵ Eat whatever is sold in the market without asking questions because of your conscience,[§] ²⁶ for "the earth and everything in it belong to God."^{*}

²⁷ If a non-Christian invites you to a meal, and you feel like going, eat whatever you are served, without asking questions because of your conscience. ²⁸ But if someone tells you, "This food has been sacrificed to idols," don't eat it for the sake of the one who mentioned it and for conscience' sake. ²⁹ His conscience I mean, not yours. For why should my freedom be determined by someone else's conscience?[†] ³⁰ If I choose to eat with thankfulness, why should I be criticized for eating what I'm thankful to God for? ³¹ So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, make sure to do everything to the glory of God. ³² Don't cause offense, whether it's to Jews or Greeks or the church of

[†] **10:7** See Exodus 32:6. [‡] **10:23** See 6:12. [§] **10:25** This refers back to the issue of food sacrificed to idols ^{*} **10:26** Quoting Psalms 24:1 [†] **10:29** This question seems to be at odds with the previous verse. Paul is arguing for tolerance—both of the one who is offended at eating meat sacrificed to idols, and the other who sees no problem with it since the "gods" of idols do not exist.

God—³³ just as I try to please everybody in all I do. I don't think of what benefits me, but what benefits others, so that they may be saved.

11

¹ You should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ. ² I'm grateful that you always remember me and that you are keeping to the teachings just as I passed them on to you. ³ I do want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ.* ⁴ A man's head is dishonored if he prays or prophesies with his head covered. ⁵ A woman's head is dishonored if she prays or prophesies with her head uncovered—it's just as if she had her hair shaved off. ⁶ If a woman's head is not covered, then she should have her head shaved. If it's scandalous for a woman to be shorn or shaven, then she should have her head covered. ⁷ A man shouldn't cover his head, because he is the image and glory of God, while the woman is the glory of the man. ⁸ Man didn't come from woman, but woman came from man; ⁹ and man was not created for the woman, but the woman was created for the man. ¹⁰ That's why the woman should have this sign of authority on her head out of respect for the watching angels.† ¹¹ Even so, from the Lord's perspective, the woman is as essential as the man, and the man as essential as the woman.‡ ¹² As the woman came from the man, so the man comes from the woman§—but more importantly everything comes from God. ¹³ Judge for yourselves: is it appropriate for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? ¹⁴ Doesn't nature itself indicate that a man with long hair disgraces himself? ¹⁵ However, a woman with long hair brings herself glory, because her hair is given to her as a covering. ¹⁶ But if anyone wants to argue about this, we don't have any other custom than this, and neither do any other of God's churches.*

¹⁷ Now in giving you the instructions that follow I can't commend you, because when you meet together you cause more harm than good! ¹⁸ First of all, I hear that when you have church meetings that you are split into different factions, and I believe there's some truth to this. ¹⁹ Of course such splits among you must happen so those who are genuine can prove themselves by their evidence! ²⁰ When you meet together you're not really celebrating the Lord's Supper at all. ²¹ Some want to eat first before everyone else, leaving others hungry. Still others get drunk. ²² Don't you have your own houses to eat and drink in? Do you look down on God's church, and humiliate those who

* **11:3** The meaning of "head" in this context is much discussed. In Scripture "head" can have to do with "origin," "source," or "authority." † **11:10** As many commentators note, this is one of the most difficult verses in the New Testament to understand and translate. Some understand the "authority" as the head covering demonstrating the woman is respectable and has a position in relationship to man. Others see this as an "authority" to speak and prophesy, since this would not normally be a woman's role in this society. There are many other interpretations of this, as well as of the phrase literally translated "because of the angels." ‡ **11:11** Literally, "nevertheless neither woman without man nor man without woman in the Lord." § **11:12** Referring back to Creation, where Eve is made from Adam, but from then on women gave birth to men. * **11:16** Paul clearly indicates this is simply the way things work in practice in the church by using the word "custom" or "habit" rather than the word "rule" or "command."

are poor? What should I tell you? That you're doing really well? I have nothing good to say about you for doing this!

²³ For I received from the Lord what I passed on to you: the Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed took some bread. ²⁴ After giving thanks, he broke the bread into pieces and said, "This bread is my body, which is given for you. Remember me by doing this." ²⁵ In the same way he took the cup, after the meal, and said, "This cup is the new agreement[†] sealed with my blood. Remember me when you drink it. ²⁶ For every time you eat this bread and drink from this cup you announce the Lord's death, until he returns."

²⁷ So anyone who eats the bread or drinks from the Lord's cup in a dishonorable way will be guilty of doing wrong against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ Let each person examine themselves, and then let them eat the bread and drink from the cup. ²⁹ Those who eat and drink bring judgment on themselves if they don't recognize their relationship with the body of the Lord. ³⁰ That's the reason why many of you are weak and sick, and some even have died. ³¹ However, if we really examined ourselves, we would not be judged like this. ³² But when we are judged, we are being disciplined by the Lord so that we won't be condemned along with the world. ³³ So my brothers and sisters, when you meet together to eat the Lord's Supper, wait for each other. ³⁴ If anyone is hungry, then eat at home so that when you meet together you won't bring condemnation on yourselves. I'll give you more directions when I visit.

12

¹ Now about "spiritual gifts."^{*} My brothers and sisters, I want to explain this to you. ² You know that when you were pagans, you were deceived, being led astray by worshiping idols who couldn't even speak. ³ Let me make it clear to you: no one who speaks in the Spirit of God says, "Curse Jesus!" and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord!" except by the Holy Spirit. ⁴ Now there are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but they come from the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different kinds of ministries,[†] but they come from the same Lord. ⁶ There are different ways of working, but they come from the same God, who is at work in all of them. ⁷ The Spirit is given to each of us and is revealed for the good of all. ⁸ One person is given by the Spirit the ability to speak words of wisdom. Another is given a message of knowledge by the same Spirit. ⁹ Another receives the gift of strongly trusting in God by the same Spirit. Another receives gifts of healing from that one Spirit. ¹⁰ Another is given the ability to perform miracles. Another receives the gift of prophecy. Another is given the gift of spiritual discernment. Another receives the ability to speak different languages while another is given the gift of interpreting languages. ¹¹ But all of these gifts are

[†] **11:25** This translates the word often rendered as "covenant" which has limited use in modern English. The idea is of an agreement between two parties. In this case it is the relationship between God and human beings. ^{*} **12:1** Paul takes up another issue that the Corinthians have asked him about. [†] **12:5** Or "service."

the work of the one and the same Spirit, sharing with each person as he alone chooses.

¹² Just like the human body is one unit but has many parts—all the parts of the body even though there are many of them, make up one body—so is Christ. ¹³ For it was through one Spirit that we were all baptized into one body. It doesn't matter whether we are Jews or Greeks, slave or free—we all were given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ The body is not made of one part, but many parts. ¹⁵ If the foot were to say, "Because I'm not a hand, I'm not part of the body," would that make it not part of the body? ¹⁶ If the ear were to say, "Because I'm not an eye, I'm not part of the body," would that make it not part of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body was an eye, how could you hear anything? If the whole body was an ear, how could you smell anything?

¹⁸ But God has arranged each part in the body, every last one of them, placing them just as he wanted. ¹⁹ If they were all the same part, what would happen to the body? ²⁰ However, since there are many parts, they make up the body. ²¹ The eye can't tell the hand, "I don't need you," or the head tell the feet, "I don't need you." ²² Quite the opposite: some of those parts of the body that seem the most insignificant are the most essential. ²³ In fact those parts of the body we do not consider to be decent to reveal we "honor" more by covering them up—what is indecent we treat with greater modesty! ²⁴ What's presentable doesn't need such covering up. God has so arranged the body that more honor is given to the parts that are less presentable. ²⁵ This is so there wouldn't be any conflict within the body—the different parts should care equally for each other. ²⁶ So when one part is suffering, all the other parts of the body suffer with it, and when one part is treated well, then all the other parts of the body are happy too!‡

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one makes up a part of it. ²⁸ In the church, God has arranged first for some to be apostles, secondly for some to be prophets, thirdly teachers. Then there are those who perform miracles, those with healing gifts, those who can help others, those good at administration, and those who can speak different languages. ²⁹ Not everyone is an apostle, or a prophet, or a teacher, or able to perform miracles. ³⁰ Not all have healing gifts, or the ability to speak languages, or to interpret languages. ³¹ But you should really want to have the most significant gifts.§ So now I will show you a far better way.

13

¹ If I were to have eloquence in human languages—even the language of angels—but have no love, then I would only be an echoing gong or a clashing cymbal. ² If I were to speak prophecies, to know every secret mystery and be completely knowledgeable, and if I were

‡ **12:26** Here Paul seems to be thinking far more of the body of the church than a physical body. § **12:31** Having discussed the different spiritual gifts, Paul states that believers should desire the most important ones. Of course which these are would be a matter of much debate. What he really is doing is setting the scene for the next chapter, for without love none of these gifts, even those considered the most significant, are worth anything.

able to have so much faith I could move mountains, but have no love, then I am nothing. ³ If I were to donate everything I own to the poor, or if I were to sacrifice myself to be burned as a martyr, and have no love, then I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous. Love is not boastful. Love is not proud. ⁵ Love does not act improperly, or insist on having its own way. Love is not argumentative and doesn't keep a record of wrongs. ⁶ Love takes no delight in evil but celebrates the truth. ⁷ Love never gives up, keeps on trusting, stays confident, and remains patient whatever happens.

⁸ Love never fails. Prophecies will come to an end. Tongues will become silent. Knowledge will become useless. ⁹ For our knowledge and our prophetic understanding are incomplete. ¹⁰ But when completeness comes, then what is incomplete disappears. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I grew up I left behind such child-like ways. ¹² At the moment we peer into a mirror's dim reflection, but then we shall see face to face. For now I only have partial knowledge, but then I shall know completely, just as I am completely known. ¹³ Trust, hope, and love last forever—but the most important is love.

14

¹ Make love your most important objective! But also do your best to gain spiritual gifts, especially the ability to speak God's message.* ² Those who speak in a tongue† are not talking to people, but to God, because nobody can understand them as they speak mysteries in the Spirit. ³ However, the words of those who speak for God build people up—they provide encouragement and comfort. ⁴ Those that speak in a tongue only build themselves up, but those who speak God's message build up the church. I would like it if you all spoke in tongues, but I'd prefer if you could speak God's message. ⁵ Those who speak for God are more important than those who speak in tongues, unless they interpret what's been said, so that the church can be built up.

⁶ Brothers and sisters, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what benefit would I be to you unless I bring you some revelation, or knowledge, or prophetic message, or teaching? ⁷ Even when it comes to something non-living such as musical instruments like a flute or a harp: if they don't produce clear notes, how will you know what tune is being played? ⁸ Similarly, if the trumpet doesn't give a clear sound, who will get ready for battle? ⁹ It's the same situation for you—unless you speak using words that are easy to understand, who will know what you're saying? What you say will be lost on the wind. ¹⁰ There are surely many languages in this world, and there is meaning in every

* **14:1** Literally, "prophecy," but in the sense of telling the good news rather than foretelling the future. The terms "speaks God's message," "God's prophetic message," or "speaks for God" are used here. † **14:2** This is clearly not the use of normal human language. There is much debate over this phenomenon. Clearly the early church was gifted with the ability to speak and be understood in different human languages as Acts 2 makes clear. However, some kind of "ecstatic utterance" appears to be in view here. Its practice in Corinth was being abused, and so Paul has to counteract the problem here.

one of them. ¹¹ If I don't understand the language, those who speak make no sense to me, and I make no sense to them.‡ ¹² It's the same for you—if you are keen to have spiritual gifts, try to have many of those that will build up the church. ¹³ Anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that they're able to translate what they say. ¹⁴ For if I pray out loud in a tongue, my spirit is praying, but it does nothing for my understanding!

¹⁵ So then, what should I do? I will pray “in the Spirit,” but I will pray with my mind too. I will sing “in the Spirit,” but I will sing with my mind too.§ ¹⁶ For if you only pray “in the Spirit,” how can ordinary people that don't have understanding say “Amen” after your prayer of thanks, since they haven't a clue what you said? ¹⁷ You might have said a great prayer of thanks, but the other hasn't been helped! ¹⁸ I thank God that I can speak in tongues more than all of you. ¹⁹ But in church I would rather speak five understandable words to teach others than ten thousand words in a tongue nobody understands. ²⁰ Brothers and sisters, don't think like children. Be as innocent as babies in regard to evil, but be grown up in your understanding. ²¹ As Scripture records, “I will speak to my people through other languages and the lips of foreigners, but even then they won't listen to me,” says the Lord.”*

²² Speaking in tongues is a sign, not to believers, but those who don't believe. Speaking God's prophetic message is the opposite: it is not for those who don't believe, but for believers. ²³ If the whole church is meeting together and you are all speaking in tongues, and some people come in who don't understand, or people who don't believe, won't they say that you are insane? ²⁴ But if everyone is speaking God's message, and someone comes in who isn't a believer, or someone who doesn't understand, they will be convinced and called to account by everyone's words. ²⁵ Their secrets thoughts will be revealed, so they will fall to their knees† and worship God, affirming that God is truly among you.

²⁶ So then, brothers and sisters, what should you do? When you meet together, different people will sing, or teach, or share a special message, or speak in a tongue, or give an interpretation. But everything should be done to build up and encourage the church. ²⁷ If anyone wants to speak in a tongue, make it just two, or three at the most, taking turns, and someone should interpret what is said. ²⁸ If there's no one there to interpret, those who speak in tongues should keep quiet in church and only speak to themselves, and God. ²⁹ Similarly, have two or three of those who give God's prophetic message speak, and let everyone else think about what was said. ³⁰ However, if a special revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, then the first speaker should give way to them. ³¹ You can all speak for God, one at a time, so that everyone can learn and be encouraged. ³² It is for those who speak for God to control their prophetic inspiration, ³³ for God is not a God

‡ **14:11** Literally, I am a barbarian to the one who speaks, and the one who speaks is a barbarian to me. The very word “barbarian” comes from the idea that sounds being made make no sense—“baa-baa” etc. § **14:15** Paul here seems to be using the phraseology of some of those in Corinth who were proud of being “in the Spirit” as if that was superior to anything else. Paul points out that being “in the Spirit” is not helpful unless it produces understanding.

* **14:21** Quoting Isaiah 28:11-12. † **14:25** Literally, “fall on his face.”

of disorder but of peace and quiet.[‡] This is the way it should be in all the churches of God's people. ³⁴ "Women should stay quiet in the churches—they shouldn't speak. They should respect their situation, as the laws states. ³⁵ If they want to learn they can do so at home, asking their husbands. It is not proper[§] for women to speak in church."^{*} ³⁶ What? Did the word of God begin with you? Are you the only ones it came to? ³⁷ Anyone who thinks they are a prophet, or that they have some spiritual gift, should be aware that what I'm writing to you is a command of the Lord. ³⁸ Those who ignore this will themselves be ignored. ³⁹ So my brothers and sisters, make it your aim to speak for God. Don't prohibit speaking in tongues. ⁴⁰ Just make sure everything done is done properly and in an orderly manner.

15

¹ Now I want to remind you about the good news I announced to you. You accepted it, and you have stood firm for it. ² It is through this good news that you are saved if you hold on to the message that I gave you. Otherwise you trusted for nothing! ³ I passed on to you what I myself had also received, a message of vital importance: that Christ died for our sins, according to Scripture; ⁴ he was buried and was raised from the dead on the third day, again in accordance with Scripture. ⁵ He appeared to Peter, then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still alive today, though some have died. ⁷ He appeared to James, then all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, he also appeared to me, someone born as it were at the wrong time. ⁹ For I'm the least important apostle of all, not even fit to be called an apostle since I persecuted God's church. ¹⁰ But by God's grace I am what I am, and his grace given to me wasn't wasted. On the contrary I've worked harder than all of them—though not me, but God's grace working through me. ¹¹ So whether it's I or them, this is the message we shared with you that brought you to trust in God.

¹² Now if the message declares that Christ has been raised from the dead, how is it that some of you say there's no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there's no resurrection of the dead then Christ hasn't been raised either. ¹⁴ And if Christ isn't raised, then our message we shared with you is pointless, and your trust in God is pointless too. ¹⁵ In addition, we would be shown to be false witnesses of God when we testified that God raised Christ from the dead. But God didn't raise Christ from the dead if it's true that there's no resurrection. ¹⁶ If the dead are not

[‡] **14:33** This statement is to deal with the situation where people are claiming special revelation/inspiration and therefore wanting precedence—with the obvious arguments that would result. [§] **14:35** "Not proper." By using this term (which also can mean shameful or disgraceful) Paul reveals this is related to the cultural context. ^{*} **14:35** The reason for placing 14:34-35 in quote marks is the understanding that this is the position outlined in the letter from Corinth, and Paul is quoting them before refuting their argument. The fact that just 3 chapters earlier in 11:5 Paul refers to women praying and prophesying indicates that this statement cannot be read as a blanket ban on women speaking in church. From the context it appears possible that women in the church at Corinth were questioning and arguing, being part of the disorder he mentions, and this suggested solution in the letter from the church at Corinth is what Paul is addressing here.

raised, then Christ hasn't been raised either,¹⁷ and if Christ hasn't been raised, then your trust in God is useless, and you are still in your sins.¹⁸ This also means that those who died in Christ are lost.¹⁹ If our hope in Christ is only for this life, we're the most pitiful people of all!

²⁰ But Christ *has* been raised from the dead, the firstfruits* of the harvest from those who have died. ²¹ Just as death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead came through a man. ²² Just as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in their own turn: Christ the firstfruits, then those who belong to Christ when he comes. ²⁴ After this comes the end, when Christ hands over the kingdom to God the Father, having destroyed† all rulers, authorities, and powers. ²⁵ Christ has to rule until he has put all his enemies under his feet.‡ ²⁶ The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. ²⁷ As Scripture says, "He put everything under his feet."§ (Of course when it says "everything" is put under him it's obvious this doesn't refer to God who placed everything under Christ's authority.) ²⁸ When everything has been placed under Christ's authority, then the Son will also place himself under God's authority, so that God who gave the Son authority over everything may be all in all.*

²⁹ Otherwise what will those people do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then would people be baptized for them?† ³⁰ As for us, why do we place ourselves in danger hour after hour? ³¹ I die every day—let me say it bluntly, my brothers and sisters. This is just as sure as the pride I have for what Christ Jesus has done in you. ³² Humanly speaking, what would I gain by fighting with those people in Ephesus who were like wild animals, if the dead are not raised? If the dead are not raised, "let's eat and drink, for tomorrow we die"!‡

³³ Don't be fooled: "bad company ruins good character." ³⁴ Come to your senses as you should, and stop sinning! Some of you don't know God. I tell you this to shame you.

³⁵ Of course somebody will ask, "How exactly are the dead raised? What kind of body will they have?" ³⁶ What a foolish question! What you sow doesn't sprout into life unless it dies. ³⁷ When you sow, you don't sow the plant it will grow into, just the bare seed, whether wheat or whatever you're planting. ³⁸ God makes the plant grow into the form he has chosen, and different seeds produce different plants with different forms. ³⁹ What living things are made from is not the same. Human beings have one kind of body tissue, while animals have another, birds another, and fish another. ⁴⁰ There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. Heavenly bodies have one kind of beauty, earthly

* **15:20** The word "firstfruits" refers to the first sample of a harvest that was given as an offering to God, also seen as a guarantee of a successful harvest. Christ as the firstfruits therefore means he is both the initial harvest from the dead and the guarantee of their resurrection. † **15:24** Destroyed in the sense of ending their power. ‡ **15:25** Meaning they have been conquered and humbled. § **15:27** Quoting Psalms 8:6. * **15:28** "All in all." Various explanations have been given for this phrase. It is obviously referring to the completeness of God's rulership in the Universe, and is perhaps best translated literally from the original as "all in all." † **15:29** The theological meaning of this verse is much debated. However, the actual words are translated simply enough. ‡ **15:32** Quoting Isaiah 22:13.

bodies another. ⁴¹ The sun shines in one way, and the moon another, while the stars are different again, with each one shining in a different way.

⁴² It's the same with the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in decay; it is raised to last forever. ⁴³ It is sown in shame; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown as a natural body; it is raised as a spiritual body. Just as there are natural bodies there are spiritual bodies. ⁴⁵ As Scripture says, "The first man, Adam, became a living being;"[§] but the last Adam a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ The spiritual did not come first, but the natural—the spiritual came after that. ⁴⁷ The first man is from the dust of the earth; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ Earthly people are like the man made from the earth; heavenly people are like the man from heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we bore the likeness of the earthly man so we shall bear the likeness of the man from heaven. ⁵⁰ However, I tell you this, my brothers and sisters: our present bodies* cannot inherit the kingdom of God. These decaying bodies cannot inherit what lasts forever.

⁵¹ Listen, I'm going to reveal a mystery! Not all of us will die—but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the blink of an eye, at the sound of the last trumpet. The trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised never to die again, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must be clothed with a body that never perishes. This mortal life must be clothed with immortality. ⁵⁴ When this perishable body has been clothed with a body that never perishes, and this mortal life has been clothed with immortality, then the Scripture will come true that says, "Death has been totally conquered and destroyed. ⁵⁵ Death—where's your victory? Death—where's your sting?"[†] ⁵⁶ The sting that causes death is sin; and the power of sin is the law; ⁵⁷ but praise God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ So my dear brothers and sisters: be strong, stand firm, doing everything you can for the Lord's work, since you know that nothing you do in the Lord is wasted.

16

¹ Now about "collecting money for fellow-believers." I'm giving you the same instructions for you to follow as I did to the churches in Galatia. ² On the first day of the week everybody should set aside some money you've earned. I don't want there to be any collections to have to be made when I'm with you. ³ When I get there I will write recommendation letters for whoever you choose, and they will take your donation to Jerusalem. ⁴ If it works out for me to go too, they can come with me.

⁵ After I've been to Macedonia, I plan to come and visit you. I pass that way through Macedonia ⁶ and I may stay with you for a while, perhaps spend the winter, and then you can send me on my way to wherever I'm headed. ⁷ This time I don't want to come and see you for just a short time. I hope I can stay for a while with you, if that's what

§ 15:45 Quoting Genesis 2:7. * 15:50 Literally, "flesh and blood." † 15:55 Referencing Isaiah 25:8; Hosea 13:14.

the Lord permits. ⁸ However, I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹ because a tremendous door of opportunity has opened up for me there, though there are plenty who oppose me.

¹⁰ Now if Timothy arrives, make sure that he has nothing to fear by being with you, for he's working for the Lord just as I am. ¹¹ Don't let anyone look down on him. Cheerfully send him on his way so he can come and see me—the brothers and sisters and I are waiting for him. ¹² As for our brother Apollos: I urged him to go and see you together with the other believers, but he wasn't willing to go at the moment. He'll come and visit when he gets the chance.

¹³ Stay alert. Stand firm in your trust in God. Take courage. Be strong. ¹⁴ Whatever you do, do it in love. ¹⁵ You know that Stephanas and his family were among the first converts in Achaia, and they dedicated themselves to helping God's people. I'm pleading with you, my brothers and sisters, ¹⁶ to respect their leadership, and everyone who helps the work with such dedication. ¹⁷ I'm delighted that Stephanas, Fortunatas, and Achaicus have arrived here, for they did what you weren't able to. ¹⁸ They have been a great source of encouragement to me, and to you. People like that deserve your recognition.

¹⁹ The churches of Asia* send their greetings. Aquila and Priscilla, along with the church that meets in their home, send their best wishes. ²⁰ All the brothers and sisters here send their greetings. Greet one another affectionately. ²¹ I Paul write this greeting with my own hand. ²² Anyone who doesn't love the Lord should be excluded from the church.† Come Lord! ²³ May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. ²⁴ My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.

* **16:19** Referring to the Roman province of Asia Minor. † **16:22** Literally, "let him be accursed."

Second Corinthians

¹ This letter comes from Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the will of God, and from Timothy, our brother. It is sent to the church of God in Corinth, together with all of God's people throughout Achaia.

² May you have grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ Praise be to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! He is the compassionate Father and the God of all comfort. ⁴ He comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those who are also in trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. ⁵ The more we share in Christ's sufferings, the more we receive the abundant comfort of Christ. ⁶ If we are in distress, it is for your comfort and salvation. If we are being comforted, it is for your comfort, which results in you patiently bearing the same sufferings that we suffer. ⁷ We have great confidence in you,* knowing that as you share in our sufferings you also share in our comfort.

⁸ Brothers and sisters, we won't keep you in the dark about the trouble we had in Asia. We were so overwhelmed that we were afraid we wouldn't have the strength to continue—so much so we doubted we would live through it. ⁹ In fact it was like a death sentence inside us. This was to stop us relying on ourselves and to trust in God who raises the dead. ¹⁰ He saved us from a terrible death, and he will do so again. We have total confidence in God that he will continue to save us. ¹¹ You help us by praying for us. In this way many will thank God for us because of the blessing that God will give us in response to the prayers of many.

¹² We take pride in the fact—and our conscience confirms it—that we have acted properly towards people, and especially to you. We have followed God's principles of holiness and sincerity, not according to worldly wisdom but through the grace of God. ¹³ For we are not writing anything complicated that you can't read and understand. I hope you'll understand in the end, ¹⁴ even if you only understand part of it now, so that when the Lord comes you will be proud of us, just as we are of you.

¹⁵ Because I was so sure of your confidence in me I planned to come and visit you first. That way you could have benefited twice, ¹⁶ as I would go on from you to Macedonia, and then return from Macedonia to you. Then I would have had you send me on my way to Judea. ¹⁷ Why did I change my original plan? Do you think I make my decisions lightly? Do you think that when I plan I'm like some worldly person who says Yes and No at the same time? ¹⁸ Just as God can be trusted, when we give you our word it's not both Yes and No. ¹⁹ The truth of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, was announced to you by us—me, Silvanus, and Timothy—and it wasn't both Yes and No. In Christ the answer is absolutely Yes! ²⁰ However, many promises God has made, in Christ the answer is always Yes. Through him we respond, saying

* **1:7** Literally, "our hope in you is firm."

Yes[†] to the glory of God. ²¹ God has given both us and you the inner strength to stand firm in Christ. God has appointed us, ²² placed his stamp of approval on us, and given us the guarantee of the Spirit to convince us. ²³ I call God as my witness that it was to avoid causing you pain that I chose not to come to Corinth. ²⁴ This isn't because we want to dictate how you relate to God, but because we want to help you have a joyful experience—for it's by trusting God that you stand firm.

2

¹ That's why I decided that I would avoid another sad visit with you. ² For if I make you sad, who will be there to make me happy? It won't be those I've made sad! ³ That's why I wrote what I did, so that I wouldn't be sad over those who should make me happy. I was so sure that all of you would share in my happiness. ⁴ I was crying many tears when I wrote to you, in great anguish and with a heavy heart—not to make you sad, but so you would know how much love I have for you.

⁵ Not to put it too strongly, but the person caused more pain to all of you than to me. ⁶ This person suffered enough punishment from the majority of you, ⁷ so now you should forgive him and be kind to him. Otherwise he may sink into despair. ⁸ So I urge you to publicly affirm your love towards him. ⁹ That's why I wrote: so I could discover your true character and whether you're doing everything you were told to do. ¹⁰ Anyone you forgive, I forgive too. What I have forgiven, whatever it may be, I have forgiven before Christ for your benefit. ¹¹ In this way Satan will not be able to take us in, because we know the tricks he thinks up.

¹² Now when I arrived in Troas to spread the good news of Christ, the Lord opened a door of opportunity for me. ¹³ But my mind wasn't at peace because I couldn't find my brother Titus. So I said goodbye and went over to Macedonia.*

¹⁴ But praise be to God, who always leads us in a triumphal procession in Christ, and reveals through us the sweet scent of his knowledge wherever we go! ¹⁵ We are like a fragrance of Christ to God, rising up from among those who are being saved as well as those who are dying. ¹⁶ To those who are dying it is the smell of decay, while to those who are being saved it is the scent of life! But who is up to such an assignment? ¹⁷ We are not like the majority who trade in the word of God for profit. Quite the opposite: we are sincere in sharing the word of God in Christ, knowing God is watching us.

3

¹ Are we starting to speak well of ourselves again? Or do we need to have some letter of recommendation for you, or from you, as some people do? ² You are our letter, written in our experience with you, that everybody reads and knows about. ³ You demonstrate that you are a letter from Christ, delivered by us; not written with ink but with

[†] **1:20** Literally, "Amen," which means "Yes," or "I agree." * **2:13** From Troas to Macedonia would involve a sea-crossing.

the Spirit of the living God; not written on stone slabs but in our living experience as human beings. ⁴ We have total confidence before God through Christ. ⁵ Not that we would consider ourselves able to do this on our own—it's God who gives us this capacity! ⁶ He also gave us the ability to be ministers of a new agreement,* based not on the letter of the law, but on the spirit. The letter of the law kills, but the spirit gives life. ⁷ However, the old way of relating to God, written in letters carved in stone, ended in death, even though it came with God's glory—so much so that the Israelites couldn't even bear to look at Moses' face because it shone so brightly, even though the glory was fading. ⁸ If that was so, shouldn't the new way of relating to God in the Spirit come with even greater glory? ⁹ If the old way that condemns us has glory, the new way that makes us right with God has so much more glory! ¹⁰ For the old that was once glorious has no glory at all in comparison with the incredible glory of the new. ¹¹ If the old that is fading away had glory, the new that continues has so much more glory.

¹² Since we have such a confident hope, we are truly bold! ¹³ We don't have to be like Moses, who had to put on a veil to cover his face so the Israelites wouldn't be dazzled by the glory, even though it was fading away. ¹⁴ In spite of that, they had a hard, stubborn attitude. For right up until today when the old agreement is read, the same “veil”† remains. Only through Christ can it be removed. ¹⁵ Even today, whenever the books of Moses are read, a veil covers their minds. ¹⁶ But when they turn and accept the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there's freedom. ¹⁸ So all of us, with our faces unveiled, see and reflect the glory of the Lord as in a mirror. We are being transformed into the same mirror image, whose glory grows brighter and brighter. This is what the Lord the Spirit does.

4

¹ So then, since God in his mercy has given us this new way of relating to him, we don't give up. ² But we have given up secret, shameful acts. We don't behave in deceitful ways and we don't distort the word of God. We demonstrate who we are by revealing the truth before God so everybody can decide in their own minds. ³ Even if the good news we share is veiled, it is veiled to those who are dying. ⁴ The god of this world has blinded the minds of those who don't trust in God. They can't see the light of the good news of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

⁵ We are not promoting* ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord. In fact we are your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God who said, “Let light shine out of the darkness,”† shone in our minds to illuminate the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ. ⁷ But we have this treasure in clay jars, to show that this supreme power comes from God and not from ourselves.

* **3:6** Or “covenant.” † **3:14** In other words, they are not able to see clearly. * **4:5** Literally, “preaching.” † **4:6** Quoting Genesis 1:3.

⁸ We are attacked from every direction, but we are not crushed. We are at a loss as to what to do, but never in despair. ⁹ We are persecuted, but never abandoned by God. We are knocked down, but not dead yet! ¹⁰ In our bodies we always share in the death of Jesus, so that we can also demonstrate the life of Jesus in our bodies. ¹¹ While we live we are always under the threat of death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be revealed in our mortal bodies. ¹² As a result, we are facing death so that you may have life!

¹³ Since we have the same spirit of trust in God that Scripture refers to when it says, "I trusted in God, and so I spoke out,"[‡] we also trust in God and speak out for him. ¹⁴ We know that God who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus, and will bring us into his presence with you. ¹⁵ It's all for you! As God's grace reaches many more, thankfulness to God will be even greater, to his glory. ¹⁶ So we don't give up. Even though our physical bodies are falling apart, our inner selves are being renewed daily. ¹⁷ These trivial troubles we have only last for a little while, but they produce for us an ever-increasing degree of glory. ¹⁸ We don't concern ourselves with what can be seen, for we look forward to what can't be seen. What we see is temporary, but what we can't see is eternal.

5

¹ We know that when this earthly "tent"^{*} we live in is taken down, we have a house prepared by God, not made by human hands. It is eternal and is in heaven. ² We sigh with longing for this, wanting so badly to be clothed with this new heavenly home. ³ When we put on this clothing we won't be seen naked. ⁴ While we are in this "tent" we sigh, being weighed down by this life. It's not so much that we want to take off the clothing of this life but that we look forward to what we shall be clothed with, so that what is mortal may be overwhelmed by life. ⁵ It's God himself who prepared us for all this, and who provided the Spirit as a guarantee to us. ⁶ So we remain confident, knowing that while we are at home here in our physical bodies, we are away from the Lord. ⁷ (For we live by trusting in God, not by seeing him.) ⁸ As I say, we are confident, wanting to be away from the body so we can be at home with the Lord. ⁹ That's why our goal, whether home here in our bodies or not, is to make sure we please him. ¹⁰ For all of us must appear before Christ's seat of judgment. Each of us will receive what we deserve for what we have done in this life, whether it is good or bad.

¹¹ Knowing how we are in awe of the Lord, we try to convince others. It's clear to God what we are, and I hope that it's clear to your minds too. ¹² We are not trying to speak well of ourselves again, just trying to give you the opportunity to be proud of us, so you can answer those who are proud of outward show and not what they are inside.[†] ¹³ If we are "crazy people,"[‡] it's for God. If we make good sense, it's for

[‡] **4:13** Quoting Psalms 116:10. ^{*} **5:1** The symbolism here is of the earthly body as a tent, and the heavenly body is a house—both of which "clothe" the person. [†] **5:12** Literally, "in the heart." [‡] **5:13** This may have been a criticism of Paul and his companions by those in Corinth.

you. ¹⁴ Christ's love urges us on, because we're absolutely sure that he died for everyone, and so everyone died. ¹⁵ Christ died for everyone so that they shouldn't live any longer for themselves, but for him who died and rose again for them.

¹⁶ From now on we don't look at anyone from a human point of view. Even though we once viewed Christ this way, we don't do so any longer. ¹⁷ That's why anyone who is in Christ is a new being—what was old is gone, the new has come! ¹⁸ God did all this by changing us from enemies into friends through Christ. God gave us this same work of changing his enemies into his friends. ¹⁹ For God was in Christ bringing the world back from hostility to friendship with him, not counting anyone's sins against them, and giving us this message to change his enemies into his friends. ²⁰ So we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God is pleading through us: "Please, won't you come back and be God's friend?" ²¹ God made Jesus, who never personally sinned, experience the consequences of sin so that we could have a character that is good and right just as God is good and right. §

6

¹ As workers together with God we also plead with you not to make your acceptance of God's grace worthless. ² Just as God said, "At the right time I heard you, and on the day of salvation I rescued you."* Believe me: now is the right time! Now is the day of salvation! ³ We don't put anything in anyone's way that would trip them up, making sure the work we do won't be criticized. ⁴ Instead we try to demonstrate we are good servants of God in every way we can. With a great deal of patience we put up with all kinds of trouble, hardship, and distress. ⁵ We have been beaten up, thrown into prison, and attacked by mobs. We have been worked to the bone, suffering sleepless nights and hunger. ⁶ We demonstrate who we are by living blameless lives in the knowledge of God, with a great deal of patience, being kind and filled with the Holy Spirit, showing sincere love. ⁷ We speak truthfully,† living in the power of God. Our weapons consist of what is true and right; we attack with our right hand and we defend with our left‡. ⁸ We continue whether we are honored or dishonored, whether we are cursed or praised. People call us frauds but we tell the truth. ⁹ We are disregarded, even though we are well-known; given up for dead, but we're still alive; lashed, but not killed. ¹⁰ Seen as miserable, we are always rejoicing; as poor, but we make many rich; as destitute, but we own everything!

¹¹ I've been speaking bluntly, my Corinthian friends, loving you with a big heart! ¹² We haven't kept our love from you, but you have kept your love from us. ¹³ Please respond in the same way, as if you were my children, and be big-hearted!

§ 5:21 Or "we could become right just as God is right," meaning morally right, not in the sense of being correct. * 6:2 Quoting Isaiah 49:8. † 6:7 Or "word of truth," meaning the gospel. ‡ 6:7 Literally, "weapons of the right and left." This may mean the use of a sword with the right hand and a shield with the left.

¹⁴ Don't join together with people who don't believe—for what connection does goodness have with wickedness? What do light and darkness have in common? ¹⁵ How could Christ and the Devil[§] ever agree? How could a believer and an unbeliever share together? ¹⁶ What compromise could the Temple of God make with idols? For we are a temple of the living God, just as God said: "I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people."^{*} ¹⁷ "So leave them, and separate yourselves from them, says the Lord. Don't touch anything that is unclean, and I will accept you."[†] ¹⁸ "I will be like a Father to you, and you will be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."[‡]

7

¹ Dear friends, since we have these promises, we should wash ourselves clean from all that makes both body and spirit dirty, aiming for complete holiness out of reverence for God. ² Please accept us as your friends! We haven't done anyone wrong, we haven't corrupted anyone, and we haven't taken advantage of anyone. ³ I'm not saying this to condemn you—as I already told you, you mean so much to us that we live and die together with you! ⁴ I speak up very strongly for you because I am so proud of you. You are such an encouragement to me. I am so happy for you despite all our troubles.

⁵ When we arrived in Macedonia we didn't have a minute's peace. We were attacked from every direction, with external conflicts and inner fears. ⁶ Even so, God who encourages the downhearted, encouraged us with Titus' arrival. ⁷ Not just by his arrival, but also by the encouragement you gave him. He told us how you were longing to see me, how sorry you were, and how concerned you were about me, which made me even happier. ⁸ Even though I made you sorry by the letter I wrote, I don't regret it—though I did regret it because the letter did hurt you, but just for a while. ⁹ I'm happy now, not for hurting you, but because this pain led you to change your minds. You were made sorry in a way God would want, and so weren't harmed by us in any way. ¹⁰ The kind of sorrow God wants us to have makes us change our minds and brings salvation. This kind of sorrow leaves no sense of regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. ¹¹ See what happened to you when you had this very same experience of sorrow that God wants. Remember how enthusiastic you became, how keen you were to defend yourselves, how angry you were at what had happened, how seriously you took it, how you longed to do right, how concerned you were, how you wanted justice to be done. In all of this you showed that you were sincere in wanting to make things right.^{*}

¹² So when I wrote to you, I wasn't writing about who did the wrong or who was wronged, but to show you how devoted you are to us in God's sight. ¹³ We are so encouraged by this. Added to our own

[§] **6:15** Literally, "Belial." ^{*} **6:16** Quoting Leviticus 26:12 and Ezekiel 37:27. [†] **6:17** Referencing Isaiah 52:11 and Ezekiel 20:34, Ezekiel 20:41. [‡] **6:18** Referencing 2 Samuel

7:14 or 1 Chronicles 17:13. ^{*} **7:11** Paul appears to be referencing previous issues that needed attention e.g. chapter 2.

encouragement, we were so pleased to see how happy Titus was, because you set his mind at rest. ¹⁴ I boasted[†] to him about you, and you didn't let me down. Just as all I've told you is true, my boasting about you to Titus has proved to be true too! ¹⁵ Titus cares for you even more as he remembers how you did what he told you, how you welcomed him with great respect. ¹⁶ I am so happy that I can be completely confident of you.

8

¹ Brothers and sisters, we want to let you know about the grace of God shown to the Macedonian churches. ² Even though they have suffered terrible trouble, they are overflowing with happiness; and even though they are very poor, they are also overflowing in their generosity. ³ I can confirm that they gave what they could, in fact even more than that! By their own choice ⁴ they kept on pleading with us to have a part in this privilege of sharing in this ministry to God's people. ⁵ They didn't just do what we hoped they would do, but they gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us, as God wanted them to do. ⁶ So we have encouraged Titus—since it was he who started this work with you—to return and complete this gracious ministry of yours.

⁷ Since you have an abundance of everything—your trust in God, your eloquence, your spiritual knowledge, your complete dedication, and in your love for us—make sure that your abundance also extends to this gracious ministry of giving. ⁸ I'm not ordering you to do this, but to prove how sincere your love is in comparison with the dedication of others.* ⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Even though he was rich, he became poor for you, so that through his poverty you could become rich. ¹⁰ This is my advice: it would be good if you finished what you started. Last year you were not only the first to give but the first to want to do so. ¹¹ Now finish what you planned to do. Be as keen to finish as you were to plan, and give as you are able. ¹² If the willingness is there, it's fine to give what you have, not what you don't have! ¹³ This is not to make things easier for others and harder for you, but simply to be fair. ¹⁴ At the moment you have more than enough and can meet their needs, and in turn when they have more than enough they can meet your needs. In that way everyone is treated fairly. ¹⁵ As Scripture says, "The one who had much didn't have any excess, and the one who didn't have much didn't have too little."[†]

¹⁶ Thanks be to God that he gave to Titus the same devotion for you that I have. ¹⁷ Though he agreed to do what we told him, he's coming to see you because he really wants to, and had already decided to do so. ¹⁸ We're also sending with him a brother who is praised by all the churches for his work in spreading the good news. ¹⁹ He was also appointed by the churches to go with us as we deliver this gracious offering we're carrying. We do this to honor the Lord and to show

[†] **7:14** Here and elsewhere in this letter Paul speaks of his boasting. This should be taken to mean his commendation of others, rather than pride in himself. * **8:8** Presumably meaning the other churches such as those in Macedonia. [†] **8:15** This refers to the gathering of manna in Exodus 16:8.

our eagerness to help others.‡ 20 We want to guard against anyone criticizing us about how we use this gift. 21 We're concerned to do things the right way, not only in the eyes of the Lord, but also in the eyes of everyone. 22 We're also sending with them another brother who has proved to be reliable on many occasions, and who is eager to help. He is now even more eager to help because of the great confidence he has in you. 23 If anyone asks about Titus, he is my companion. He works with me on your behalf. The other brothers are representatives from the churches and an honor to Christ. 24 So please welcome them before all the churches and show them your love, proving how rightly proud we are of you.

9

1 I really don't need to write to you about this offering for God's people. 2 I know how keen you are to help—I was boasting about this to those in Macedonia that you in Achaia have been ready for over a year, and your enthusiasm has encouraged many of them to give. 3 But I'm sending these brothers so that my boasting about you regarding this won't be proved wrong, and that you're prepared, just as I said you would be. 4 This is just in case some Macedonians should come with me and find you unprepared. We, not to mention you, would be really embarrassed if this project failed! 5 That's why I decided I should ask these brothers to visit you in advance, and complete the arrangements to collect this offering, so that it would be ready as a gift, and not as something demanded.

6 I want to remind you of this: If you only sow a little, you'll only reap a little; if you sow plenty, you'll reap plenty. 7 Everybody should give as they've already decided—not reluctantly, or because they have to, for God loves those who give with a cheerful spirit.* 8 God is able to graciously provide you with everything, so that you will always have all you need—with plenty to help others too. 9 As Scripture says, "He gives generously to the poor; his generosity is everlasting."† 10 God, who provides seed to the sower and gives bread for food, will provide and multiply your "seed" and increase your harvest of generosity. 11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can always be very generous, and your generosity will lead others to be grateful to God. 12 When you serve in this way, not only are the needs of God's people met, but also many will give grateful thanks to God. 13 By giving this offering you show your true nature, and those who receive it will thank God for your obedience, since it shows your commitment to the good news of Christ and your generosity in giving to them and everyone else. 14 They will pray for you with much fondness because of God's abundant grace working through you. 15 Thank God for his gift that is far greater than words can express!

‡ 8:19 See 1 Corinthians 16:3-4. * 9:7 See Proverbs 22:8. † 9:9 Quoting Psalms 112:9. In the context of the Psalm this refers to a generous man.

10

¹ This is me Paul, personally appealing to you through Christ's kindness and gentleness, the one who is "shy" when I have to face you but who is "bold" when I'm not there.* ² I'm pleading with you, so that the next time I'm with you I won't have to be as tough as I think I'll have to be, boldly dealing with those who think we behave in worldly ways. ³ Even though we live in this world, we don't fight as the world does. ⁴ Our weapons are not of this world but God's mighty power that destroys fortresses of human thinking, demolishing misleading theories. ⁵ Every high wall that stands tall and proud against the knowledge of God is knocked down. Every rebel idea is captured and brought into obedient agreement with Christ. ⁶ When you are completely obeying Christ then we're ready to punish any disobedience.

⁷ Look at what's staring you in the face! Anyone who considers that they belong to Christ should think again—just as they belong to Christ, so do we! ⁸ Even though I may seem to be boasting a little too much about our authority, I'm not embarrassed about it. The Lord gave this authority to us to build you up, not to knock you down. ⁹ I'm not trying to scare you by my letters. ¹⁰ People say, "His letters are tough and severe, but in person he's feeble, and he's a useless speaker." ¹¹ People like that should realize that what we say through letters when we're not there we will *do* when we are there! ¹² We're not so arrogant to compare ourselves with those who think so much of themselves. Those who measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves with themselves, are really foolish! ¹³ But we won't boast about ourselves in extravagant terms that can't be measured. We simply measure what we have done using God's system of measurement that he gave us—and that includes you. ¹⁴ We are not over-extending our authority in saying this, as if we didn't get as far as you, for we did get to you and share with you the good news of Christ.† ¹⁵ We're not boasting in extravagant terms that can't be measured, claiming credit for what others have done. On the contrary, we hope that as your trust in God grows, our work among you will greatly increase. ¹⁶ Then we can share the good news in places way beyond you, without boasting about what's already been done where someone else has worked.‡ ¹⁷ "If anyone wants to boast, boast about the Lord."§ ¹⁸ It's not those who praise themselves that are respected, but those that the Lord praises.

11

¹ I hope you can put up with a little more foolishness from me—well you already do put up with me! ² I agonize over you with a divine kind of jealousy, for I promised you to a single husband—Christ—so that I could present you as a pure virgin to him. ³ I worry that in

* **10:1** Paul seems to be dealing with an accusation some have made against him. † **10:14** Paul is saying that he was working within his commission to spread the gospel when he came to Corinth. It may be that some were saying that Corinth was not really part of Paul's jurisdiction. ‡ **10:16** Paul wants to avoid issues of who gets credit for doing what, and would rather move on with the work of spreading the good news. § **10:17** Quoting Jeremiah 9:24.

some way, just as the serpent deceived Eve with his devious cunning, that you might be led astray in your thinking from your sincere and pure commitment to Christ. ⁴ If anyone comes and tells you about a different Jesus to the one we shared with you, you easily go along with them, * accepting a different spirit to the one you received, and a different kind of good news to the one you believed.

⁵ I don't believe I'm inferior to these "super-apostles." ⁶ Even though I may not be skilled in giving speeches, I do know what I'm talking about. We have made this absolutely clear to you in every way. ⁷ Was it wrong of me to humble myself so you could be elevated, since I shared the good news with you at no charge? ⁸ I robbed as it were other churches, taking pay from them so I could work for you. ⁹ When I was there with you and needed something, I wasn't a burden to anyone because the believers who came from Macedonia took care of my needs. I was determined never to be a burden to you and I never shall. ¹⁰ This is as certain as the truth of Christ that is in me: nobody in all Achaia will stop me boasting about this! ¹¹ And why? Because I don't love you? God knows that I do! ¹² I'll continue to do what I've always done, so as to remove any opportunity for those who want to boast that their work is the same as ours. ¹³ These people are false apostles, dishonest workers, who pretend† to be apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ Don't be surprised at this for even Satan himself pretends to be an angel of light. ¹⁵ So it's no wonder then if those who serve him pretend to be agents of good. But their final end will be in accordance with what they've done.

¹⁶ Let me say it again: please don't think I'm being foolish. However, even if you do, accept me as someone who is foolish, and let me also boast a little.‡ ¹⁷ What I'm saying is not as the Lord would say it—all this foolish boasting. ¹⁸ But since many others are boasting in the way the world does, let me boast too. ¹⁹ (You're happy to put up with fools, since you are so wise!)§ ²⁰ You put up with people who make you slaves, who take what you have, who exploit you, who arrogantly put you down, who hit you in the face. ²¹ I'm so sorry that we were too weak to do anything like that! But whatever people dare to boast about, I dare to do too. (Here I'm talking like a fool again.)

²² Are they Hebrews? Me too. Are they Israelites? Me too. Are they descendants of Abraham? Me too. ²³ Are they servants of Christ? (I know I'll sound like I'm crazy, talking like this.) But I have done so much more. I've worked harder, been imprisoned more often, whipped more times than I can count, faced death time and again. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes less one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent twenty-four hours adrift on the ocean. ²⁶ During my many journeys I have faced the dangers of crossing rivers, robber gangs, attacks from my own countrymen, as well as from foreigners.* I have faced danger in cities, in the deserts, and on

* **11:4** In other words, they are too tolerant of others who come with a very different understanding of the good news. † **11:13** Literally, "transform themselves into." Also in verse 14. ‡ **11:16** Paul suggests that he also should be allowed to boast as the false apostles were boasting. § **11:19** Clearly a sarcastic or ironic comment; also what follows... * **11:26** Literally, "Gentiles."

the sea. I have faced the danger of people who pretend to be Christians. ²⁷ I have faced hard labor and struggles, many sleepless nights, hungry and thirsty, often going without food, cold, without enough clothing to keep warm.

²⁸ Besides all this, I face the daily concerns of dealing with all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I don't feel weak too? Who is led into sin, and I don't burn up? ³⁰ If I have to boast, I will boast about how weak I am. ³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus—may he be praised forever—knows I am not lying. ³² While I was in Damascus, the governor under King Aretas had the city guarded in order to capture me. ³³ But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the city wall, and so I escaped from him.

12

¹ I suppose I have to boast, even though it doesn't really help. Let me go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. ² I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was taken up to the third heaven (whether physically in the body, or out of it, I don't know, but God knows). ³ I know that this man (whether taken up physically in the body, or apart from it, I don't know, but God knows), ⁴ how he was taken up into Paradise, and heard things too wonderful to be spoken, in words so sacred that no human being is allowed to say. ⁵ Something like that I'll boast about, but I won't boast about myself, except for my weaknesses. ⁶ I wouldn't be foolish if I wanted to boast, because I'd be telling the truth. But I won't boast, so that nobody will think more of me than what they see me doing or hear me saying. ⁷ Also, because these revelations were so amazingly great, and so that I wouldn't become proud, I was given a "thorn in my flesh"*—a messenger from Satan to hurt me so that I wouldn't become proud. ⁸ I pleaded with the Lord three times to get rid of this problem. ⁹ But he told me, "My grace is all you will need, for my power is effective in weakness." That's why I happily boast about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may reside in me. ¹⁰ So I appreciate weaknesses, insults, troubles, persecutions, and difficulties that I suffer for Christ's sake. For when I'm weak, then I'm strong!

¹¹ I'm talking like a fool, but you made me do it! You should really have been speaking well of me, for in no way am I inferior to the super-apostles,† even though I don't count for anything. ¹² Yet the marks of an apostle were patiently demonstrated among you—signs, wonders, and powerful miracles. ¹³ In what way were you inferior to the other churches except I wasn't any burden to you? Please forgive me for doing you wrong!‡ ¹⁴ Now I'm preparing to visit you for the third time, and I won't be a burden to you. I don't want what you have, I want you yourselves! After all, children shouldn't save up for their parents, but parents should for their children. ¹⁵ I will happily spend myself, and be spent, for you. If I love you so much more, will you love me even less? ¹⁶ Well, even if that's so, I wasn't a burden to you. Maybe

* **12:7** Probably some physical problem in Paul's body. † **12:11** See 11:5. ‡ **12:13** Again a statement that should be viewed as ironic; similarly verse 16.

I was being devious, and tricked you with my cunning ways! ¹⁷ But did I take advantage of you by anyone I've sent to you? ¹⁸ I urged Titus to go and see you, and I sent another brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? No, we both have the same spirit and use the same methods. ¹⁹ Maybe you're thinking that all along we've been just trying to defend ourselves. No, we speak for Christ before God. Everything we do, friends, is for your benefit. ²⁰ I do worry when I visit that somehow I won't find you as I would want to, and that you won't find me as you would want to! I'm afraid that there will be arguments, jealousy, anger, rivalry, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder. ²¹ I'm afraid that when I visit, my God will humble me in your presence, and that I will be weeping over many of those who have sinned previously, and who still have not repented of impurity, sexual immorality, and indecent acts that they committed.

13

¹ This is my third visit to you. "Any charge must be verified by two or three witnesses."^{*} ² I already warned those of you who were sinning when I visited the second time. Even though I'm not there, I'm warning them again—and all the rest of you—that when I visit I won't hesitate to act against them, ³ since you're demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak in the way he relates to you; rather he works powerfully among you. ⁴ Even though he was crucified in weakness, now he lives through the power of God. We too are weak in him, but you will see that we live with him through the power of God. ⁵ Examine yourselves to see if you are trusting God. Put yourselves to the test. Don't you yourselves realize that Jesus Christ is in[†] you? Unless you have failed the test... ⁶ However, I hope that you realize that we have not failed the test.

⁷ We pray to God that you won't do anything bad—not so we can show we passed the test, but so you can do what is good, even if we appear to be failures. ⁸ We can't do anything against the truth, only for the truth. ⁹ We're happy when we are weak, and you are strong—we pray that you may continue to improve. ¹⁰ That is why I write about this while I'm not with you, so that when I am with you I won't have to treat you harshly by imposing my authority. The Lord gave me authority for building up, not for tearing down.

¹¹ Finally, brothers and sisters, I say goodbye. Continue to improve spiritually. Encourage one another. Be in agreement. Live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹² Greet each other with Christian affection. ¹³ All the believers here send their greetings. ¹⁴ May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

* **13:1** Quoting Deuteronomy 19:15. † **13:5** Or "in union with."

Galatians

¹ This letter comes from Paul, an apostle not appointed by any human organization or human authority.* Quite the contrary: I was appointed by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Jesus from the dead. ² All the brothers and sisters here with me join in sending this letter to the churches in Galatia.

³ May the grace and peace of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

⁴ Jesus gave himself for our sins to set us free from this current world of evil, following the will of our God and Father. ⁵ To him be glory forever and ever! Amen.

⁶ I'm shocked at how quickly you're abandoning the God who by the grace of Christ called you. You are turning to a different kind of good news ⁷ that isn't good news at all! Some people there are confusing you, wanting to pervert the good news of Christ. ⁸ But if anyone, even we ourselves, or even an angel from heaven, should promote any other kind of good news[†] than what we have already told you, let them be condemned! ⁹ I repeat what we've told you before: if anyone promotes any other kind of good news[‡] than what you've already accepted, let them be condemned!

¹⁰ Whose approval do you think I want—that of people, or of God? Do you think I'm trying to please people? If I wanted to please people I wouldn't be a servant of Christ!

¹¹ Let me make it clear, my friends, regarding the good news I'm declaring—it did not come from any human being. ¹² I didn't receive it from anyone, and nobody taught it to me—it was Jesus Christ who revealed it to me. ¹³ You heard how I behaved as a follower of the Jewish religion—how I fanatically persecuted God's church, savagely trying to destroy it. ¹⁴ I surpassed my contemporaries in the practice of the Jewish religion because I was so fervently devoted to the traditions of my ancestors.

¹⁵ But when God (who had set me apart from birth) called me through his grace, and was pleased ¹⁶ to reveal his Son to me so that I could announce the good news to the nations,[§] I didn't discuss this with anyone. ¹⁷ I didn't go to Jerusalem to talk to those who preceded me as apostles; instead I left for Arabia, and then later returned to Damascus. ¹⁸ After three years I went to Jerusalem to visit Peter. I stayed with him for two weeks. ¹⁹ I didn't see any other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. ²⁰ (Let me assure you before God that I'm not lying about what I'm writing to you!) ²¹ Then I went to Syria and Cilicia. ²² Even so, my face wasn't known to those in the churches of Judea. ²³ They had only heard people say, "The man who used to persecute us is now spreading the faith he once tried to destroy!" ²⁴ —and they praised God because of me.

* **1:1** Literally, "not by men nor through man." † **1:8** Clearly Paul doesn't think this is good news at all, so maybe should be in ironic quotes: "good news." ‡ **1:9** As 1:8. § **1:16** Or "Gentiles."

2

¹ Fourteen years later I returned to Jerusalem with Barnabas. I took Titus along with me. ² I went because of what God had shown me.* I met with the recognized church leaders there in private and explained to them the good news I was sharing with the foreigners.† I didn't want the course I had followed, and what I was working so hard for, to come to nothing. ³ But as it turned out, nobody even insisted that Titus who was with me should be circumcised, though he was Greek. ⁴ (That issue only arose because some false Christians slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus, trying to make us slaves. ⁵ We never gave into them, not even for a moment. We wanted to make sure to keep the truth of the good news unchanged for you.)

⁶ But those considered to be important didn't add anything‡ to what I said. (It doesn't concern me what kind of leaders they were, because God doesn't judge people the way we do.) ⁷ On the contrary, once they realized that I'd been given responsibility to share the good news with the foreigners just as Peter had been given the responsibility to share the good news with the Jews, ⁸ (for the same God§ who worked through Peter as apostle to the Jews also worked through me as apostle to the foreigners), ⁹ and once they recognized the grace that had been given to me, then James, Peter, and John, who bore the responsibility* of church leadership, shook Barnabas and me by the hand as their fellow-workers. ¹⁰ We were to work for the foreigners, while they would work for the Jews. Their only instruction was to remember to look after the poor, something I was already very committed to.

¹¹ However, when Peter came to Antioch I did have to confront him directly, because he was clearly wrong in what he did. ¹² Before some of James' friends arrived, Peter used to eat with the foreigners. But when these people came he stopped doing this and stayed away from the foreigners. He was afraid of being criticized by those who insisted that men had to be circumcised. ¹³ As well as Peter, other Jewish Christians became hypocritical too, to the extent that even Barnabas was persuaded to follow their hypocrisy.

¹⁴ When I realized that they weren't taking a firm stand for the truth of the good news, I said to Peter in front of everyone, "If you're a Jew yet live like the foreigners and not like Jews, why are you forcing the foreigners to live like Jews? ¹⁵ We may be Jews by birth, and not 'sinners' like the foreigners, ¹⁶ but we know that nobody is made right by doing what the law demands—it is only through trusting in Jesus Christ. We have trusted in Christ Jesus so that we could be made right by placing our confidence in Christ, and not through doing what the law says—because nobody is made right by observing the requirements of the law."

¹⁷ For if, as we look to be made right in Christ, we ourselves prove to be sinners, does that then mean that Christ is in the service of sin?† Of course not! ¹⁸ For if I were to rebuild what I've destroyed, then I

* 2:2 Literally, "according to revelation." † 2:2 Literally, "Gentiles." ‡ 2:6 Or "made no changes." § 2:8 Literally, "the One." * 2:9 Literally, "considered pillars." † 2:17 The idea here is that by giving up observance of the Jewish law we then become sinners, and Christ has led us into sin—a concept that Paul strongly rejects.

only demonstrate I'm a law-breaker.‡ 19 For through the law I died to the law in order that I could live for God. 20 I've been crucified with Christ— so it's no longer I who lives, but it is Christ living in me. The life I now live in this body, I live by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me, and who gave himself for me. 21 How could I dismiss God's grace? For if we could be made right through keeping the law then Christ died a pointless death!

3

1 You Galatians, you've lost your heads!* Who has put you under a spell? The death of Jesus Christ on a cross was clearly presented to you so you could see! 2 So tell me—did you receive the Spirit by keeping the law, or by placing your trust in what you heard? 3 You really have lost your heads! You began living† in the Spirit. Do you really think you can now make yourselves perfect by your own human efforts?‡ 4 Did you go through so much suffering for nothing? (It really wasn't for nothing was it?) 5 Let me ask you: does God§ give you the Spirit and do so many miracles among you because you keep the law, or is it because you trust in what you heard?

6 It's just like Abraham who “trusted God, and was considered to be right.”* 7 So you should acknowledge that those who trust in God are the children of Abraham. 8 In Scripture it's foreseen that God would make right the foreigners who trusted in him. The good news is revealed to Abraham beforehand with the words, “Through you all the nations will be blessed.” 9 Consequently those who trust in God are blessed along with Abraham who trusted God. 10 All those who rely on keeping the law† are under a curse, for as Scripture says, “Cursed is everyone who doesn't carefully obey everything that's written in the book of the law.” 11 Clearly nobody is made right with God by attempting to keep the law, for “Those who are made right will live by trusting God.”‡ 12 Obedience to the law has nothing to do with trusting God. Scripture only says, “You will live if you observe everything the law requires.”§ 13 Christ has rescued us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.* As Scripture says, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”†— 14 so that through Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham could come to the foreigners as well, and we could receive the promise of the Spirit by trusting God.

15 Brothers and sisters, here's an example from daily life. If a contract is drawn up and agreed, signed and sealed, nobody can ignore

‡ **2:18** In other words, if I return to the old system of law as the means of being set right with God, all I do is prove that I am in violation of the law as a sinner. * **3:1** The word used here is usually translated as “foolish”; however today that has become more of an epithet. Paul's point is that they are not thinking—the word really means “mindless.” The same word is used again in verse 3. † **3:3** Meaning, “You began your Christian lives.” ‡ **3:3** Or “by human means.” § **3:5** Literally, “the one.” * **3:6** Quoting Genesis 15:6. † **3:10** As a means of salvation. ‡ **3:11** Quoting Habakkuk 2:4. § **3:12** Quoting Leviticus 18:5. * **3:13** “By becoming a curse for us”: meaning by experiencing the consequences of sin. The idea that this was an imposed curse by God is not the meaning here. It is sin itself that brings the curse (see Romans 6:23). † **3:13** Quoting Deuteronomy 21:23.

it or add to it. ¹⁶ Now the promises were given to Abraham, and to his son.[‡] It doesn't say, "sons" as if plural, but singular: "and to your son," meaning Christ. ¹⁷ Let me explain. The law, coming four hundred and thirty years later, doesn't cancel the previous agreement[§] that God made, breaking the promise. ¹⁸ If the inheritance is derived from obedience to the law, it no longer comes from the promise. But God graciously gave it to Abraham by means of the promise.

¹⁹ What was the point of the law, then? It was added to show what wrongdoing really is, until the son came to whom the promise had been made. The law was put in place by angels through the hand of a mediator. ²⁰ But a mediator isn't needed when there's only one person involved. And God is one!^{*}

²¹ So does the law work against God's promises? Of course not! For if there was a law that could give life, then we could be made right by keeping it. ²² But Scripture tells us that we all are prisoners of sin. The only way we can receive God's promises is by trusting in Jesus Christ. ²³ Before we trusted in Jesus we remained in the custody of the law until this way of trusting was revealed. ²⁴ The law was our guardian until Christ came, so that we could be made right by trusting him. ²⁵ But now this way of trusting Jesus has come, we no longer need such a guardian. ²⁶ For you are all God's children through your trust in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There's no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female—you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's children, and you are heirs of the promise!

4

¹ Let me explain what I'm saying. An heir who is under-age is no different from a slave, even though the heir may be the owner of everything. ² An heir is subject to guardians and managers until the time set by the father. ³ It's just the same for us. When we were children, we were slaves subject to the basic rules^{*} of the law. ⁴ But at the appropriate time God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the rule of law, ⁵ so that he could rescue those who were kept under the rule of law, so that we could receive the inheritance of adopted children.

⁶ To show you are his children, God sent the Spirit of his Son to convince us, causing us to call out, "Abba," meaning "Father." ⁷ Since you are now no longer a slave, but a child, and if you are his child, then God has made you his heir.

[‡] **3:16** Literally, "seed." See Genesis 12:7 and Genesis 13:15. [§] **3:17** Or "covenant." ^{*} **3:20** The idea here is that the Old Testament law needed a mediator (Moses). But in the case of the promise this was made directly to Abraham, and according to the argument that Paul is developing here, directly fulfilled that promise through Jesus Christ. In this way, says Paul, the promise and its fulfillment are superior to the law. ^{*} **4:3** The word translated "rules" here is subject to wide interpretation. Originally the word referred to the alphabet, then took the meaning of the "ABC's" of life. Paul is comparing the ceremonial law to such letters and symbols, basic instructions useful for existence but having no power to save and heal. The same word is used in verse 9.

⁸ At the time when you didn't know God, you were enslaved by the supposed "gods" of this world. ⁹ But now you've come to know God—or better, to be known *by* God. So how can you go back to those useless and worthless rules? Do you want to be slaves to those rules all over again? ¹⁰ You're observing special days and months, seasons and years.† ¹¹ I'm concerned that all I did for you has been wasted!

¹² I'm pleading with you, my friends: be like me, because I became like you.‡ You've never treated me badly. ¹³ You remember that it was because I was sick that I shared with you the good news on my first visit.§ ¹⁴ Even though my illness was difficult for you, you didn't despise or reject me—in fact you treated me like an angel of God, like Christ Jesus himself.

¹⁵ So what's happened to all your gratefulness? I tell you, back then if you could have pulled out your eyes and given them to me, you would have! ¹⁶ So what has happened—have I become your enemy by telling you the truth? ¹⁷ These people are keen to gain your support, but not for any good reasons. On the contrary, they want to keep you away from us so that you will enthusiastically support them. ¹⁸ Of course it's good to want to do good. But this should be at all times, not just when I'm there with you!∗ ¹⁹ My dear friends, I want to work with you until Christ's character is duplicated in you. ²⁰ I really wish I could be with you right now so I could change my tone of voice... I'm so worried about you.

²¹ Answer me this, you people who want to live under the law: Don't you hear what the law is saying? ²² As Scripture says, Abraham had two sons, one from the servant girl, and one from the free woman.† ²³ However, the son from the servant girl was born following a human plan,‡ while the son from the free woman was born as the result of the promise. ²⁴ This provides an analogy: these two women represent two agreements. One agreement is from Mount Sinai—Hagar—and she gives birth to slave children. ²⁵ Hagar symbolizes Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the current Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶ But the heavenly Jerusalem is free. She is our mother.

²⁷ As Scripture says, "Rejoice you who are childless and who have never given birth! Shout aloud for joy, you who have never been in labor—for the abandoned woman has more children than the woman who has a husband!"§ ²⁸ Now my friends, we are children of promise just like Isaac. ²⁹ However, just as the one born according to a human plan persecuted the one born through the Spirit, so it is today. ³⁰ But what does Scripture say? "Send away the servant girl and her son, for the son of the servant girl will not be an heir together with the son of the free woman."∗ ³¹ Therefore, my friends, we're not children of a servant girl, but of the free woman.

† **4:10** This refers to the observing of special feast days and times in the Old Testament system.

‡ **4:12** In other words, a "liberated Gentile." § **4:13** It seems that because Paul was delayed due to sickness that he had the chance to share the good news with the Galatians. ∗ **4:18** Suggesting these people were only wanting to be helpful to the Galatians to fulfill their own agenda. † **4:22** See Genesis 16:15 and Genesis 21:2-3. ‡ **4:23** Referring to Sarah's plan to have a child through her servant-girl. § **4:27** Quoting Isaiah 54:1. ∗ **4:30** Quoting Genesis 21:10.

5

¹ Christ set us free so we could have real freedom. So stand firm and don't get burdened down again by a yoke of slavery. ² Let me, Paul, tell you bluntly: if you rely on the way of circumcision, Christ will be of absolutely no benefit to you. ³ Let me repeat: every man who is circumcised has to keep the whole of the law. ⁴ Those of you who think you can be made right by the law are cut off from Christ—you have abandoned grace.

⁵ For through the Spirit we trust and wait in hope to be made right. ⁶ For in Christ Jesus being circumcised or uncircumcised doesn't achieve anything; it's only trust working through love that matters. ⁷ You were doing so well! Who got in the way and prevented you from being convinced by the truth? ⁸ This "persuasion" certainly isn't from the one who calls you. ⁹ You only need a little bit of yeast to raise the whole batch of dough. ¹⁰ I'm confident in the Lord that you won't change the way you think, and that the one who is confusing you will face the consequences,* whoever he is.

¹¹ As for me, brothers and sisters, if I were still advocating circumcision—why am I still persecuted? If that was true, it would remove the issue of the cross that offends people so much. ¹² If only those who are causing you trouble would go even further than circumcision and castrate themselves!†

¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to freedom! Just don't use your freedom as an excuse to indulge your sinful human nature—instead serve one another in love. ¹⁴ For the whole law is summed up in this one command, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."‡ ¹⁵ But if you attack and tear into one other, watch out that you don't completely destroy yourselves! ¹⁶ My advice is to walk by the Spirit. Don't satisfy the desires of your sinful human nature. ¹⁷ For the desires of the sinful nature are opposed to the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are opposed to the sinful nature. They fight one another, so you don't do what you want to do. ¹⁸ But if the Spirit leads you, you're not under the law.

¹⁹ It's clear what the sinful human nature produces: sexual immorality, indecency, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, rivalry, jealousy, anger, selfish ambition, dissension, heresy, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, feasting, and similar things. As I warned you before so I warn you again: nobody who behaves like this will inherit the kingdom of God.

²² But the Spirit produces fruit such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trust, ²³ gentleness, self-control—and there's no law against these kinds of things! ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed to the cross their sinful human nature, together with all their sinful passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live in the Spirit we should also walk in the Spirit. ²⁶ Let's not become boastful, or irritate and envy one another.

* **5:10** Or "judgment." † **5:12** Not to be taken literally, of course, but symbolically, pushing the circumcision philosophy to the extreme. ‡ **5:14** Quoting Leviticus 19:18.

6

¹ My friends, if someone is led astray by sin, you who are spiritual should bring them back with a gentle spirit. Watch out that you don't get tempted too. ² Carry each other's burdens, for in this way you fulfill the law of Christ. ³ Those who think they're really something—when they're actually nothing—only fool themselves. ⁴ Carefully examine your actions. Then you can be satisfied with yourself, without comparing yourself to anyone else. ⁵ We have to take responsibility for ourselves.

⁶ Those that are taught the Word should treat their teachers well, sharing with them all good things. ⁷ Don't be fooled, God can't be treated with contempt: whatever you sow, that's what you reap. ⁸ If you sow according to your sinful human nature, from that nature you'll reap self-destruction. But if you sow according to the Spirit, from the Spirit you'll reap eternal life. ⁹ Let's never tire of doing good, for we'll reap a harvest at the proper time, if we don't give up. ¹⁰ So while we have time,* let's do good to everyone—especially to those who belong to the family of faith.

¹¹ Notice how big the letters are, now that I'm writing with my own hand! ¹² Those people who only want to make a good impression are forcing you to be circumcised just so they won't be persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³ Even those who are circumcised don't keep the law, but they want to have you circumcised so that they can boast about you and claim you as their followers.† ¹⁴ May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through this cross, the world has been crucified to me, and I've been crucified as far as the world is concerned. ¹⁵ Circumcision or uncircumcision doesn't matter—what matters is that we're created brand new! ¹⁶ Peace and mercy to all who follow this principle, and to the Israel of God! ¹⁷ Please, don't anyone trouble me anymore, because I carry on my body the scars of Jesus.‡ ¹⁸ My brothers and sisters, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

* **6:10** That is, the time of opportunity. † **6:13** The boast is that they have convinced others to follow their belief in the ongoing importance of the Jewish rite of circumcision (and other Jewish practices, the problem noted throughout Galatians). ‡ **6:17** In other words, the wounds Paul received when he was persecuted for following Jesus.

Ephesians

¹ This letter comes from Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to God's will, to the Christians* in Ephesus and those who trust in Christ Jesus. ² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ Praise God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with all that's spiritually good in the heavenly world, ⁴ just as he chose us to be in him† before the beginning of this world, so that in love we could be holy and without fault before him. ⁵ He decided in advance to adopt us as his children, working through Jesus Christ to bring us to himself. He was happy to do this because this is what he wanted. ⁶ So we praise him for his glorious grace that he so kindly gave us in his beloved Son.‡ ⁷ Through him we gain salvation through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins as a result of his priceless grace ⁸ that he so generously provided for us, together with all wisdom and understanding.

⁹ He revealed to us his previously-hidden will through which he was happy to pursue his plan ¹⁰ at the appropriate time to bring everyone§ together in Christ—those in heaven and those on the earth. ¹¹ *In him*—we were chosen beforehand, according to the plan of the one who is working everything out according to his will, ¹² for the purpose that we* who were the first to hope in Christ could praise his glory. ¹³ *In him*—you† too have heard the word of truth, the good news of your salvation. *In him*—because you trusted in him you were stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit's promise, ¹⁴ which is a down-payment on our inheritance when God redeems what he's kept safe for himself—us, who will praise and give him glory!

¹⁵ That's the reason, because I've heard of your trust in the Lord Jesus and the love that you have for all Christians, ¹⁶ why I never stop thanking God for you and remember you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you a spirit of wisdom to see and know him as he really is. ¹⁸ May your minds be enlightened so you can understand the hope he's called you to— the glorious riches he promises as an inheritance to his holy people. ¹⁹ May you also understand God's amazing power ²⁰ that he demonstrated in raising Christ from the dead. God seated Christ at his right hand in heaven, ²¹ far above any other ruler, authority, power, or lord, or any leader with all their titles—not only in this world, but also in the coming world too. ²² God has made everything subject to the authority of Christ, and has given him the responsibility as head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, filled full and made complete by Christ, who fills and brings everything to completion.

* **1:1** Literally, “saints.” † **1:4** Or “in union with him.” ‡ **1:6** Son is assumed here. The Greek says “beloved one.” § **1:10** Paralleling Colossians 1:20. * **1:12** “We” meaning Jewish Christians. † **1:13** “You” meaning Gentile Christians.

2

¹ At one time you were dead in your sins and evil actions, ² living your lives according to the ways of the world, under the control of the devil,* whose spirit is at work in those who disobey God. ³ All of us were once like that, our behavior determined by the desires of our sinful human nature and our evil way of thinking. Like everyone else, in our nature we were children of anger.†

⁴ But God in his generous mercy, because of the amazing love he had for us ⁵ even while we were dead in our sins, has made us alive together with Christ. Trusting in him has saved you! ⁶ He raised us up with Christ, and in Christ Jesus seated us with him in heaven, ⁷ so that in all eternity to come he could demonstrate the amazing extent of his grace in showing us kindness through Christ Jesus. ⁸ For you've been saved by grace through trusting in him—it's not through yourselves, it's the gift of God! ⁹ This has nothing to do with human effort, so don't be proud of yourselves. ¹⁰ We're the product of what God does, created in Christ Jesus to do good, which God already planned that we should do.

¹¹ So you who are “foreigners” humanly-speaking, called “uncircumcised” by those who are “circumcised”‡ (which is only a procedure carried out by human beings), you need to remember ¹² that once you had no relationship to Christ. You were barred as foreigners from being citizens of Israel, strangers to the agreement§ God had promised. You had no hope and you lived in the world without God. ¹³ But now, in Christ Jesus, you who were once a long way off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ Christ is our peace. Through his body* he made the two into one, and broke down the separating wall of hostility that divided us, ¹⁵ freeing us from the law with its requirements and regulations. He did this so he could create in himself one new person out of the two and so make peace, ¹⁶ and completely reconcile both of them to God through the cross as if they were just one body, having destroyed our hostility towards each other.

¹⁷ He came and shared the good news of peace with those of you who were far away, and those who were nearby, ¹⁸ because through him we both gain access to the Father through the same Spirit. ¹⁹ That means you're no longer strangers and foreigners; you are fellow citizens of God's people and belong to God's family ²⁰ that's being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together, growing to form a holy temple for the Lord. ²² You too are being built together in him as a place for God to live by the Spirit.

* **2:2** Literally, “the ruler of the power of the air.” † **2:3** The Greek literally says “Children in nature of anger.” Following the previous thought about human nature, this could mean we are “naturally angry” or rebellious towards God. Alternatively, this could be viewed that we are the object of divine anger, though God is not specifically mentioned here. ‡ **2:11** That is, the Jews (circumcised) and the Gentiles (uncircumcised). § **2:12** Or “covenant.” * **2:14** From the context it appears that Paul is referring here to Jesus' crucifixion.

3

¹ This is why, I, Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ for the sake of you foreigners, ² (well, I'm assuming you've heard that God gave me the specific responsibility of sharing God's grace with you), ³ how, by what God showed me, made clear the mystery that was previously hidden. I wrote to you briefly before about this, ⁴ and when you read this you'll be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ. ⁵ In past generations this wasn't made clear to anyone, but now it's been revealed to God's holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit ⁶ that foreigners are joint heirs, part of the same body, and in Christ Jesus share together in the promise through the good news.

⁷ I became a minister of this good news through the gift of God's grace that I was given by his power that was at work in me. ⁸ This grace was given to me, the least important of all Christians, in order to share with the foreigners the incredible value of Christ, ⁹ and to help everyone see the purpose of the mystery which from the very beginning was hidden in God who made everything. ¹⁰ God's plan was that the various aspects of his wisdom would be revealed through the church to the rulers and authorities in heaven. ¹¹ This was in accordance with God's eternal purpose that he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² Because of him and our trust in him we can come to God in total freedom and confidence. ¹³ So I'm asking that you don't get discouraged that I'm suffering—it's for you and you should value that!

¹⁴ This is why I kneel before the Father ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth receives its nature and character, ¹⁶ asking him that out of his wealth of glory he may strengthen you in your innermost being with power through his Spirit. ¹⁷ May Christ live in you as you trust in him, so that as you are planted deep in love, ¹⁸ you may have the power to comprehend with all God's people the breadth and length and height and depth of Christ's love. ¹⁹ May you know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you're made full and complete by the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now may he who—through his power working in us—can do infinitely more than we ever ask for or even think about, ²¹ may he be glorified in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations for ever and ever. Amen.

4

¹ So I—this prisoner in the Lord—am encouraging you to make sure you live according to the principles to which you were called. ² Don't think proudly of yourselves; be gentle and patient, showing tolerance to each other in love. ³ Make every effort to remain one in the Spirit through the peace that binds you together. ⁴ For there's one body, and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope. ⁵ The Lord is one, our trust in him is one, and there's one baptism; ⁶ there's one God and Father of everyone. He is over all and through all and in all.

⁷ To each of us grace was given in proportion to Christ's generous gift. ⁸ As Scripture says, "When he ascended to the heights he took

captives with him, and gave gifts to humanity.”* ⁹ (Regarding this: it says he ascended, but that means he also had previously descended to our lowly world. ¹⁰ The one that descended is the same one who also ascended to the highest heaven in order that he could make the whole universe complete.)

¹¹ The gifts he gave were so that some could be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, ¹² with the purpose of preparing God's people for the work of helping others, to help the body of Christ to grow. ¹³ We grow together until we all reach the state of being one in our trust in and knowledge of the Son of God, completely grown up, measuring up to full maturity in Christ. ¹⁴ We shouldn't be little children any more, tossed about and blown along by every passing breeze of doctrine, confused by human trickery, led into error by crafty people who deceitfully scheme; ¹⁵ instead by speaking the truth in love we ought to grow up in everything into Christ, who is our head. ¹⁶ It's because of him that the whole body operates, every joint holding it together as each individual part does what it's supposed to, and the whole body grows, building itself up in love.

¹⁷ So let me say this to you—in fact I insist on it in the Lord—that you should no longer live like the foreigners do, in their empty-headed way. ¹⁸ In the darkness of their minds they don't understand, and they have been cut off from the life of God because they don't know anything and in their stubbornness they don't want to know. ¹⁹ Because they are past caring they abandon themselves to sensuality, and greedily do all kinds of disgusting things.

²⁰ But that's not what you learned about Christ! ²¹ Didn't you hear about him? Weren't you taught concerning him? Didn't you learn the truth as it is in Jesus? ²² So get rid of your former lifestyle, that old nature that ruins you through deceptive desires! ²³ Let yourselves be re-made spiritually and mentally, ²⁴ and put on your new nature that God created so you will be like him, right and holy in the truth.

²⁵ So reject lies, and tell the truth to each other—for we belong to each other. ²⁶ Don't sin by getting angry; don't let evening come and find you still mad— ²⁷ and don't give the devil any opportunity. ²⁸ Thieves, stop your stealing, and do honest, productive work with your hands, so you'll have something to give to those who need it. ²⁹ Don't use bad language. Speak words that will encourage people as necessary, so that those who listen will be helped. ³⁰ Don't disappoint the Holy Spirit of God that marked you as belonging to him until the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of every kind of bitterness, rage, anger, verbal abuse, and insults, along with all forms of evil. ³² Be kind and compassionate to each other, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

5

¹ So then, imitate God since you're his much-loved children. ² Live in love, just as Christ loved you. He gave himself for us, a gift and sacrificial offering to God like a sweet-smelling perfume. ³ Sexual

* **4:8** Quoting Psalms 68:18.

immorality or any kind of indecency or greed should never be mentioned concerning you, as God's people should not be doing such things. ⁴ Obscene talk, stupid chatter, and coarse jokes are totally inappropriate—instead you should be thanking God. ⁵ You know it's absolutely sure that no-one who is sexually immoral, or commits indecency, or who is greedy, or is an idol-worshiper will inherit anything in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Don't let anyone fool you with lying words, for it's because of such things that God's judgment is passed on the children of disobedience. ⁷ So don't partner with them in this. ⁸ At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. You are to live as children of light ⁹ (and the fruit of light is everything that's good and right and true), ¹⁰ demonstrating what the Lord really appreciates.

¹¹ Don't have anything to do with the pointless things that darkness produces—instead expose them. ¹² It's shameful even to speak about the things such people do secretly, ¹³ but when anything is exposed by the light then it's revealed as it is. Light makes everything visible. ¹⁴ That's why it's said, "Wake up, those of you who are sleeping, rise up from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." ¹⁵ So be careful how you live your life, not foolishly, but wisely, ¹⁶ making the best use of opportunities because the days are evil. ¹⁷ So don't be ignorant—find out what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸ Don't get drunk on wine which will wreck your life, but be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹ Share together with one another, using psalms and hymns and sacred songs, singing and making music to the Lord to express what you feel. ²⁰ Always thank God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

²¹ Each of you should be willing to accept what others tell you to do out of reverence for Christ. ²² Wives, do what your own husbands tell you to do, as you would if the Lord told you. ²³ The husband is head of the wife in the same way as Christ is head of the church—his body and its savior. ²⁴ In the same way that the church does what Christ says, wives should do what their husbands tell them in all things. ²⁵ Husbands, you should love your wives in the same way as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. ²⁶ He made it holy, he made it clean by washing in the water of the word,* ²⁷ so that he could make the church his own, with no flaw or blemish or any kind of fault, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ Husbands should love their wives just like this, as they love their own bodies. A man who loves his wife loves himself—²⁹ for no one ever hated his own body, but feeds it and looks after it, just as Christ does for the church, ³⁰ for we are parts of his body. ³¹ "This is why a man leaves his father and mother, and is joined to his wife, and the two are united in one."† ³² This is a deep hidden truth—but I'm talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each husband should love his own wife as he does himself, and the wife should respect her husband.

* 5:26 Presumably an allusion to baptism. † 5:31 Quoting Genesis 2:24.

6

¹ Children, do what your parents tell you, for this is the right thing to do. ² “Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment that has a promise attached: ³ “that things may go well for you and you may live a long life on the earth.”* ⁴ Fathers, don't make your children mad, but look after them by disciplining them and instructing them about God. ⁵ Servants, obey those who are your human masters, with proper respect and awe, doing things from sincere motives as if you were serving Christ. ⁶ Don't just work well when you're being watched to gain approval, but work like servants of Christ, honestly doing God's will, ⁷ happily serving as if you were doing it for the Lord, and not for people. ⁸ You know that whoever does what's good will be rewarded by the Lord, whether that person is a servant or someone who is free. ⁹ Masters, you should treat your servants the same way. Don't threaten them, remember that the Lord in heaven is both their master and yours, and he treats people the same, without favoritism.

¹⁰ Lastly, stay strong in the Lord, and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on all the armor of God so you can withstand all the devil's attacks! ¹² We're not fighting against human forces, but against supernatural rulers and powers, the dark lords of this world, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. ¹³ Take all the weapons God provides so that you may be able to stand your ground in the day of evil and after doing all you can, to find yourself still standing! ¹⁴ So stand up, wrap the belt of truth around your waist, tie on the breastplate of justice and the right, ¹⁵ and put on the shoes of readiness to share the good news of peace. ¹⁶ Above all, take up the shield of trusting God, by which you'll be able to put out all the devil's flaming arrows. ¹⁷ Wear the helmet of salvation, and carry the sword of the Spirit—the Spirit that's the word of God. ¹⁸ Always pray in the Spirit as you do all this. Stay awake and keep on praying for all God's people. ¹⁹ Pray for me too so that I'll be given the right words to say, and that I'll be able to explain confidently the hidden truths of the good news. ²⁰ I'm an imprisoned ambassador for the sake of the good news, so please pray that I will speak fearlessly, as I should. ²¹ Tychicus, our good friend and faithful minister, will give you all my news and explain everything so you'll know how I'm doing. ²² That's why I'm sending him to you—to tell you what's happened to us and to encourage you. ²³ Peace to all the Christians there, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, with love and trust in him. ²⁴ Grace to all those who eternally love our Lord Jesus.

* **6:3** Quoting Exodus 20:12 or Deuteronomy 5:16.

Philippians

¹ This letter comes from Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all God's people in Christ Jesus living in Philippi, and to the church leaders and assistants. ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³ When I think of you I'm so thankful to my God, ⁴ and I'm always glad to remember all of you in my prayers, ⁵ because you've been partners with me in spreading the good news right from the beginning up till now. ⁶ I'm absolutely sure that God who began this good work in you will continue working and bring it to a successful conclusion when Jesus Christ returns.

⁷ It's appropriate for me to be thinking this way about all of you because you mean so much to me. Whether I'm in prison or out there making the good news clear, all of you share God's grace together with me. ⁸ God is my witness as to my great affection for every one of you in the caring love of Christ Jesus.

⁹ My prayer is that your love may grow more and more in knowledge and understanding, ¹⁰ so that you can work out what's really important. That way you can be genuine and blameless when Christ returns, ¹¹ filled with the fruits of living right that come through Jesus Christ and give glory and praise to God.

¹² I want you to know, my brothers and sisters, that all I've experienced has worked out to move the good news forward! ¹³ For everyone—including the whole praetorian guard*—now knows that I'm in chains for Christ; ¹⁴ and because of my chains most of the Christians here have been encouraged to speak God's word boldly and fearlessly! ¹⁵ Yes, some speak out of jealousy and rivalry. However, there are those who speak from good motives. ¹⁶ They act out of love, because they know that I'm meant to be here to defend the good news. ¹⁷ Those others present Christ deceptively because of their selfish ambitions, trying to cause me problems in my imprisonment.

¹⁸ But so what? All I care about is that Christ is presented every which way, whether just pretending or whether from true convictions. That's what makes me happy—and I will go on being happy! ¹⁹ Why? Because I'm convinced that through your prayers for me, and through the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, this will turn out to be my salvation.† ²⁰ For it's my strongest hope and expectation not to do anything of which I would be ashamed. Instead it's my bold hope, as always, that even now Christ will be greatly honored through me, whether I live or die.

²¹ As far as I'm concerned, living is for Christ, and dying brings gain. ²² But if I'm to go on living here and this would be productive work, then I really don't know what's best to choose! ²³ For I'm in a dilemma—I really want to leave and be with Christ, which would be far better, ²⁴ and yet to remain physically here is more important as far as you're concerned. ²⁵ Since I'm absolutely sure of this, I know that

* **1:13** Bodyguards to the Roman Emperor. † **1:19** Paul may be referring to salvation from his immediate situation or his ultimate salvation, or both.

I'll stay here, remaining with you all to help you as your trust and delight in God grows,²⁶ so that when I see you again your praise to Christ Jesus may be even greater because of me.

²⁷ Just be sure that the way you live your lives corresponds to the good news of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or not I can get to hear how you're doing—that you stand firm in full agreement with one another, spiritually united as you work together for the trusting faith of the good news. ²⁸ Don't let your enemies scare you. By being brave you will demonstrate to them that they will be lost, but that God himself will save you. ²⁹ For you have been given the privilege not only of trusting in Jesus, but suffering for him as well. ³⁰ You're experiencing the same struggle you saw me having—a struggle I still have, as you now know.

2

¹ So then, if you're encouraged by being in Christ, if you're comforted by his love, if you share together in the Spirit, if you have compassion and sympathy—² then make my joy complete by thinking the same way and loving the same way, spiritually united and having one purpose. ³ Don't do anything from a spirit of selfishness or pride, but humbly think of others better than you do of yourself. ⁴ None of you should be preoccupied about your own things—instead concern yourself with the interests of others too.

⁵ The attitude you should have is the same as that of Christ Jesus. ⁶ Though in his nature he was always God, he wasn't concerned to cling on to his equality with God. ⁷ Instead he emptied* himself, taking the nature of a servant, becoming like a human being. ⁸ Coming in human form, humbling himself, he submitted himself to death—even death on a cross.

⁹ That's why God placed him in the position of greatest honor and power, and gave him the most prestigious name—¹⁰ so that in the name of Jesus everyone should bow in respect, whether in heaven or on earth or under the earth, ¹¹ and all will declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹² So, my good friends, continue to work towards the goal of salvation with complete reverence and respect for God, following what you were told—not just when I was with you, but even more so now I'm away from you. ¹³ For it's God who is working within you, creating the will and the ability to do what he wants you to do. ¹⁴ Do everything without complaining or arguing ¹⁵ so that you'll be sincere, innocent of any wrong. Be God's blameless children living in the middle of a dishonest and corrupt people.† Shine among them as lights to the world, ¹⁶ holding out to them the word of life. That way I'll have something to be proud of when Christ returns, proving I didn't run around and work for nothing! ¹⁷ So even if I pour out my life as a sacrifice and offering so you may trust in God, I'm happy for it, and

* **2:7** Indicating that Jesus chose to “empty” himself of his divine powers. † **2:15** See Deuteronomy 32:5.

I'm glad together with all of you, ¹⁸ just as you have such joy and are glad with me.

¹⁹ I'm hoping, if that's what the Lord Jesus wants, to send Timothy to you soon. It will cheer me up once I know how you're doing. ²⁰ I don't know anyone who genuinely cares about you as he does. ²¹ Other people only worry about their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. ²² But you already know what he's like—just as a child working to help his father, so he's worked with me to spread the good news. ²³ So I hope to send him as soon as I see how I'm doing, ²⁴ and I trust in the Lord that shortly I'll be able to come too. ²⁵ But I thought it was important to send Epaphroditus to you. He's a brother to me, a co-worker and fellow-soldier. He's the one you sent to look after me, ²⁶ and he's been longing to see all of you, worried about you because you'd heard he was sick. ²⁷ He certainly was sick—he nearly died—but God had mercy on him. Not just on him, but on me too, so that I wouldn't have tragedy upon tragedy. ²⁸ That's why I'm so keen to send him, so that when you see him you'll be happy, and I won't have to be so anxious. ²⁹ So welcome him with much happiness in the Lord—honor people like him, ³⁰ because in working for Christ he nearly died, putting his life on the line to make up for the help you weren't in a position to give me.

3

¹ To sum up: my dear friends, delight in the Lord! It's not a burden for me to repeat these things to you—it's to keep you safe! ² Watch out for the wolves, those who do evil, those who insist on physical circumcision— ³ for it's we who are truly circumcised, worshiping by the Spirit of God, placing our assurance in Christ Jesus. We have no confidence in human abilities*— ⁴ for if there was a way to rely on human nature then I myself could have that confidence! If anyone thinks they have confidence in such human things, then I outdo them: ⁵ I was circumcised on the eighth day, I'm an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin, a true Hebrew. Regarding legal observance I'm a Pharisee; ⁶ as for religious dedication I was a persecutor of the church; while in regard to doing right according to the law I was blameless!

⁷ But in whatever way such things gained me anything, I count them as a loss for Christ. ⁸ Truly, I count everything as loss in exchange for the incredible benefit I've gained through knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I've thrown away all these things for him, and consider them trash, so that I might gain Christ. ⁹ I want to be found in him, not being right because of what I've done, or what the law requires, but made right through confidence in Christ, set right by God through trusting in him. ¹⁰ I want to really know him, and the power of his resurrection—to take part in his suffering and become like him in his death, ¹¹ so that somehow I might be part of the resurrection from the dead!

¹² Not that I've already got it all, or that I'm already perfect—but I run so that I might win what was won for me by Christ Jesus. ¹³ My friends, I don't consider that I've already won, but this is my one objective:

* **3:3** Literally, "flesh," also in verse 4.

disregarding what is behind me, I strain forward to what is in front of me. ¹⁴ I run towards the finish line to win the prize of God's invitation to heaven through Christ Jesus.

¹⁵ Those of us who are spiritually mature should think like this, and if you think anything different, then God will reveal this to you. ¹⁶ We just need to make sure that we follow what we already have understood. ¹⁷ My friends, copy my example as others do and take note of the way to behave since you have us as a model.

¹⁸ The way some people live makes them enemies of the cross of Christ—as I've often told you before and repeat again though it pains me so much I want to weep. ¹⁹ They will end up being completely lost, these people whose "god" is their physical desires and who are proud of what they should be ashamed of, thinking only about the things of this world. ²⁰ But our homeland is heaven, and we're waiting for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come from there too. ²¹ He will recreate our defective human bodies so that they will be made like his glorious body using the power by which he brings everything under his control.

4

¹ So stand firm in the Lord, my dear friends who mean so much to me, who make me so happy! To me you are my crowning achievement! I truly love you and long to see you! ² Euodia and Syntyche—I urge you to resolve your differences with each other and agree in the Lord. ³ In fact, my faithful fellow-worker,* let me ask you to help these women, for they worked together with me to spread the good news—as well as Clement and my other co-workers, whose names are recorded in the book of life.

⁴ Always be happy in the Lord—I repeat, Be happy! ⁵ Everyone should know about your kindness. The Lord will soon be here. ⁶ Don't worry about anything, but take everything to God in prayer, explaining your requests to him and thanking him for all he does. ⁷ Then the peace that comes from God, which is better than we can ever imagine, will protect your thoughts and attitudes in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Lastly, whatever is true, honorable, right, pure, beautiful, commendable, whatever is truly good and deserves to be praised, think about these kinds of things. ⁹ Put into practice what you learned and received from me, what you saw me doing and heard me say. Then the God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰ I'm so happy in the Lord that you've at last thought about me again—realizing that you were concerned about me before but you couldn't do anything about it. ¹¹ I'm not talking about my own needs, because I've already learned to be satisfied in whatever situation I find myself. ¹² I'm used to having nothing, and I've experienced having plenty too. In every possible situation I've learned the secret of dealing with having plenty and going hungry, of being rich and of living in poverty: ¹³ I can do anything through him who makes me strong!

* **4:3** An unknown Christian worker presumably located in Philippi.

¹⁴ Even so it was good of you to share with me during my troubles. ¹⁵ You Philippians remember that right at the beginning of sharing the good news, when I left Macedonia, that yours was the only church that helped me financially. ¹⁶ Even when I was in Thessalonica you helped me out not once but twice. ¹⁷ Not that I'm looking for a donation—I'm looking for your "account" to increase in "profit."[†] ¹⁸ For I have everything, more than I need! I'm thankful to receive from Epaphroditus the things you sent. They're like a sweet-smelling sacrifice that pleases God and that he approves of. ¹⁹ My God will fill you with everything you need in accordance with his glorious wealth in Christ Jesus! ²⁰ Glory be to God the Father, forever and ever. Amen. ²¹ Greet every fellow-believer in Christ Jesus. The Christian brothers and sisters with me send their greetings. ²² All the believers send you greetings, especially those from Caesar's palace. ²³ May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

[†] **4:17** Paul is using business terms, but probably referring figuratively to their spiritual "account."

Colossians

¹ This letter comes from Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the will of God, and from our brother Timothy. ² To the believers and trusting Christians at Colossae: may you have grace and peace from God our Father. ³ We are always thankful to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for you, and pray for you. ⁴ We've heard about your trust in Christ Jesus and your love for all the believers ⁵ because of the hope prepared for you in heaven. You already heard about this in the good news, the message of truth ⁶ that came to you just as it has gone throughout the whole world, spreading widely and bringing results. It's done the same for you too, ever since you heard it and realized the true nature of God's grace. ⁷ Our dear friend and fellow-worker Epaphras, who is a trustworthy minister of Christ on our behalf, taught you about this. ⁸ He's also made clear to us your love in the Spirit.

⁹ Because of this we continue to pray for you from the time we heard about you, asking God to give you understanding of what he wants you to do and to give you every kind of spiritual wisdom and understanding. ¹⁰ That way you'll live lives that rightly represent the Lord and please him, producing all kinds of good results and gaining greater knowledge of God. ¹¹ May you be made powerfully strong by his wonderful strength, having great patience and endurance. ¹² May you happily praise the Father, who has made it possible for us to share in the inheritance of God's people who live in the light. ¹³ He rescued us from the tyranny of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ through whom we have been set free and our sins forgiven.

¹⁵ The Son is the visible picture of the invisible God. He was before* all creation, ¹⁶ for everything was created through him—in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, empires, rulers, leaders and authorities—everything was created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He existed before everything, and he holds everything together. ¹⁸ He is also the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the first and highest of those raised from the dead, so that he is supreme in everything. ¹⁹ God was pleased to have his full nature live in him, ²⁰ and through him brought back everything in the universe to himself, since he made peace through the blood of his cross, through him reconciling all those on the earth and in heaven.† ²¹ You once were alienated from God, enemies in the way you thought and the way you acted, ²² but now he has reconciled you through his dying human body, bringing you into his presence where you stand holy, pure, and faultless. ²³ But your trust in him must continue rock-solid and immovable. Don't be shaken from the hope of the good news that

* **1:15** Literally, “first-born,” denoting position rather than timing of birth. † **1:20** The “he/him” can be confusing here. Supplying the actual nouns may help, though it makes for a clumsy translation: “God was pleased to have God's full nature live in Christ, and through Christ brought back everything in the universe to himself (God), since Christ made peace through the blood of Christ's cross, through Christ reconciling all those on the earth and in heaven.”

you heard, the good news that's been shared throughout the world—that's the work that I Paul have been doing.

²⁴ I'm happy to have trouble for your sake, for by means of what happens to me physically I'm part of Christ's sufferings that he continues to experience for the sake of his body, the church. ²⁵ I serve the church following the direction God gave me about you, to present fully the word of God to you. ²⁶ This is the mystery that was hidden down through the ages and for many generations, but it's now been revealed to God's people. ²⁷ God wanted to make known to them the glorious wealth of this mystery to the nations:‡ Christ living in you is the glorious hope! ²⁸ We're telling everyone about him, instructing and teaching them in the best way we know how so that we can bring everyone before God fully mature in Christ. ²⁹ That's what I'm working for too, making every effort as I rely on his strength which is powerfully at work in me.

2

¹ I want you to know how hard I'm working for you, and for those at Laodicea—in fact for all those who haven't met me personally—² so that you may be encouraged. May you be bound together in love, experiencing the great benefit of being completely sure in your understanding, for this is what the true knowledge of God brings. May you know the revealed mystery of God, which is Christ! ³ In him you can discover all the rich wisdom and knowledge of God.

⁴ I'm telling you this so that no one will fool you by spinning you a tale.* ⁵ Even though I'm not physically there with you, I'm with you in spirit. I'm so happy to see the way you stick together and how firm you are in your trust in Christ. ⁶ Just as you accepted Christ Jesus as Lord, go on following him, ⁷ grounded in him and built up by him. May your trust in him continue to grow strong, following what you were taught, full of gratitude to God.

⁸ Watch out that nobody enslaves you through their philosophy and worthless delusions, following human traditions and concepts of this world, and not following Christ. ⁹ For the fullness of God's divine nature lives in Christ in bodily form, ¹⁰ and you have been made full† in him. He is supreme over every ruler and authority.

¹¹ You were “circumcised” in him but not by human hands. You have been set free from sinful human nature by the “circumcision” Christ performed.‡ ¹² You were buried with him in baptism, and you were raised with him through your trust in what God did by raising him from the dead. ¹³ And even though you were dead because of your sins and being physically “uncircumcised,” he brought you to life together with him. He has forgiven us all our sins. ¹⁴ He wiped out the record of our debts according to the Law that was written down against us; he took away this barrier§ by nailing it to the cross.

‡ **1:27** Or “Gentiles.” * **2:4** Literally, “false arguments.” † **2:10** Or “complete,” “whole.”

‡ **2:11** Clearly this is not talking about physical circumcision but what it was supposed to mean spiritually. § **2:14** Note that the barrier is on our side, not God's.

¹⁵ He stripped away the power of spiritual rulers and authorities,* and having publicly revealed what they were truly like, he led them captive behind him in victory.

¹⁶ So don't let anyone criticize you for what you eat or what you drink, or regarding which religious festival, new moon ritual, or ceremonial sabbaths you choose to observe.† ¹⁷ These are just a shadow of what was to come, for the physical reality is Christ. ¹⁸ Don't let anyone cheat you out of your prize by insisting you have to beat yourself,‡ or worship angels. They think they are better than anyone else because of visions they say they've had, and become ridiculously conceited in their sinful minds. ¹⁹ Such people are not connected to the head that directs the body, nourished and joined together through the body's sinews and muscles. As the body is united together it grows the way God wants it to grow.

²⁰ If you died with Christ to the religious demands that this world insists upon,§ why would you make yourself subject to such demands as if you were still part of this world? ²¹ Things like: don't handle that, don't taste that, don't touch that! ²² These commands refer to things that don't last since they're used up,* and they're based on man-made requirements and teachings. ²³ Such rules may make some kind of sense to those who practice self-centered piety, who are so proud of being humble, and who "mortify the body;" but in reality they don't help at all in dealing with sinful desires.

3

¹ So if you've been brought back to life with Christ, look for what comes from above, where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand. ² Fix your mind on what's above, not what's here on earth. ³ You died, and your life is kept safe with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ—your life—is revealed, then you will also share in his visible glory.

⁵ So kill your worldly nature—sexual sin, immorality, lust, evil desires, greedily wanting to have more—this is the worship of idols. ⁶ Because of such things, those who disobey experience God's judgment. ⁷ At one time you lived like that when you behaved in such a way, ⁸ but now you should get rid of such things as anger, rage, wickedness, abuse, and using obscenities. ⁹ Don't lie to each other, since you've discarded your old self and what you used to do, ¹⁰ and put on your new self that is always being made more like your Creator, understanding better who he really is. ¹¹ In this new situation there's no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, foreigner, barbarian,* slave or free, for Christ is everything, and he lives in all of us.

* **2:15** Clearly speaking about *evil* spiritual agencies. † **2:16** In this context Paul is referring to the various yearly festival days of the Jewish ceremonial system. ‡ **2:18** Self-mortification; the phrase could also be translated "false humility." § **2:20** Probably referring both to Jewish religious regulations and to pagan ceremonies and taboos. * **2:22** This tends to indicate that the rules are about food and drink which will of course be consumed and then "used up." * **3:11** Literally, "Scythian," a "barbarian" people from what is now southern Russia, the Ukraine, and Central Asia.

¹² Since you are God's special people, holy and dearly loved, adopt a sympathetic nature that is kind, humble, gentle, and patient. ¹³ Be patient with one another, forgive others among you if you have grievances against one another. Just as the Lord forgave you, you should do the same. ¹⁴ Above all, love one another, which is the perfect bond that will hold you together. ¹⁵ May the peace of Christ direct your thinking, because you were called to this by God who makes you one, and thank God for it! ¹⁶ Let Christ's message fully live in you. In every wise way teach and instruct one another through psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing praises to God in gratitude and sincerity. ¹⁷ Whatever you do, whether in word or action, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, praising God the Father through him. ¹⁸ You married women, respect your husbands appropriately in the Lord. ¹⁹ You married men, love your wives and don't treat them badly. ²⁰ You children, always do what your parents tell you because this is what pleases the Lord. ²¹ You fathers, don't make your children mad, so they won't feel like giving up. ²² Those of you who are servants, do everything your human masters tell you, not with just an eye to please them, but honestly and sincerely, respecting the Lord. ²³ Do whatever you do really well, as if you're doing it for God, and not for people, ²⁴ because you know that the Lord will give you your reward—an inheritance! You're serving Christ the Lord! ²⁵ Whoever does what's wrong will be paid back for the wrong they've done, and God has no favorites.

4

¹ You masters, treat your servants in a way that is right and fair, recognizing that you too have a Master in heaven. ² Remember to keep on praying, with an alert and thankful mind! ³ Pray for us too that God may open a door of opportunity to spread the message, to tell about the revealed mystery of Christ—which is the reason I'm here in prison. ⁴ Pray that I may make it as clear as I should when I speak. ⁵ Behave wisely with outsiders, making the best use of every opportunity. ⁶ Always be gracious when you speak. Make sure it's in good taste, and think about how best to answer everyone.

⁷ Tychicus will tell you all about what's happening to me. He's a dear brother, a trustworthy minister and co-worker in the Lord. ⁸ I'm sending him to you for this very reason—so that you'll know how things are with me and this will cheer you up. ⁹ Onesimus is going with him too, a trusted and dear brother, who's one of you. They'll explain to you everything that's going on here. ¹⁰ Aristarchus who's with me here in prison sends his best wishes; likewise Mark, Barnabas' cousin (you've already had instructions to welcome him if he visits you), ¹¹ and Jesus—also called Justus—who are the only Jewish Christians* among those working with me here for the kingdom of God, men who have been a great help to me. ¹² Epaphras who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends his greetings. He's always passionate in his prayers on your behalf, praying that you'll stand firm as grown-up Christians,

* **4:11** Literally, "belonging to the circumcision."

totally convinced about everything as God would want. ¹³ For the record I can tell you that he's done a lot for you, and for those in Laodicea and Hierapolis as well. ¹⁴ Luke, our dear doctor, and Demas also send their best. ¹⁵ Greet the believers that are in Laodicea—Nympha too, and the church that meets in her house. ¹⁶ And when this letter has been read to you, make sure it's read to the church in Laodicea too, and that you also read the letter sent to Laodicea. ¹⁷ Tell Archippus, "See that you follow through in doing the ministry God gave you."

¹⁸ I Paul write my closing greetings with my own hand. Remember I'm in prison. Grace be with you.

First Thessalonians

¹ This letter comes from Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians who belong to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. May you have grace and peace! ² We are always thanking God for all of you, never forgetting you in our prayers. ³ We remember you before our God and Father—how you put your trust in him into practice, how you work hard in love, and how you patiently wait in the hope of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ Brothers and sisters, we already know that you are loved by God and are very special to him. ⁵ The good news we brought to you wasn't just words, but had power too, for the Holy Spirit completely convinced you. In the same way you know what kind of men we are since we demonstrated to you that we were working for your benefit.

⁶ You were imitating us and the Lord when you received the message, for despite your troubles you experienced the joy the Holy Spirit gives. ⁷ So you have become an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Greece! ⁸ You have broadcast the Lord's message, not only in Macedonia and Greece, but everywhere people have heard of your trust in God—so there's no need for us to tell anybody about it! ⁹ In fact they talk about what a marvelous welcome you gave us, how you abandoned idols and turned to God, how you serve the true and living God, ¹⁰ as you look forward to the coming of his Son from heaven—Jesus, the one God raised from the dead, who will save us from the judgment to come.

2

¹ Brothers and sisters, you yourselves know what our visit meant to you, and that it wasn't wasted! ² You'll recall that after having had much trouble and bad treatment at Philippi, with the help of God we still dared to share God's good news with you, despite the opposition we faced. ³ For what we speak about isn't deceptive, or worthless, or fraudulent.

⁴ On the contrary, we have God's approval for what we say—he's entrusted us with sharing the good news. We don't set out to please people, but God. He's the one who judges our motives. ⁵ As you know, we've never used flattering words. Nor were we covering up some greedy, selfish attitude—as God is our witness! ⁶ We weren't trying to win anybody's praise—not from you, nor anyone else. We could have become a “burden” to you as messengers of Christ, ⁷ but instead we acted kindly among you, like a mother caring for her own children. ⁸ We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not just God's good news, but also our very own selves, because you had become so dear to us.

⁹ Don't you remember, brothers and sisters, all our hard work—working day and night so we wouldn't be a burden to any of you as

* 1:7 Literally, “Achaia,” also verse 8.

we shared God's good news with you? ¹⁰ You yourselves can testify as to how we acted, and God can too—how we treated you believers with a holy attitude, fairly and blamelessly. ¹¹ You know how we cared for every one of you like a father caring for his own children. We encouraged you, comforted you, and shared with you our experience ¹² so that you could live as God would want you to live—the God who calls you to his own kingdom and glory.

¹³ Another thing: we're always thanking God that when you heard and accepted the word of God, you didn't treat it as some human words, but what it truly is, the word of God. This is what is at work in those of you who trust in him. ¹⁴ The experience you brothers and sisters have had imitates that of God's churches that belong to Christ Jesus in Judaea. Just like your fellow Jewish Christians you suffered as they did at the hands of the Jewish leaders ¹⁵ who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and chased us out. They don't please God and they are hostile to everyone, ¹⁶ trying to prevent us from speaking to the other nations* to prevent them from being saved. They're always sinning to the maximum extent, but for them full judgment has arrived!

¹⁷ Brothers and sisters, since we felt as if we'd experienced a family separation because we hadn't seen you for a while (separated physically though not in spirit), we tried even harder to come and see you again face to face because that's what we wanted to do. ¹⁸ We really wanted to come and visit you, and I, Paul, tried again and again—but Satan stopped us. ¹⁹ For what gives us hope, what makes us happy, what we are really proud of as we stand before our Lord Jesus Christ when he comes back—is having you there too! ²⁰ You are our pride and joy!

3

¹ So when we couldn't bear it any longer, we decided it would be best for us to stay behind in Athens, ² and send Timothy on to you. He is our brother and God's co-worker in spreading the good news of Christ. We sent him to strengthen and encourage you in your trust in God ³ so that none of you would be upset by your troubles—for you know we should expect such things. ⁴ Even while we were with you we kept on warning you that we would suffer persecution soon— and as you well know that is exactly what has happened. ⁵ This is why, when I couldn't stand it anymore, I sent to find out whether you were still trusting in God. I was concerned that the Devil* had successfully tempted you and that all our work had been for nothing!†

⁶ Now Timothy has just returned from visiting you and he has brought us good news of your trust in God and the love you have. He's told us that you still have fond memories of us, longing to see us just as we long to see you. ⁷ This news really encouraged us while we were suffering troubles ourselves, brothers and sisters, knowing that

* **2:16** "Gentiles." * **3:5** "The Devil," Literally, "the tempter." † **3:5** "Successfully tempted"—the original is actually just "tempted" but in English this doesn't imply what Paul fears—that the temptation has succeeded. The issue here is not being tempted, but falling into sin as a result of temptation.

you continue to hold on to your trust in God. ⁸ For us life is worth living now because you're standing firm in the Lord! ⁹ As we go into the presence of our God, how can we ever thank God enough for you because of all the joy you bring to us? ¹⁰ Night and day we pray for you as earnestly as possible, hoping to see you again face to face, and to help you continue developing your trust in God. ¹¹ May God our Father and our Lord Jesus make it possible for us to come to see you soon. ¹² May the Lord increase your love so it overflows to one another, and to everyone, just as we love you. ¹³ In this way may the Lord strengthen you so you may stand with minds that are holy and blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones.

4

¹ A few more things: Brothers and sisters, we plead with you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to behave in ways that please God, just as we instructed you. Of course you're already doing this, just do it more and more! ² You remember the instructions we gave you on behalf of the Lord Jesus. ³ What God wants is for you to live holy lives. So stay away from sexual immorality ⁴ in order that each of you may control yourselves* in a way that is holy and respectful, ⁵ not indulging passionate lust like the heathen† who have no knowledge of God. ⁶ Don't cheat or take advantage of another Christian in these matters, for the Lord is the one who executes justice in all such things, as we've already clearly explained to you, and warned you about. ⁷ For God did not call us to live impure lives, but holy lives. ⁸ So anyone who rejects this position isn't just rejecting what a human being is saying; they are rejecting God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

⁹ We certainly don't need to write and tell you to love fellow believers, because God teaches you to love one another— ¹⁰ and in fact you are demonstrating this love to all the believers throughout Macedonia. Even so we want to encourage you, brothers and sisters, to love more and more. ¹¹ Try to live a quiet life, minding your own business, doing your own work, as we've already explained to you, ¹² so that your way of life may be respected by non-Christians and you won't have to rely on anyone to provide what you need.

¹³ We don't want you to be confused about what happens when people die,‡ brothers and sisters, so that you won't grieve like others who don't have any hope. ¹⁴ Since we're convinced that Jesus died and rose again, we're also sure that God will bring§ with Jesus those who have died trusting in him. ¹⁵ What we're telling you comes from the Lord: those of us who are alive and still here when the Lord comes certainly won't precede those who have died. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the cry of the archangel, and with the sound of God's trumpet, and those who have died in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then those of us who are alive and

* **4:4** This could also be translated as "know how to take a wife." † **4:5** "Gentiles," "other nations." ‡ **4:13** Literally, "fall asleep." § **4:14** "Bring... those," obviously those who are resurrected from the earth, from the context of the two following verses.

still here will be carried up together with them into the clouds, and we shall meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever!
 18 So encourage one another with these words.

5

1 Brothers and sisters, we don't need to write anything to you about prophetic times and dates. 2 You yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 When people talk about peace and security suddenly they will be completely ruined. It will be just like the sudden onset of childbirth, and they certainly won't escape. 4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in the dark about this so that you won't be caught by surprise when the Day of Judgment* arrives suddenly like a thief. 5 For you are all children of light and children of the day. We don't belong to the night or to darkness. 6 So then we shouldn't be sleeping like everybody else—we should stay awake and keep ourselves clear-headed. 7 For it's during the night that people sleep; and it's at night that they get drunk. 8 But since we belong to the day we should keep our heads clear, strapping on the breastplate of trust and love, and putting on as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God hasn't placed us in a position to be punished, but has reserved us for salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 10 He's the one who died for† us so that whether we're alive or dead we shall live together with him. 11 So encourage and strengthen one another, just as you are doing.

12 Brothers and sisters, we're asking you to respect those who work with you, who lead you in the Lord and teach you. 13 You should value them highly in love for the work they do. Live in peace with each other. 14 We urge you, brothers and sisters, to warn those who are lazy, encourage those who are anxious, help those who are weak, and be patient with everyone. 15 Make sure none of you pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good to one another, and to everyone. 16 Always be full of joy, 17 never stop praying, 18 be thankful in every situation—because this is what God in Christ Jesus wants you to do. 19 Don't hold the Spirit back, 20 don't look down on prophecy, 21 make sure to check everything. Hold onto whatever is good; 22 keep away from every kind of evil.

23 May the God of peace himself make you completely holy, and may your whole being—body, mind and spirit—be kept blameless for when our Lord Jesus Christ returns. 24 The one who calls you is trustworthy, and he will do this. 25 Brothers and sisters, pray for us. 26 Greet all the believers there affectionately.‡ 27 I'm requiring you by the Lord that this letter be read to all the believers. 28 May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

* 5:4 Literally, "Day." † 5:10 "For" in the sense of "for the sake of" rather than "in place of." ‡ 5:26 Literally, "with a holy kiss."

Second Thessalonians

¹ This letter comes from Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians who belong to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ² May you have grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³ We keep on thanking God for you, brothers and sisters—we just have to! This is the right thing to do because your trust in God is growing in leaps and bounds, and the love you all have for each other increases more and more.

⁴ We speak so proudly of you among the churches of God because of your patient courage and trust in God during all the persecution and trouble you're going through. ⁵ For this is evidence that God is right in the decisions he makes, and that you deserve the kingdom of God for which you are suffering. ⁶ Since God does what's right he will deal appropriately with those who cause you trouble. ⁷ He will free you from your suffering—and us too—when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels, ⁸ bringing judgment on those who reject God and refuse to accept the good news of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will rightly experience the consequence of eternal loss, separated from the presence of the Lord and his glorious power, ¹⁰ on the day when he comes to receive glory from his people, admired by all those who trust in him. This includes you because you were convinced about what we told you.

¹¹ That's why we continue to pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of what he's called us to do. May God powerfully fulfill every desire you have to do good and every action that comes from trusting him ¹² so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be honored by what you do—and in turn you are honored by him through the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2

¹ Talking about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we're brought together to him, brother and sisters— ² please don't become upset or concerned by any spiritual revelation, or message, or letter supposedly from us that makes you think that the day of the Lord has already come. ³ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, because the Rebellion* must come first, and the lawless man be revealed, the one whose end is destruction. ⁴ He is the enemy of God, and proudly sets himself up over everything that is called God and is worshiped. He even installs himself in God's Temple, claiming to be God. ⁵ Don't you remember that I told you all this while I was still with you?

⁶ Now you know what's keeping him in check, because he will be revealed for what he is at the appropriate time.† ⁷ For the secret ways of lawlessness‡ are already at work; however he who now restrains it

* **2:3** Literally, "apostasy," the end-time, final rejection of God. † **2:6** This whole section (2:6-12) is much debated as to its meaning. ‡ **2:7** Literally, "mystery of lawlessness," indicating the "revealed secret" of the anti-God power that is not only law-breaking but is truly law-less—without any respect for law.

will continue to do so until he is out of the way. ⁸ Then the lawless one will be revealed, the one whom the Lord Jesus will wipe out, blowing him away,[§] destroying him by the brilliance of his coming. ⁹ He (the lawless one) comes to do Satan's work, having all kinds of powers, using miracles, and performing amazing but deceptive displays. ¹⁰ Using every type of evil trick he deludes those who are on their way to destruction, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ Because of this God sends them a convincing delusion so that they put their trust in the lie.* ¹² As a result everyone who did not trust in the truth will be condemned, for they preferred what is evil.

¹³ But we just have to keep on thanking God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you to be saved through the Spirit who makes you right as you trust in the truth. ¹⁴ This is what he called you to through the good news we shared with you, so that you could participate in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵ So, brothers and sisters, stand firm, and hold on to what you've been taught, whether by what you were told, or through a letter from us. ¹⁶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God the Father (who through his grace gave us eternal confidence and a trustworthy hope), ¹⁷ encourage you and strengthen you so you can say and do everything that is good.

3

¹ Lastly, brothers and sisters, please pray for us, so that the Lord's message may spread and be truly appreciated, just as it is by you—² and that we may be kept safe from immoral and evil men, because not everyone trusts in God. ³ But the Lord is trustworthy and will strengthen you, and protect you from the evil one. ⁴ We have great confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do what we told you. ⁵ May the Lord lead you into a deeper understanding of God's love for you and the endurance of Christ.*

⁶ Now we want to tell you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, not to associate with any believer who can't be bothered to work for their living—those who don't follow the teachings they learned from us. ⁷ You certainly know that you should follow our example, because while we were with you we weren't lazy, ⁸ —we didn't eat anyone's food without paying for it. Instead we worked hard day and night so we wouldn't be a burden to any of you. ⁹ Not that we don't have the right to do so—but we wanted to be an example to you, so that you could copy what we did. ¹⁰ Even while we were with you we gave strict instructions that anybody who didn't want to work shouldn't eat. ¹¹ But now we hear that there are some lazy

§ 2:8 Literally, "by the breath of his mouth." * 2:11 The lie: in this context surely meaning the fundamental Lie about the nature and character of God told by the Enemy (Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28), who even claims to be God (2:4). In terms of God's "sending" of this delusion, note that in Scripture God is often speaking of causing that which he does not prevent. * 3:5 "The endurance of Christ" could mean the endurance demonstrated by Christ, or the endurance given by Christ—or both.

busybodies among you who don't work at all. ¹² We're ordering such people, urging them in the Lord Jesus, to settle down and work to pay for their own food.

¹³ Brothers and sisters, don't give up doing good. ¹⁴ Take note of anyone who doesn't do what we're telling you in this letter, and make sure you don't associate with them, so that they may become embarrassed.† ¹⁵ Don't consider them enemies, but warn them as a brother or sister.

¹⁶ May the Lord of peace himself grant you peace in every situation in every way. May the Lord be with all of you. ¹⁷ Notice the greeting to you from me, Paul, in my own handwriting. This is my signature on every letter I write. ¹⁸ May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you.

† **3:14** In other words, that they would be encouraged to do what they should.

First Timothy

¹ This letter comes from Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus appointed by the authority of God our Savior and Christ Jesus, who is our hope. ² I'm sending it to you Timothy. You are my true son* because of your trust in God. May you have grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

³ When I was on my way to Macedonia I asked you to stay behind in Ephesus, so that you could speak with those who teach false ideas and insist that they stop. ⁴ They shouldn't concern themselves with legends and never-ending obsessions about ancestry.† Such ideas only lead to pointless debates, instead of understanding God as we trust in him.

⁵ The reason why I insist on this is so we may have love that comes from a pure heart, from a clear conscience and sincere trust in God.

⁶ Some have deviated from these things, and have ended up talking nonsense. ⁷ They have ambitions to be teachers of the law, but they have no idea what they're talking about or what they're so boldly announcing!

⁸ Now we recognize that the law is good if people use it properly. ⁹ We also know that law isn't laid down for those who do what is good and right, but for those who are rebellious and ignore the law. It applies to people who have no use for God, who are sinful, who treat nothing as holy and are completely irreligious. It's for those who kill fathers and mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ for those who are sexually immoral, homosexuals, kidnappers, liars, false witnesses—and anything else that's opposed to good teachings ¹¹ as determined by the wonderful good news of our blessed God which he entrusted to me.

¹² I'm just so grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord for the strength he's given me, and that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to work for him. ¹³ Even though I used to insult God, and persecuted and abused God's people, God showed me mercy because of my ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁴ Our Lord in his grace filled me to overflowing with trust and love that comes from Christ Jesus.

¹⁵ You can trust this saying that everyone should accept: "Christ Jesus came to this world to save sinners," and I'm the worst of them. ¹⁶ For this reason I was shown mercy—since I'm the worst sinner, Jesus Christ could demonstrate his infinite patience as an example to those who choose to trust in him and gain eternal life.

¹⁷ Honor and glory forever and ever to the eternal King, the immortal, invisible, and only God! Amen.

¹⁸ These are the instructions I want to give to you, Timothy, my son, following the prophecies that brought you this far,‡ so you can fight the good fight! ¹⁹ Keep on trusting God and make sure you have a clear conscience. Some have refused to do this and have shipwrecked their

* **1:2** Actually "little child." † **1:4** Or "endless genealogies"—a situation that is not clear from the context. ‡ **1:18** The Greek is ambiguous—it could refer to prophecies about Timothy, or that Timothy followed the prophecies...

trust in God. ²⁰ Hymenaeus and Alexander are such people, and I have “handed them over to Satan”[§] to teach them not to misrepresent God.

2

¹ First of all, I want to encourage you to pray for everybody: make requests of God, ask on their behalf, and give thanks. ² Pray like this for kings and all types of leaders so that we may live quiet and peaceful lives, always thinking about God and taking life seriously. ³ This is what is good, and what pleases God our Savior. ⁴ He wants everyone to be saved, and come to understand what truth really is.

⁵ For there is one God, and one mediator of God and mankind—the man Christ Jesus. ⁶ He gave himself so we could all be won back, demonstrating the evidence at the right time. ⁷ I was appointed to share this message and be its messenger,* a teacher to the foreigners† about trusting God and the truth (I’m not lying, I’m telling the truth!)

⁸ What I really want is for men everywhere to pray sincerely to God.‡ No anger or arguments! ⁹ In the same way, women should dress sensibly, modestly, and appropriately. They should be attractive not in their hairstyle or by wearing gold or pearls or expensive clothes, ¹⁰ but by the good things they do—as is appropriate for women who claim to follow God. ¹¹ Women should learn quietly, respecting their place. ¹² I don’t allow women to be instructors, or to dominate men; let them remain quiet.§ ¹³ For Adam was made first, and then Eve. ¹⁴ Adam wasn’t deceived, but Eve was completely deceived, and she fell into sin. ¹⁵ However, women will be saved through becoming mothers,* as long as they continue to trust and love, and to live holy, sensible lives.

3

¹ This is a trustworthy statement: “If someone aspires to be an elder, this is a good work to want to do.” ² An elder must be above reproach, married to one wife, self-controlled, well-balanced, sensible, hospitable, and able to teach. ³ He should be someone who doesn’t get drunk or become violent, but is gentle, and is not argumentative or greedy for money. ⁴ He must handle his own family well. His children must respect what he tells them to do. ⁵ (For if a man doesn’t know how to manage his own family, how can he manage God’s church?) ⁶ He should not be a new believer, in case he gets so full of himself* he falls under the same condemnation as the devil. ⁷ People outside the church should also speak well of him so that he won’t disgrace himself and fall into the devil’s trap.

§ 1:20 The phrase “handed over to Satan” is not explained and could mean being “excommunicated” from the church community, or allowing them to experience the results of their sins. The fact they are supposed to learn something indicates that Paul believed their redemption was still possible. * 2:7 Literally, “an apostle.” † 2:7 Literally, “Gentiles.” ‡ 2:8 Literally, “holding up holy hands.” § 2:12 Or tranquil, calm. * 2:15 “Through child-bearing.” The meaning and implication of this verse are much debated... * 3:6 Or “he becomes proud and arrogant.”

⁸ Similarly deacons[†] should be respected, and not hypocritical. They should not be addicted to drink, and should not be trying to dishonestly enrich themselves. ⁹ They must stick to the revealed truth about God, trusting in him with a pure conscience. ¹⁰ They should be tried out first, and if they can't be faulted then let them serve as deacons. ¹¹ Their wives[‡] should be respected too. They should not slander people with gossip, and they should be self-controlled and trustworthy in all they do. ¹² Deacons should be married to one wife, managing their children and their homes well. ¹³ Those who serve well as deacons gain a good reputation and much confidence in their trust in Christ Jesus.

¹⁴ Even though I hope to see you soon, I'm writing about all this to you so that ¹⁵ if I'm delayed you'll know how people should behave themselves in God's house. This is the church of the living God, the support pillar and foundation of the truth. ¹⁶ There's no question about it: the revealed truth about God is amazing! He was made known to us in human form, he was vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, declared to the nations, trusted in by the world, and taken up in glory!

4

¹ However, the Spirit very clearly explains that in the last times some will abandon their trust in God, and will listen to deceptive spirits and beliefs that come from demons. ² These hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared, ³ tell people to not marry and not to eat certain foods made by God that should be accepted with thanks by those who trust and know the truth. ⁴ Everything created by God is good, and nothing should be rejected but should be received with thanks, ⁵ since it is made sacred by the word of God and by prayer.

⁶ If you point out these things to the brothers and sisters you will be a good minister* of Christ Jesus. You gain strength by trusting in the truth, and in the good teaching you've followed. ⁷ Reject what is irreligious, and old wives' tales. Make sure your exercise is spiritual—⁸ for while physical exercise is useful to some extent, spiritual exercise is much more useful. For “it has promise for the present life, and for the life to come.” ⁹ You can trust this saying[†] that should be accepted by everyone. ¹⁰ The reason we work and do the best we can is because our hope is in the living God. He is the Savior of all people, especially of those who trust in him.

¹¹ This is what you should teach. Tell everyone to follow your instructions. ¹² Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young. Be an example to those who trust in God—in the way you speak, the kind of life you live, in love, in trust, and in purity. ¹³ Until I get there, make sure you read the Scriptures to the church, and encourage them by your speaking and teaching. ¹⁴ Don't neglect the gracious gift you have that was given to you by prophetic inspiration when the church elders laid their hands on you. ¹⁵ Think carefully about these things, and dedicate yourself completely to them so that everyone can

[†] **3:8** “Deacons,” directly from the Greek work “diakonos,” meaning servant. [‡] **3:11** “Their wives”: or simply “women.” * **4:6** The word is actually the one used for “deacon.” [†] **4:9** Assuming the saying is the previous verse.

see the progress you're making. ¹⁶ Mind what you're doing and what you're teaching. Keep going with all of this, because as you do so you'll save both yourself and those who listen to you.

5

¹ Don't rebuke a man who is older than you. Instead, encourage him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, ² older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with the highest standards of decency. ³ Help widows who don't have a family. ⁴ For the Christian responsibility of a widow's children or grandchildren is to do their duty for their own family, and repay their parents by helping them out. This is what pleases God. ⁵ Now a real widow, having no family, alone and without support, puts her hope in God and prays for help night and day. ⁶ But a widow who concentrates on pleasing herself is already dead, even though she's still physically alive. ⁷ Give people these instructions so that they will be above criticism. ⁸ But those who don't look after their relatives, especially their own family, have denied their beliefs, and are worse than those who don't believe. ⁹ Only widows over sixty who have been faithful to their husbands should be put on the list.* ¹⁰ The widow should have a reputation for doing good. Did she bring up children properly? Has she been hospitable? Has she washed the feet of church members? Has she helped those who were in trouble? Has she really tried to do good in every way?

¹¹ Don't take on widows who are younger, because when their physical desires make them want to re-marry they abandon their dedication to Christ. ¹² In this they are guilty of breaking their previous commitment.† ¹³ They also get used to a lazy life, just visiting each other in their homes. Not only lazy, but they gossip and meddle, talking about things they shouldn't. ¹⁴ So my best advice is that younger widows marry and have children and take care of the home. That way there's no opportunity for criticism from the Enemy. ¹⁵ However, some have already gone the way of Satan. ¹⁶ Any Christian woman who has widows in the family should help them, so that the church is not burdened with the responsibility, and can help those widows who are truly in need.

¹⁷ Elders who direct the church well should be seen as doubly valuable,‡ particularly those who work in speaking the Word and in teaching. ¹⁸ As Scripture says, "Don't muzzle the ox when it's threshing out the grain." Also, "The worker deserves to be paid."§ ¹⁹ Don't entertain any accusation against an elder unless two or three witnesses support it. ²⁰ Censure those who sin in front of everyone as a warning to others as well.

²¹ Before God and Christ Jesus, and the holy angels, I instruct you to follow these instructions without bias. Don't do anything from an

* **5:9** The list of those widows who should be helped by the church. † **5:12** The idea here is that the widows have made a commitment to serve Christ in the church, and they are helped by the church because of this. To re-marry would annul this commitment. ‡ **5:17** Or "should receive adequate pay." § **5:18** Quoting Deuteronomy 25:4; see also Luke 10:7.

attitude of favoritism. ²² Don't be in a hurry to lay hands on anyone; and don't get involved in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

²³ Don't just drink water, but use a little bit of wine because of your bad stomach—you're sick so often!

²⁴ The sins of some people are really obvious, and they are clearly guilty, but the sins of others are not seen until later. ²⁵ Similarly some good works are obvious, and even those that are hidden won't be for long.

6

¹ All who are bound under slavery should consider their masters worthy of respect, so that God's name and Christian beliefs won't be defamed. ² Slaves who have Christian masters should not disrespect them because they are brothers. Instead they should serve them even better, because those who are benefiting from their service are fellow-believers they should love. Teach these instructions, and encourage people to follow them.

³ Those that teach different beliefs, and don't listen to good counsel, particularly the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the true teachings of God, ⁴ are arrogant and don't understand anything. They're obsessed with speculation and philosophical debates which only lead to jealousy, arguments, malicious gossip and evil suspicions— ⁵ the constant arguing of people whose minds are totally corrupt and who have lost the truth, thinking that they can profit financially from religion...

⁶ But knowing and following God is so incredibly satisfying! ⁷ For we didn't bring anything into the world, and we can't take anything out with us either. ⁸ But if we have food and clothes then that's enough for us. ⁹ Those who are determined to become rich fall into the trap of temptation, following many foolish and damaging impulses. ¹⁰ For the desire to be rich leads to many kinds of evil results. Some of those who longed for this have turned away from the truth, and have hurt themselves, experiencing a lot of pain.

¹¹ But you as a man of God should run away from such things. You should seek to do what is right, practice true religion, and trust in God. Aim to love, to be patient, and gentle. ¹² Fight the good fight as you trust in God. Hold on tightly to the eternal life to which you were called. This is what you promised to do in front of many witnesses.

¹³ My charge to you before God the Life-giver, and before Christ Jesus who testified to the good news before Pontius Pilate, ¹⁴ is to follow faithfully what you've been told* so you will be above criticism until our Lord Jesus Christ appears. ¹⁵ At the right time Jesus will be revealed—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. ¹⁶ He is the only one who is immortal, and lives in unapproachable light. No one has seen him or can see him—honor and eternal power is his! Amen.

¹⁷ Warn those who are rich in the present world not to become proud. Tell them not to place their trust in wealth that is so insecure but in God

* **6:14** Literally, "keep the commandment."

who so freely gives us everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ Tell them to do good, and to become rich in doing good things, ready to share what they have, and to be generous. ¹⁹ In this way they store up treasure that will provide a solid basis for the future, so that they can take hold of true life.

²⁰ Timothy, take care of what's been given to you. Don't pay any attention to pointless chatter and arguments based on so-called "knowledge." ²¹ Some who promote these ideas have wandered away from their trust in God. May grace be with you.

Second Timothy

¹ This letter comes from Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus chosen by God, sent to tell about the promise of real life* that is in Christ Jesus. ² I'm sending it to you Timothy, my dear son. May you have grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

³ I'm always thinking of you and I'm so thankful to God, whom I serve as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience. I never forget to mention you in my prayers. ⁴ I remember how you cried, and I so want to see you! That would make me really happy. ⁵ I keep in mind your sincere trust in God, the same trust that your grandmother Lois and mother Eunice also had—and I know that same trust continues in you.

⁶ That's why I want to remind you to revitalize God's gracious gift to you which you received when I placed my hands on you.† ⁷ God didn't give us a spirit that makes us fearful, but a spirit of power and love and good sense. ⁸ So don't be ashamed to tell others about our Lord, or be ashamed of me. Instead be ready to share in suffering for the good news as God gives you strength. ⁹ He is the one who has saved us and called us to live a holy life—not through what we do, but by God's own plan and through his grace. ¹⁰ He gave this grace to us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, and is now revealed in the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus. He destroyed death, making life and immortality brilliantly clear through the good news. ¹¹ I was appointed speaker, apostle, and teacher of this good news. ¹² That's also the reason I'm suffering all this, but I'm not ashamed, because I know whom I've trusted. I'm confident that he can look after what I've entrusted to him until the Day‡ he returns.

¹³ You should follow the model of good advice that you learned from me, with an attitude of trust and love in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the truth that was entrusted to you through the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

¹⁵ You already know that everyone from Asia§ has abandoned me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. ¹⁶ May the Lord be kind to the family of Onesiphorus, because he often took care of me and wasn't embarrassed about me being in prison. ¹⁷ When he was in Rome, he took the trouble to search for me, and he found me. ¹⁸ May the Lord grant him his blessing in the Day of Judgment. (Timothy, you're very much aware of how much Onesiphorus did for me when he was in Ephesus.)

* **1:1** The Greek simply uses the word for life, but Paul is surely referring here to the abundant life that relates to eternal life (see 1 Timothy 1:16). † **1:6** Paul clearly “laid his hands” on Timothy in a way to designate a special blessing. ‡ **1:12** “Day,” referring to the end-time Day of Judgment. § **1:15** The Roman province of Asia Minor (now in modern-day Turkey).

2

¹ So then, my son, grow strong in the grace of Christ Jesus. ² Take what you heard me say in front of many witnesses and share it with those who are trustworthy, who then can teach others as well. ³ Suffer together with me like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ A soldier on active duty doesn't get caught up in the business of everyday life. He wants to please the one who enlisted him. ⁵ Similarly athletes who compete in the games don't win a prize if they don't keep to the rules. ⁶ The farmer that does all the hard work should be the first to benefit from the crop. ⁷ Think about what I'm telling you. The Lord will help you to understand all this.

⁸ Focus your mind on Jesus Christ, a descendant of David, who was raised from the dead. This is my good news, ⁹ and I'm suffering imprisonment because of it as if I were a criminal—but the word of God is not imprisoned. ¹⁰ Despite all this I'm willing to keep on going for the sake of God's people* so that they may gain the salvation of Christ Jesus that is eternal glory. ¹¹ This is a trustworthy saying: "If we died with him, we will also live with him; ¹² if we keep going, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us. ¹³ If we are not trustworthy, he is still trustworthy, for he cannot be untrue to himself."

¹⁴ This is what you should remind people about, telling them before God that they shouldn't have meaningless arguments over words. To do this only harms those who listen.

¹⁵ Make sure you work hard so you can present yourself to God and gain his approval. Be a worker that doesn't need to be embarrassed, using the word of truth correctly. ¹⁶ Avoid pointless chatter because people who do this are heading away from God. ¹⁷ Their teachings are as destructive as gangrene that destroys healthy flesh. Hymenaeus and Philetus are like this. ¹⁸ They have deviated from the truth by saying that the resurrection has already happened, which has ruined some people's trust in God.

¹⁹ But God's solid, trustworthy foundation stone stands firm, with this inscription, "The Lord knows those who belong to him," and "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord should stay away from all that is evil."† ²⁰ A stately home doesn't just have cups and bowls‡ made of gold and silver. It also has ones made from wood and clay. Some are made for special use; others for more commonplace functions. ²¹ So if you get rid of what is evil, you will become a cup or bowl that is holy and special, useful to the Lord, ready to do all that's good.

²² Run away from anything that fires up the desires of youth. Run after what is right and trustworthy, run after love and peace along with those who are true and pure Christians. ²³ Avoid foolish and childish debates, for you know they only lead to fights. ²⁴ For the Lord's minister must not fight, but be kind to everyone, able to teach, patient, ²⁵ gently correcting opponents. Perhaps God may help them to come to repent and to understand the truth. ²⁶ In this way they may come

* **2:10** Literally, "the elect." † **2:19** Quoting Numbers 16:5. ‡ **2:20** Literally, "vessels" or "utensils." There seems to be no good English equivalent for "home containers."

to their senses and escape the devil's trap. For he has captured them and made them do whatever he wants.

3

¹ Be aware that there will be troubled times in the last days. ² People will love themselves and love money. They will be boastful, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, and without God in their lives. ³ Heartless and unforgiving, they'll commit slander and have no self-control. Brutal people who hate what's good, ⁴ they will betray others and be totally thoughtless. They are absurdly full of themselves, living so much for pleasure that they don't care about loving God. ⁵ They may give an outward impression of being religious, but they don't actually believe it works. Stay away from these people!

⁶ They're the kind of people that slip into homes and take control of vulnerable women who are burdened down by the guilt of sin and distracted by all kinds of desires. ⁷ These women are always trying to learn but they're never able to understand the truth!

⁸ Just like Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, these teachers also oppose the truth. They are people with corrupted minds whose supposed trust in God is a lie.* ⁹ But they won't get far. Their stupidity will be obvious to everyone, just like that of Jannes and Jambres.

¹⁰ But you know all about my teaching and behavior, and my aim in life. You know my trust in God and my love. You know what I've had to endure— ¹¹ how I've been persecuted and what I've suffered. You know what happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—the troubles I had and how the Lord rescued me from all of them.

¹² Of course it's true that everyone who wants to live a life devoted to God in Christ Jesus will experience persecution, ¹³ while wicked people and frauds will do well, going from bad to worse, deceiving others and deceiving themselves too. ¹⁴ But you must hold onto the things you've learned and are convinced are true. You know who taught you. ¹⁵ From your childhood you've known the holy Scriptures which can give you understanding for salvation by trusting in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture inspired by God is useful for teaching, for confronting what is wrong, for setting us straight, and for telling us what is right. ¹⁷ This is how God provides a thorough preparation for those who work for him to accomplish all that's good.

4

¹ This is what I instruct you to do before God and Christ Jesus who will judge the living and the dead when he comes to establish his kingdom. ² Speak God's word whether it is convenient or not, tell people where they're going wrong, warn them, encourage them. Do this with a great deal of patient teaching.

³ For the time is coming when people won't bother to listen to true teaching. Instead they will be curious to listen to something different,* and will surround themselves with teachers who'll tell them what they

* **3:8** Or "whose trust in God is counterfeit." * **4:3** Literally, "having itching ears."

want to hear. ⁴ They will stop listening to the truth and wander off following myths. ⁵ You need to keep your wits about you at all times. Put up with troubles, do the work of sharing the good news, fulfill your ministry.

⁶ For I'm about to be sacrificed—the time of my death is approaching. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept my trust in God. ⁸ Now there's a prize reserved for me—the crown for a life lived according to what is good and right. The Lord, (who is the judge that always does what's right), will give that to me on that Day.[†] And not just to me, but to everyone who longs for his coming.

⁹ Please try to come to me as soon as you can. ¹⁰ Demas has abandoned me because he loves the things of this world more, and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹ Only Luke is here with me. Bring Mark with you, because he can help me with my work. ¹² I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. ¹³ When you come please bring the cloak I left behind with Carpus in Troas—and the books, especially the parchments. ¹⁴ Alexander the coppersmith caused me a lot of trouble—may God judge him for what he did. ¹⁵ You watch out for him too, because he was very much against what we were saying.

¹⁶ When it came to my first defense,[‡] no-one stood up for me—everyone abandoned me. May they not be blamed for this. ¹⁷ But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength so that I could declare the whole of the message so that all the foreigners[§] could hear it. I was rescued out of the lion's mouth! ¹⁸ The Lord will rescue me from all the evil things done against me, and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. His is the glory forever and ever. Amen. ¹⁹ My greetings to Prisca^{*} and Aquila, and to Onesiphorus's family. ²⁰ Erastus stayed on in Corinth. I left Trophimus behind in Miletus because he was sick. ²¹ Please try to come before winter. Eubulus sends his best wishes—and Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brothers and sisters too. ²² The Lord be with you.[†] May his grace be with you all.

[†] 4:8 See note on 1:12. [‡] 4:16 Referring to a judicial trial. [§] 4:17 Literally, "Gentiles."

^{*} 4:19 Called Priscilla in Acts 18:2. [†] 4:22 Literally, "be with your spirit."

Titus

¹ This letter comes from Paul, servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. I'm sent to build up the trust of God's chosen people and to share the knowledge of the truth that leads to lives lived for God. ² This gives them the hope of eternal life that God (who cannot lie) promised ages ago, ³ but which at the proper time he revealed through his word in the message which I was entrusted to give, following the command of God our Savior. ⁴ This letter is sent to Titus, my true son through the trust in God we share in common. May you have grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

⁵ The reason I left you in Crete was for you to organize what was still needed and to appoint elders in every town, as I told you. ⁶ An elder must have a good reputation, the husband of one wife, and have children who believe and who are not accused of being wild or disobedient. ⁷ As a leader for God, a head elder must have a good reputation and not be arrogant. He should not have a quick temper nor get drunk; he shouldn't be violent or greedy for money. ⁸ He should be hospitable, someone who loves what's good and does what's right. He should be living a life for God, self-controlled, ⁹ and must be devoted to the trustworthy message as it's taught. In this way he can encourage others through correct teaching, and be able to convince those who disagree.

¹⁰ For there are many rebels around who talk a lot of deceptive nonsense, especially from the circumcision group.* ¹¹ Their talking must stop, these people who throw whole families into turmoil, teaching things that aren't right for the sake of making money. ¹² As someone of their own people,† a prophet, has stated, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts who are lazy, greedy people." ¹³ This is a true statement! Consequently give them a good telling-off so that they can have a healthy trust in God, ¹⁴ not paying attention to Jewish myths and human commandments from those who deviate from the truth. ¹⁵ To those who have clean minds everything is clean, but to those who are corrupt and refuse to trust in God, nothing is clean—both their minds and their consciences are corrupt. ¹⁶ They claim to know God, but they prove this is false by what they do. They are detestable and disobedient, worthless for doing anything good.

2

¹ You, however, must teach what is consistent with healthy beliefs. ² Older men shouldn't drink; they should be respectable and sensible,* with a healthy trust in God, loving and patient. ³ Similarly older women ought to behave in a way that shows they live their lives for God. They shouldn't destroy people's reputations by what they say,

* **1:10** Referring to those Jewish believers who taught that circumcision was necessary for salvation. † **1:12** Not necessarily of the circumcision faction or any other dissident group, but someone from Crete. * **2:2** "Sensible," or "thoughtful," "self-controlled," "decent." Also in 2:5, 2:6, and 2:12.

and they shouldn't be addicted to wine. ⁴ They should be teachers of what's good, teaching the young wives to love their husbands and their children. ⁵ They are to be sensible and pure, working in their homes, doing good and listening to what their husbands tell them. In this way the word of God will not be spoken about badly. ⁶ Likewise tell the young men to be sensible. ⁷ You should set an example of doing good in all areas of life: show integrity and seriousness in what you teach, ⁸ sharing healthy beliefs that can't be criticized. In this way those who are opposed will be ashamed of themselves and won't have anything bad to say about us. ⁹ Tell servants to always obey their masters. They should try to please them and not talk back to them. ¹⁰ They shouldn't steal things for themselves, but show they are completely trustworthy so that they may rightly represent the truth about God our Savior in every way.

¹¹ For God's grace has been revealed, bringing salvation to everyone.

¹² It teaches us to reject a godless way of life with the desires of this world. Instead we should live thoughtful, self-controlled lives that are right before God in the present world ¹³ as we look for the wonderful hope of the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ He gave himself for us, so that he could set us free from all our wickedness, and to make us clean for him—a people who belong to him, keen to do good.

¹⁵ This is what you should be teaching. You have the authority to encourage and to correct as necessary. Don't let anyone look down on you.

3

¹ Remind them to follow what rulers tell them to do, and to obey authorities. They should always be ready to do what is good. ² They should not speak badly about anyone, and they should not be argumentative. Tell them to show gentleness and kindness to everyone. ³ For there was a time when we too were foolish and disobedient. We were deceived and slaves to various desires and pleasures. We lived wicked lives full of jealousy, hateful people hating one another.

⁴ But when the goodness and love of God our Savior was revealed, he saved us, ⁵ not because of anything good that we've done, but because of his mercy. He did this through the cleansing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ which he poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior. ⁷ Now that we are set right by his grace we have become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

⁸ You can trust what I'm saying, and I want you to emphasize these instructions so that those who trust in God will think seriously about them and continue to do good. They are excellent and helpful for everyone. ⁹ Avoid pointless discussions, and obsessions about ancestry. Don't get into arguments, and avoid fights over the Jewish laws—they're useless and don't help at all. ¹⁰ Warn someone who is divisive once, and then again—after that don't pay them any attention, ¹¹ realizing that they're perverse and sinful and have condemned themselves.

¹² As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, try and come to me at Nicopolis because I'm planning to spend the winter there. ¹³ Do all you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that they have everything they need. ¹⁴ May our people learn the habit of doing good in providing for the daily needs of others. They need to be productive! ¹⁵ Everyone here with me sends their greetings. Give our best wishes to those who love us, those who trust in God. May grace be with you all.

Philemon

¹ This letter is sent from Paul, prisoner of Jesus Christ, and from our brother Timothy, to Philemon, our good friend and co-worker; ² to our sister Apphia, to Archippus who fights alongside us, and to your house church. ³ May you have grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ I always thank my God for you, remembering you in my prayers, ⁵ because I hear of your trust in the Lord Jesus and your love for all believers. ⁶ I pray that you will put the generous nature of your trust in God into action as you recognize all the good things we share in Christ. ⁷ Your love, my dear brother, has brought me much happiness and encouragement. You have really inspired those of us who believe!

⁸ That's why even though I'm brave enough in Christ to order you to do your duty, ⁹ I would rather ask you this favor out of love. Old Paul, now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus, ¹⁰ is appealing to you on behalf of Onesimus who became my adopted son during my imprisonment. ¹¹ In the past he was of no use to you, but now he's useful to both you and me! ¹² I send him to you with my fondest wishes.* ¹³ I'd have preferred to keep him here with me so that he could have helped me as you would have done while I am in chains for telling the good news. ¹⁴ But I decided not do anything without your permission. I didn't want you to be forced to do good, but to do so willingly. ¹⁵ Maybe you lost him for a while so that you could have him back forever! ¹⁶ He's not a servant anymore, because he's more than a servant. He's a specially-loved brother, particularly to me, and even more to you, both as a man and as a fellow-believer in the Lord.†

¹⁷ So if you consider me as a colleague working together with you for the Lord,‡ welcome him as if you were welcoming me. ¹⁸ If he has done you any wrong, or owes you anything, charge it to my account. ¹⁹ I Paul am signing this with my own hand: I will repay you. Of course I won't mention what you owe me, including your very self! ²⁰ Yes, brother, I'm expecting this favor from you in the Lord; please make me happy in Christ.

²¹ I'm writing about this to you because I'm convinced you'll do as I ask—in fact I know you'll do even more than I've asked! ²² In the meantime please have a room ready for me, for I hope to be able to return to see you soon in answer to your prayers. ²³ Epaphras who is here in prison with me sends his greetings, ²⁴ as do my co-workers Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke. ²⁵ May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you.

* **1:12** Literally, "heartfelt affections." † **1:16** Literally, "in the flesh and in the Lord."

‡ **1:17** "A colleague working together with you for the Lord." The word in Greek is "partner," but this needs explaining because of modern usage.

Hebrews

¹ God, who in the past spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at various times and in many ways, ² has in these last days spoken to us through his Son. God appointed the Son heir of everything, and made the universe through him. ³ The Son is the radiant glory of God, and the visible expression of his true character. He sustains everything by his powerful command. When he had provided cleansing for sin he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. ⁴ He was placed much higher than the angels since he received a greater name than them. ⁵ God never said to any angel, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father," or "I will be a Father to him, and he will be a Son to me."*

⁶ Also, when he brought his firstborn[†] Son into the world, he said, "Let all God's angels worship him."[‡] ⁷ Regarding the angels, he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire,"[§] ⁸ but about the Son he says, "Your throne, God, lasts forever and ever, and justice is the ruling scepter of your kingdom. ⁹ You love what is right, and hate what is lawless. That is why God, your God, has placed you above everyone else by anointing* you with the oil of joy."[†]

¹⁰ "You, Lord, laid the foundations of the earth in the beginning. The heavens are the product of your hands. ¹¹ They will come to an end, but you will continue. They will wear out like clothes do, ¹² and you will roll them up like a cloak. Like clothes, they will be changed, but you never change, and your life never ends."[‡] ¹³ But he never said to any angel, "Sit at my right hand until I place your enemies in subjection under your feet."[§] ¹⁴ What are the angels? They are beings that serve, sent out to help those who will receive salvation.

2

¹ So we should pay even closer attention to what we've learned so we don't drift away from it. ² If the message the angels brought was trustworthy, and every sin and disobedient act brings its own consequence,* ³ how will we escape if we don't pay attention to this great salvation that the Lord first announced, and then we had confirmed to us by those who heard him. ⁴ God also testified through

* **1:5** Hebrews is full of Old Testament quotations and allusions, some of which are not quoted exactly or are given in summary form. It is therefore difficult at times to identify the exact source or sources. Old Testament quotes that are relatively clear will be identified here. The quotations referenced in this verse appear to be: Psalms 2:7, 2 Samuel 7:14, and 1 Chronicles 17:13. † **1:6** "Firstborn": this term is not to be taken that there was a time when Jesus did not exist; it is used to identify rank rather than chronology. ‡ **1:6** Quoting Deuteronomy 32:43. § **1:7** Quoting Psalms 104:4. * **1:9** The ancient practice of pouring oil over the head of a person was to indicate they were being chosen for a specific position, a high honor. † **1:9** Quoting Psalms 45:6-7. ‡ **1:12** Literally, "your years never fail." The quotation is from Psalms 102:25-27. § **1:13** Quoting Psalms 110:1. * **2:2** Literally, "receives its reward."

signs and miracles, by acts that show his power, and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, given as he chose.

⁵ It's not angels who will be in charge of the world to come that we're talking about. ⁶ But as it's been said, "What are human beings that you should worry about them? What is a son of man[†] that you should care about him?" ⁷ You set him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor, and placed him over all your creation.[‡] ⁸ You gave him authority over everything."[§] Nothing was left out when God gave him authority over everything. However, we see that not everything is subject to his authority yet.

⁹ But we see Jesus, placed a little lower than the angels, through the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor. Through God's grace Jesus experienced death for everyone.

¹⁰ It was appropriate that God, who creates and maintains everything, should bring many of his children to glory, and to completely prepare through suffering the one who leads them to salvation. ¹¹ For both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy belong to the same family.* That's why he doesn't hesitate to call them "brothers," ¹² saying "I will announce your name to my brothers; I will praise you among your people when they meet together."[†] ¹³ Also: "I will place my trust in him," and "Here I am, together with the children God has given to me."[‡]

¹⁴ Because the children share flesh and blood in common, he shared in this in the same way so that through death he could destroy the one that had the power of death—the devil—¹⁵ and free everyone who through fear of death were enslaved all their lives.

¹⁶ Of course it's not angels he's concerned about; he's concerned to help the children of Abraham. ¹⁷ That's why it was necessary for him to become like his brothers in everything, so that he could become a merciful and trustworthy high priest in the things of God, to forgive his people's sins. ¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.

3

¹ So, my brothers and sisters who live for God and who share in this heavenly calling, we need to think carefully about Jesus—the one we say is sent by God,* and is the High Priest. ² He was faithful to God in the work he was chosen to do, just like Moses was faithful to

[†] **2:6** "Son of man": in normal use means just a human being; however Jesus applied this generic term to himself. [‡] **2:7** Instead of just referring to humanity, this can also refer to Jesus: "You made him less than the angels for a while, and then you crowned him with glory and honor." The whole passage can be seen in this dual way, referring to Jesus as the son of man, both representative and Savior of humanity. [§] **2:8** Again this can apply to humanity, God giving authority over the creatures as mentioned in Genesis 1, or it can apply to the authority of Jesus as Lord. * **2:11** Literally, "all from one." [†] **2:12** "Meet together": the word is "ecclesia" which eventually came to mean "church." The quotation is from Psalms 22:22. [‡] **2:13** Quoting Isaiah 8:17-18. * **3:1** Literally, "apostle." This word taken from the Greek meant one who is sent.

God in God's house.† 3 But Jesus deserves much greater glory than Moses, in the same way that the builder of a house deserves more credit than the house. 4 Every house has its builder; God is the builder of everything. 5 As a servant, Moses was faithful in God's house. He provided evidence of what would be announced later. 6 But Christ is a son, in charge of God's house. And we are God's house as long as we hold on with confidence to the hope we boast we believe in.

7 This is why the Holy Spirit says, "If you hear what God is saying to you today, 8 don't have a hard-hearted attitude‡ like the time you rebelled against him, when you tested him in the wilderness. 9 Your fathers put me through it, trying my patience, and they saw the evidence I gave them for forty years.

10 That generation made me angry§ and so I said, 'They're always mistaken in what they think, and they don't know me or what I'm doing.' 11 So in my frustration I vowed, 'They shall not enter my rest.' **

12 Brothers and sisters, make sure that none of you has an evil mindset that's given up trusting in the God of life. 13 Encourage each other every day while you still have "today," so that none of you will be deceived by sin and become hard-hearted. 14 For we are partners with Christ as long as we hold on to our confidence in God from beginning to end.

15 As Scripture says, "If you hear what God is saying to you today, don't have a hard-hearted attitude like the time you rebelled against him."† 16 Who was it that rebelled against God, even though they heard what he said? Wasn't it all those who were led out of Egypt by Moses? 17 Who was God upset with for forty years? Wasn't it those who sinned, those who were buried in the desert? 18 Who was God speaking of when he vowed they should not enter into his rest? Wasn't it those who disobeyed him? 19 So we see that they were not able to enter because they didn't trust him.

4

1 Therefore let's take care to make sure that even though God has given us his promise of entering his rest, none of you miss out! 2 For we've heard the good news just like they did, but it didn't help them because they didn't accept and trust in what they heard. 3 However, those of us who trust in God *have* entered into that rest God mentioned when he said, "In my frustration I vowed, 'They shall not enter my rest.' **" (This is so even though God's plans were already complete

† 3:2 The word "house" here means more than the building; it refers to the members of the house, the household, the family. Here and in verse 5 Moses' faithfulness as a servant in God's house is referencing Numbers 12:7. ‡ 3:8 "Hard-hearted attitude," or stubborn/obstinate.

§ 3:10 As always, God uses human terms. We should not understand God as being angry as we are, especially when it comes to "losing our temper" and acting in unloving or irrational ways. The same comment applies in 3:11. * 3:11 "Rest." This concept is developed more in chapter 4 and is related to the Sabbath, the Promised Land, and God's invitation to come to him. While it is not the easiest of phrases, "entering rest" is perhaps the best translation since it retains the basis which is to be developed later, and includes all the various allusions.

The quotation is from Psalms 95:7-11. † 3:15 Quoting Psalms 95:7-8. * 4:3 Quoting Psalms 95:11.

when he created the world.) ⁴ Regarding the seventh day there's a place in Scripture that says, "God rested on the seventh day from all his work."[†] ⁵ And as the previous passage stated, "They shall not enter my rest."

⁶ God's rest is still there for some to enter, even though those who previously heard the good news failed to enter because of disobedience. ⁷ So God again sets a day—today—saying a long time later through David as he did before, "If you hear what God is saying to you today, don't have a hard-hearted attitude."[‡] ⁸ For if Joshua had been able to give them rest, God wouldn't have spoken later about another day. ⁹ So a Sabbath rest remains for God's people. ¹⁰ For whoever enters God's rest also rests from what he's doing, just as God did.

¹¹ As a result we should try hard to enter that rest so nobody falls through following the same bad example of disobedience. ¹² For God's word is alive and effective, sharper than any twin-edged sword, so penetrating it separates life and breath,[§] bone joints and their marrow, judging the thoughts and intentions of the mind. ¹³ No living being is hidden from his sight; everything is exposed and visible to the one we're accountable to.

¹⁴ Since we have such a great high priest who has ascended to heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us make sure we hold on to what we say we believe. ¹⁵ For the high priest we have isn't one who doesn't sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who was tempted in all the ways we are, but did not sin. ¹⁶ So we should go confidently to God on his throne of grace so we can receive mercy, and discover grace to help us when we really need it.

5

¹ Every high priest is chosen from the people and is appointed to work for the people as they relate to God. He presents to God both their gifts and sacrifices for their sins. ² The high priest understands how ignorant and deluded people feel because he also experiences the same kind of human weaknesses. ³ As a result he has to offer sacrifices for his sins as well as for those of the people. ⁴ No one can take the position of high priest for himself; he must be chosen by God, just like Aaron was. ⁵ In just the same way Christ did not honor himself by becoming high priest. It was God who said to him, "You are my Son. Today I have become your Father."^{*} ⁶ In another verse, God says, "You are a priest forever, following the order of Melchizedek."[†] ⁷ Jesus, while he was here in human form, prayed and appealed with loud cries and tears to God, the one who was able to save him from death. Jesus was heard because of his respect for God. ⁸ Even though he was God's Son, Jesus

[†] **4:4** Quoting Psalms 95:7. [‡] **4:7** Quoting Psalms 95:7. [§] **4:12** Greek "psyche" and "pneuma," sometimes translated "soul" and "spirit," though it is hard to understand the meaning since in common thought there is no difference between "soul" and "spirit." The translation of "life" and "breath" is employed since it is considered that this better expresses the original thought. ^{*} **5:5** Quoting Psalms 2:7 [†] **5:6** Quoting Psalms 110:4

learned through suffering what obedience really means.[‡] ⁹ When his experience was complete,[§] he became the source of eternal salvation to everyone who does what he says,¹⁰ having been designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

¹¹ We have much to say about Jesus, and it's hard to explain because you don't seem able to understand! ¹² By now you should have had enough time to become teachers, but you need someone to teach you the fundamentals, the first principles of God's word. It's like you need to go back to baby milk instead of solid food! ¹³ Those who drink baby milk don't have the experience of living the right way—they're just babies. ¹⁴ Solid food is for grown-ups—those who by always using their brains have learned to tell the difference between good and evil.

6

¹ So let's not get stuck on the basic teachings about Christ, but let's progress to a more mature understanding. We don't need to go over again the ideas of repenting from what we used to do, about trusting in God—² or teachings about baptism, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. ³ So let's get on with it, as God gives us the opportunity!

⁴ It's impossible for those who once understood and experienced God's heavenly gift—who shared in receiving the Holy Spirit,⁵ who had known God's good word and the power of the coming age—⁶ and then completely abandon God, for them to be brought back to repentance once more. They themselves have crucified the Son of God all over again and publicly humiliated him. ⁷ Land that has been watered by rain, and produces crops for those who farm it, has God's blessing. ⁸ But land that only produces weeds and thorns is worthless, and is about to be condemned. In the end all that can be done is to burn it.

⁹ But dear friends, we believe better of you and your salvation, even if we talk like this! ¹⁰ God wouldn't be so unjust as to forget what you've done and the love you've shown for him by the care you've shown for fellow-believers—something you're still doing. ¹¹ We want each of you to show the same kind of commitment, confident in God's hope until it's fulfilled. ¹² Don't be spiritually lazy, but follow the example of those who through trusting in God and patience inherit what God has promised. ¹³ When God gave his promise to Abraham he could swear by no one greater so he took an oath on himself, ¹⁴ saying, "I will definitely bless you, and multiply your descendants."^{*} ¹⁵ And so, after patiently waiting, Abraham received the promise.

[‡] **5:8** The usual translation that Jesus "learned obedience through suffering" could suggest that Jesus was not originally obedient, or that suffering was necessary in order for him to learn—both rather strange ideas to place on Jesus, the pre-existing Son of God. The thought here appears to be that even though Jesus was God's Son, his earthly experience demonstrated the cost and consequences of obedience. In some ways this parallels Jesus request to have the cup of suffering taken away from him, but then he surrenders his will in obedience to his Father. See Matthew 26:39. **§ 5:9** Avoiding the term "having been made perfect," which in the minds of some might suggest he wasn't perfect in the first place. ^{*} **6:14** Quoting Genesis 22:17.

¹⁶ People swear on things that are greater than they are, and when they have some dispute the oath is taken as the final word on the matter. ¹⁷ That's why God wanted to demonstrate more clearly to those who would inherit the promise that he would never ever change his mind. ¹⁸ So by these two actions[†] that can't be changed, and since it's impossible for God to lie, we can have total confidence, having run for safety to take hold of the hope God presented to us. ¹⁹ This hope is our spiritual anchor—it's both certain and reliable, and it takes us past the curtain to the presence of God. ²⁰ That's where Jesus went in on our behalf, because he had become a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

7

¹ Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of the Most High God. He met Abraham who was returning from defeating the kings and blessed him.* ² Abraham gave him a tithe of all that he had won. Melchizedek's name means "king of right" while king of Salem means "king of peace." ³ We don't have any information about his father or his mother or his family tree. We don't know when he was born or when he died. Like the Son of God he continues as a priest forever.

⁴ Think how great this man was for Abraham the patriarch to give him a tithe of what was won in battle. ⁵ Yes, the sons of Levi who are priests were commanded by the law to receive a tithe from the people, their brothers and sisters, who are descended from Abraham. ⁶ But Melchizedek who doesn't share their ancestry received tithes from Abraham, and blessed the one who had God's promises. ⁷ There's no argument that the lesser person is blessed by the one who is greater. ⁸ In the one case tithes are received by men who die, but in the other by one who is said to be living. ⁹ So you could say that Levi, the one who receives tithes, has paid tithes through being a descendant of Abraham, ¹⁰ for he was yet to be born from his father[†] when Melchizedek met Abraham.

¹¹ Now if perfection could have been achieved through the priesthood of Levi (for that's how the law was received), what was the need for another priest to come following the order of Melchizedek, and not following the order of Aaron? ¹² If the priesthood is changed, then the law needs to be changed too. ¹³ The one we're talking about comes from a different tribe, a tribe that has never provided priests to serve at the altar. ¹⁴ It's clear that our Lord is a descendant of Judah, and Moses said nothing about priests coming from this tribe. ¹⁵ What makes it even clearer is when another priest appears who is similar to Melchizedek, ¹⁶ and who didn't become a priest by virtue of his human ancestry but by the power of a life that cannot be ended. ¹⁷ That's why it says, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."[‡]

¹⁸ So the previous rule has been set aside because it was powerless and didn't work, ¹⁹ (for the law didn't make anything perfect). But now it's been replaced by a better hope by which we can come close to

[†] **6:18** That is, the promise and the oath. ^{*} **7:1** See Genesis 14:18. [†] **7:10** Literally, "in his father's loins." [‡] **7:17** Quoting Psalms 110:4.

God. ²⁰ This[§] was not without an oath, even though those who become priests do so without an oath. ²¹ But he became a priest with an oath because God told him, “The Lord has taken a solemn vow and will not change his mind: You are a priest forever.”* ²² This is how Jesus became the guarantee of an agreed relationship with God[†] that is so much better.

²³ There have been many priests because death prevented them from being able to continue; ²⁴ but since Jesus lives forever, his priesthood is permanent. ²⁵ As a result he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, living always to plead their case on their behalf.

²⁶ He is exactly the high priest we need: holy and without fault, pure and separate from sinners, and given a place in the highest heavens.

²⁷ Unlike those human high priests, he doesn't need to offer a daily sacrifice for his sins and then the sins of the people. He did this once, and for everyone, when he offered himself. ²⁸ The law appoints imperfect men as high priests, but God gave his solemn vow after the law, and appointed his Son, perfect forever.

8

¹ The main point of what we're saying is this: We have just such a high priest who is seated at the right hand of God, who sits in majesty on his throne in heaven. ² He serves in the sanctuary, the true Tabernacle that was set up by the Lord and not by human beings. ³ Since it's the responsibility of every high priest to offer gifts and sacrifices, this high priest must also have something to offer.

⁴ Now if he was here on earth, he wouldn't be a priest at all, because there are already priests to present the offerings that the law requires. ⁵ The place they serve is a copy, a mere shadow of what is in heaven. That's what God told Moses when he was going to set up the Tabernacle: “Be careful to make everything according to the blueprint you were shown on the mountain.”*

⁶ But Jesus has been given a far better ministry just as he is the one who mediates a far better agreed relationship between us and God, which is based on much better promises. ⁷ If that first agreement had been perfect, then a second wouldn't have been necessary. ⁸ Pointing out their failings,[†] God told his people, “Pay attention, says the Lord,

§ 7:20 Referring to the new way of approaching God. * **7:21** Quoting Psalms 110:4.

† 7:22 “An agreed relationship with God.” This translates a single word in Greek that has traditionally been translated as “covenant.” However, the word “covenant” does not normally occur in everyday English and so has become a “theological” word. Much has been written about this concept and the terms used, and “covenant” has often been retained as there does not seem to be an effective way of explaining what is meant here. The covenant concept is extensively developed in chapters 8 and 9. Problems exist with alternative words. The word “contract” can mean the result of bargaining, which is not the case here. Similarly “treaty” or “agreement” when seen in human terms may refer to mutual negotiations. But here the word refers to something that is God's initiative, and certainly is not between equals. Perhaps a better concept is “a promise that is agreed to with corresponding obligations,” but such wording would be even more cumbersome. * **8:5** Quoting Exodus 25:40. **† 8:8** Making it clear that the failure of the “first covenant” was not due to a faulty agreement but that God's people did not live up to their responsibilities under the agreement.

because the days are coming when I will make a new agreement with the people of Israel and Judah. ⁹ This will not be like the agreement I made with their forefathers when I led them by the hand out of the land of Egypt. For they didn't keep their part of the agreed relationship, so I gave up on them, says the Lord.

¹⁰ The relationship I promise to the house of Israel is this: After that time, says the Lord, I will place my laws inside them, and write them in their minds. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ¹¹ No one will need to teach their neighbor, and no one will need to teach anyone in their family, telling them, 'You ought to know the Lord.' For everyone will know me, from the smallest to the greatest. ¹² I will be merciful when they do wrong, and I will forget about their sins."[‡]

¹³ By saying, "A new agreed relationship," he makes the first agreement out-of-date. The one that's old and worn out has almost disappeared.

9

¹ The former system had instructions as to how to worship, and an earthly sanctuary. ² The first room in the Tabernacle housed the candlestick, the table, and the sacred bread. This was called the Holy Place. ³ Past the second veil in the Tabernacle was the room called the Most Holy Place. ⁴ This contained the golden altar of incense, the gold-covered "agreement chest."^{*} Inside this were the golden pot containing manna, Aaron's rod that had produced buds, and the stone inscriptions of the agreement.[†] ⁵ Above this were the glorious angel cherubim covering the place of reconciliation. We can't discuss all of this in detail now.

⁶ Once all of this had been set up, the priests would go in regularly to the first room of the Tabernacle to perform their duties. ⁷ But only the high priest went into the second room, and only once a year. Even then he had to make a sacrifice involving blood,[‡] which he offered for himself and for the people's sins of ignorance.

⁸ By this the Holy Spirit indicated that the way into the true Most Holy Place hadn't been revealed while the first Tabernacle still existed.[§] ⁹ This is an illustration for us in the present, showing us that the gifts and sacrifices that are offered can't make the worshiper's conscience clear. ¹⁰ They're just religious regulations—about food and drink, and various ceremonies involving washing—which were put in place until the time of God's new way of relating to him.

[‡] **8:12** Quoting Jeremiah 31:31-34. ^{*} **9:4** Traditionally translated "ark of the covenant," a wooden box symbolizing the place of meeting, reconciliation, and agreement between God and his people. [†] **9:4** Usually believed to be the stone inscriptions of the ten commandments.

[‡] **9:7** Blood is a frequent theme in the latter part of Hebrews. It is a shorthand symbol for life, and the shed blood of death, and while the original context of the sacrificial system is certainly literal, its use in Hebrews when applied to Christ is primarily as a symbol of what he accomplished by his life, death, and resurrection. **§ 9:8** The meaning of this statement is the subject of much debate. It could be generally concluded that in the light of the new revelation of God through Jesus, which is the focus of the New Testament and particularly the Book of Hebrews, that this passage is referring to Jesus as the full revelation of God, providing "access" to him, and that this had not happened under the old system (reference Jesus' statement in John 14:6).

¹¹ Christ has come as a high priest of all the good experiences we now have. He went into the greater, more complete Tabernacle that wasn't made by human hands—not part of this created world. ¹² He didn't enter through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood. He entered once, for all time, into the Most Holy Place, setting us free forever.

¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a cow sprinkled on those who are ritually unclean make the body ceremonially clean, ¹⁴ how much more does the blood of Christ—who offered himself in his sinless life to God through the eternal Spirit—clean your consciences from your past sinful lives so you can serve the living God?

¹⁵ This is why he is the mediator of a new agreed relationship. Since a death has occurred to set them free from the sins committed under the first agreed relationship, now those who are called can receive the promise of an eternal inheritance. ¹⁶ For a will to be implemented, the person who made it must be dead. ¹⁷ A will is only valid when there's been a death—and is never applied while the person who made it is still alive. ¹⁸ That's why the first agreement was established with blood.

¹⁹ After Moses had given all the commandments of the law to everyone, he took the blood of calves and goats, and together with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, sprinkled the book* itself and all the people. ²⁰ He said to them, "This is the blood of the agreed relationship that God has told you he wants with you."† ²¹ Moses sprinkled the blood in the same way on the Tabernacle and everything used in worship. ²² According to ceremonial law, almost everything is made clean with blood, and without shedding blood nothing is made ritually free from the stain of sin. ²³ So if the copies of what is in heaven needed to be cleansed in this way, the things in heaven needed cleansing by better sacrifices.

²⁴ For Christ hasn't entered a Most Holy Place constructed by human beings that is only a pattern of the original. He has entered heaven itself, and now appears on our behalf, speaking for us in God's presence. ²⁵ This was not to repeatedly offer himself, like a high priest has to enter the Most Holy Place year after year, offering blood that is not his own. ²⁶ Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. No: just this one time at the end of the present age he came to remove sin by sacrificing himself. ²⁷ Just as human beings die only once, and then are judged, ²⁸ so too for Christ—having been sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people, he will come again, not to deal with sin, but to save those who wait for him.

10

¹ The law is just a shadow of the good that was to come, and not the actual reality. So it can never through the repeated sacrifices offered year after year make right those who come to worship God. ² Otherwise wouldn't the sacrifices have stopped being offered? If the worshipers had been made clean once and for all, they wouldn't have

* **9:19** The book of the law. † **9:20** Quoting Exodus 24:8.

had guilty consciences any longer. ³ But in fact those sacrifices remind people of sins year after year, ⁴ because it's impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to remove sins.

⁵ That's why when Christ* came into the world he said, "You didn't want sacrifices or offerings, but you did prepare a body for me. ⁶ Burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin gave you no pleasure. ⁷ Then I said, 'God, see I've come to do what you want me to do, just as it says about me in the book.'"[†] ⁸ As mentioned above, "You didn't want sacrifices or offerings, and burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin gave you no pleasure," (even though they are offered in accordance with the law's requirements). ⁹ Then he said, "See, I've come to do what you want." He gets rid of the first agreement so he can set up the second, ¹⁰ through which we all are made holy through Jesus Christ offering his body once and for all time.

¹¹ Every priest officiates in the services day after day, again and again offering the same sacrifices that can never remove sins. ¹² But this Priest, after he had offered for sins a single sacrifice that lasts forever, sat down at God's right hand. ¹³ Now he waits until all his enemies are conquered, becoming like a footstool for him. ¹⁴ For by a single sacrifice he has set right forever those who are being made holy. ¹⁵ As the Holy Spirit also tells us, for having said, ¹⁶ "This is the agreement that I will make with them later on, says the Lord. I will put my laws inside them, and I will write them in their minds." Then he adds, ¹⁷ "I won't remember their sins and lawlessness anymore."[‡] ¹⁸ Once free from such things, sin offerings are no longer needed.

¹⁹ Now we have the confidence, brothers and sisters, to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus. ²⁰ Through his life and death,§ he opened up a brand-new, living way through the veil to God. ²¹ Since we have such a great priest placed in charge over the house of God, ²² let us come close to God with sincere minds, totally trusting in him. Our minds have been sprinkled to purify them from our evil way of thinking, and our bodies have been washed clean by pure water. ²³ So let us hold onto the hope we're telling others about, never hesitating, for God who promised is trustworthy. ²⁴ Let's think about how we can motivate one another to love and to do what is good. ²⁵ We should not give up meeting together, as some have done. In fact we should be encouraging one another, especially as you see the End* approaching.

²⁶ For if we deliberately go on sinning after we've understood the truth, there's no longer any sacrifice for sins. ²⁷ All that's left is fear, expecting the impending judgment and the terrible fire that destroys those who are hostile to God. ²⁸ Someone who rejects the law of Moses is put to death without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much worse do you think someone will deserve their punishment if they have trampled underfoot the Son of God, if they have disregarded the blood that sealed the agreement and makes us holy, treating it as ordinary and trivial, and have abused the Spirit

* **10:5** The original simply says "he." Christ is inferred from 9:24, 9:28. † **10:7** Actually "the heading of a scroll," meaning the Scriptures. The quotation is from Psalms 40:6-8. ‡ **10:17** Quoting Jeremiah 31:33-34. § **10:20** "His life and death": Literally, "his body." * **10:25** Literally, "the Day."

of grace? ³⁰ We know God, and he said, "I will make sure that justice is done; I will give people what they deserve." He also said, "The Lord will judge his people."[†] ³¹ It's terrifying to come under the power of the living God.

³² Just remember the past when, after you understood the truth,[‡] you experienced a great deal of suffering. ³³ Sometimes you were made a spectacle of, being insulted and attacked; at other times you stood in solidarity with those who were suffering. ³⁴ You showed your sympathy for those in prison, and took it cheerfully when your possessions were confiscated, knowing that you have something better coming that will truly last.

³⁵ So don't lose your confidence in God—it will be richly rewarded. ³⁶ You need to be patient so that having done what God wants, you'll receive what he has promised. ³⁷ "In just a little while he will come, as he said—he won't delay. ³⁸ Those who do what is right will live by trusting in God, and if they draw back from their commitment, I won't be pleased with them."[§] ³⁹ But we're not the kind of people who draw back and end up being lost. We are those who trust in God to save us.

11

¹ Now our trust in God is the guarantee of what we hope for, the evidence of what we can't see. ² People who lived long ago trusted God and this is what gained them God's approval. ³ Through our trust in God we understand that the whole universe was created by God's command, that what can be seen was made out of what cannot be seen.

⁴ By trusting him Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain, and as a result God identified him as someone who lived right. God showed this by accepting his offering. Even though Abel has been dead for a long time, he still speaks to us through what he did. ⁵ By trusting God Enoch was taken to heaven so he didn't experience death. He couldn't be found on earth because God took him to heaven.* Before this happened he was known as someone God was pleased with.

⁶ You can't expect God to be pleased with you if you don't trust him! Anyone who comes to God must believe that God exists, and that he rewards those who are searching for him.

⁷ Noah trusted God, and was warned by him about things that had never happened before. Because Noah paid serious attention to what God said, he constructed an ark to save his family. By trusting God, Noah showed that the world was wrong, and received the reward of being set right by God.

⁸ Through trusting God Abraham obeyed when God called him to go to the land God was going to give him. He left, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ Trusting in God he lived in the promised land—but as a foreigner, living in tents, together with Isaac and Jacob who shared with him in inheriting the same promise. ¹⁰ For Abraham was looking

[†] **10:30** Quoting Deuteronomy 32:35-36; Psalms 135:14 [‡] **10:32** Literally, "were enlightened." [§] **10:38** This is a rather free reference to Isaiah 26:20 and Habakkuk 2:3-4.

Clearly the one promising to return is viewed in this context as Jesus. * **11:5** See Genesis 5:24.

forward to a city built on foundations that last, with God as its builder and maker.

¹¹ By her trust in God even Sarah[†] herself was given the ability to conceive a child though she was too old, because she trusted God who had made the promise. ¹² That is why the descendants of Abraham, (who was as good as dead!), became as numerous as the stars of heaven, as countless as the sand of the sea-shore.

¹³ They all died still trusting in God. Though they didn't receive the things God promised, they were still looking for them as it were from a distance and welcomed them, acknowledging that on this earth they were foreigners, people just passing through.

¹⁴ People who say such things make it clear that they're looking for a country of their own. ¹⁵ For if they cared about the country they'd left behind, they could have returned. ¹⁶ But they're looking for a better country instead, a heavenly country. That is why God isn't disappointed with them, and is happy to be called their God, for he has built a city for them.

¹⁷ Abraham trusted God when he was tested and offered Isaac to God. Abraham, who had accepted God's promises, was still ready to offer to God his only son,[‡] ¹⁸ even though he'd been told, "It's through Isaac that your descendants will be counted."[§] ¹⁹ Abraham had thought it through and decided that God could bring Isaac back to life from the dead. In a sense that's what did happen—Abraham received Isaac back from the dead.

²⁰ Trusting in God, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to what the future would bring. ²¹ Trusting in God, Jacob as he was dying blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped God, leaning on his staff. ²² Trusting in God, Joseph too, when his own death approached, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites, and gave instructions about what to do with his bones. ²³ Trusting in God, Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born. They recognized he was a special child. They weren't afraid to go against what the king had commanded.

²⁴ Trusting in God, Moses, when he grew up, refused to be known as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. ²⁵ Instead he chose to share in the sufferings of God's people rather than to enjoy the temporary pleasures of sin. ²⁶ He counted the rejection he experienced from following Christ to be of far greater value than the wealth of Egypt—because he was focused on the reward to come.

²⁷ Trusting in God, he left Egypt and wasn't scared of Pharaoh's anger—he kept going with his eyes fixed on the invisible God. ²⁸ Trusting in God he observed the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroying angel would not touch the Israelites.* ²⁹ Trusting in God the Israelites crossed the Red Sea as if it were dry land. When the Egyptians attempted to do the same they were drowned. ³⁰ Trusting in God, the Israelites marched around the walls of Jericho for seven days, and the walls fell down. ³¹ Trusting in God,

[†] **11:11** Some versions say Abraham. [‡] **11:17** Of course Isaac was not literally Abraham's only son; the term in Greek indicates primacy. [§] **11:18** See Genesis 21:12. * **11:28** "Angel" and "Israelites" supplied by context.

Rahab the prostitute didn't die with those who rejected God, because she had welcomed the Israelite spies in peace.

³² What other examples should I give? I don't have time to talk about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; about David, Samuel, and the prophets. ³³ Because of their trust in God they conquered kingdoms, did what was good and right, received God's promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ put out blazing fires, escaped being killed by the sword, were weak but made strong, did mighty deeds in war, and routed enemy armies.

³⁵ Women were given their dead family members back through resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to compromise and be pardoned, because they wanted to be part of a better resurrection. ³⁶ Yet others suffered insults and whippings; they were put in chains and imprisoned. ³⁷ Some were stoned, cut in pieces, tempted, killed by the sword. Some dressed in sheepskins and goatskins: destitute, oppressed, and mistreated. ³⁸ The world was not worthy to have such people who wandered in the deserts and mountains, living in caves and holes in the ground.

³⁹ All of these people, even though they had God's approval, didn't receive what God had promised. ⁴⁰ God has given us something even better, so that they can't be complete without us.

12

¹ For that reason, since we are surrounded by such a great crowd of people who gave evidence of their trust in God, let's get rid of everything that holds us back, the seductive sins that trip us up, and let's keep on running the race placed before us. ² We should keep on looking to Jesus, the one who begins and completes our trust in God. Because of the joy ahead of him Jesus endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God's throne. ³ Think about Jesus who endured such hostility from sinful people so you don't grow tired and become discouraged.

⁴ Your resistance so far hasn't cost you blood as you fight against sin. ⁵ Have you forgotten* God's appeal to you when he reasons with you as his children? He says, "My child, don't treat the Lord's discipline lightly, and don't give up when he corrects you either. ⁶ The Lord disciplines everyone he loves, and he punishes everyone he welcomes as his child." ⁷ Be patient as you experience God's discipline because he is treating you as his children. What child doesn't experience a father's discipline? ⁸ If you are not disciplined, (which everyone has experienced), then you are illegitimate and not true children. ⁹ For if we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn't we even more be subject to the discipline of our spiritual Father which leads to life? ¹⁰ They disciplined us for a short while as they thought appropriate, but God does so for our benefit in order that we can share his holy character. ¹¹ When it happens, all discipline seems painful and not something to be happy about. But later on it produces peace

* **12:5** Or "You have forgotten."

in those who have been trained in this way so that they do what is good and right.

¹² So strengthen your feeble hands, and your weak knees![†] ¹³ Make straight paths to walk on,[‡] so that those who are crippled won't lose their way, but will be healed. ¹⁴ Do your best to live in peace with everybody, and look for holiness—if you don't have this you won't see the Lord. ¹⁵ Make sure that none of you lack God's grace, in case some cause of bitterness[§] arises to give trouble and end up corrupting many of you. ¹⁶ Make sure there's nobody who is sexually immoral, or irreligious, like Esau was. He sold his birthright for a single meal. ¹⁷ You remember that even when he wanted to receive the blessing later on he was refused. Even though he really tried, and cried hard, Esau couldn't change what he had done.

¹⁸ You haven't arrived at a physical mountain* that can be touched, that burned with fire, to a stormy place of black darkness, ¹⁹ where the sound of a trumpet and a voice speaking was heard—and those who heard the voice begged never to hear it speak to them again. ²⁰ For they couldn't take what they were told to do, such as, "Even if a farm animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death."[†] ²¹ The sight was so terrifying that Moses himself said, "I'm so scared I'm shaking!"[‡]

²² But you have arrived at Mount Zion, the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem, with its thousands and thousands of angels. ²³ You have come to the church of the firstborn whose names are written down in heaven, to God, the judge of everyone, and to those good people whose lives are complete. ²⁴ You have come to Jesus, who shares with us the new agreed relationship, to the sprinkled blood that means more than that of Abel.[§] ²⁵ Make sure you don't reject the one who is speaking! If they didn't escape when they rejected God on earth, it is even more certain that we won't escape if we turn away from God who warns us from heaven! ²⁶ Back then God's voice shook the earth, but his promise is now: "One more time I'm going to shake not only the earth, but heaven too."^{*} ²⁷ This expression, "one more time," indicates that all creation that is shaken is removed so that everything that is not shaken may remain.

²⁸ Since we're receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have a gracious attitude, so we can serve God in a way that pleases him, with reverence and respect. ²⁹ For "our God is a fire that consumes."[†]

13

¹ May love for each other as brothers and sisters always continue!
² Don't forget to show love for strangers too, because by doing so some have welcomed angels without knowing it. ³ Remember those who are

[†] **12:12** Quoting Isaiah 35:3. [‡] **12:13** Quoting Proverbs 4:26. **§** **12:15** See Deuteronomy 29:18. ^{*} **12:18** Clearly the reference in context is to Mount Sinai. [†] **12:20** Quoting Exodus 19:12-13. [‡] **12:21** Quoting Deuteronomy 9:19. **§** **12:24** Probably meaning that Jesus shed his blood in a spirit of forgiveness, while in the context of the first murder God references Abel's blood as calling out for vengeance. ^{*} **12:26** Quoting Haggai 2:. [†] **12:29** Quoting Deuteronomy 4:24.

locked up in prison as if you were imprisoned with them. Remember those who are mistreated as if you were physically suffering with them.

⁴ Everyone should honor marriage. Husbands and wives should be faithful to each other.* God will judge adulterers. ⁵ Don't love money; be content with what you have. God himself has said, "I'll never let you down; I'll never give up on you."[†] ⁶ That's why we can confidently say, "The Lord is the one who helps me, so I won't be afraid. What can anyone do to me?"[‡] ⁷ Remember your leaders who explained God's word to you. Look again at the results of their lives, and imitate their trust in God. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

⁹ Don't get distracted by different kinds of strange teachings. It's good for the mind to be convinced by grace, not by laws concerning what we eat.[§] Those who followed such laws didn't gain anything. ¹⁰ We have an altar that those priests of the Tabernacle have no right to eat from. ¹¹ The carcasses of the animals, whose blood is carried by the high priest into the most holy place as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. ¹² In the same way Jesus also died outside the city gate so that he could make God's people holy through his own blood. ¹³ So let us go out to him, outside the camp, experiencing and sharing in his shame. ¹⁴ For we don't have a permanent city to live in here, we're looking for the home that is still to come. ¹⁵ So let us through Jesus always offer a sacrifice of praise to God—this means speaking well of God, declaring his character.* ¹⁶ And don't forget to do what is good, and to share with others what you have, for God is pleased when you make such sacrifices. ¹⁷ Follow your leaders, and do what they tell you, for they are watching out for you and are accountable. Act in such a way that they can do this happily—and not with sadness, for that wouldn't help you!

¹⁸ Please pray for us. We're convinced we have acted in good conscience, always wanting to do what's good and right in every situation. ¹⁹ I really want you to pray hard so that I can come back to see you soon.

²⁰ Now may the God of peace who raised our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, from the dead, with the blood of an eternal agreement— ²¹ may he provide you with all that is good so you can do his will. May he work in us, doing everything that pleases him, through Jesus Christ—glory to him forever and ever. Amen.

²² I want to encourage you, brothers and sisters, to pay attention to what I've written to you in this short letter. ²³ You should know that Timothy has been set free. If he gets here soon, I will come with him to see you. ²⁴ Give my greetings to all your leaders, and to all the believers there. The believers here in Italy send their greetings. ²⁵ May God's grace be with all of you. Amen.

* **13:4** Literally, "the bed undefiled." † **13:5** Quoting Deuteronomy 31:6-8; Joshua 1:5.

‡ **13:6** Quoting Psalms 118:6. § **13:9** The word here is simply "food," but the following context indicates that it refers to the ceremonial law and what kinds of food were permissible.

* **13:15** Literally, "name," which frequently refers to the nature and character of the person described. This is found in such English expressions as "having a good name," i.e. character.

James

¹ This letter comes from James, servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is sent to the twelve tribes scattered abroad.* Best wishes to you!

² My friends, choose to stay happy even when all kinds of troubles come your way, ³ because you know that endurance comes from dealing with challenges to your trust in God. ⁴ Let your endurance become as strong as possible, so that you will be completely mature, without any shortcomings.

⁵ If any of you need wisdom, ask God, who gives generously to everyone without holding back. ⁶ But when you ask, remember to trust in God—don't have any doubts. Someone who doubts is like the crashing waves of the sea, tossed about and driven by the wind. ⁷ Nobody like that should think they'll get anything from the Lord—⁸ their minds think every which way, and they're unstable in whatever they do.

⁹ Believers who are born poor should take pride in the high position they've been given, ¹⁰ while the rich should “boast” in the humble position they now have,† since they will fade away like flowers in the field. ¹¹ For the sun rises along with the blistering wind and scorches the grass. The flowers fall and their beauty is marred. Everything the rich achieve will fade in just the same way.

¹² Happy is anyone who patiently endures temptation, for when they've proved that they are trustworthy, they will receive the crown of life which God promises to those who love him. ¹³ Nobody should say when they're tempted, “I'm being tempted by God.” For God is not tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone. ¹⁴ Temptations come from our own evil desires that lead us astray and entrap us. ¹⁵ Such desires lead to sin, and sin, when it's fully developed, causes death.

¹⁶ My dear friends, don't be deceived. ¹⁷ All that's good, every perfect gift, is from above, and comes down from the Father who made heaven's lights. Unlike them he doesn't change—he doesn't vary or cause shadows.‡ ¹⁸ He chose to give us new life through the word of truth, so that out of all his creation we would be very special to him.§

¹⁹ Remember this, my dear friends: everyone should be quick to listen but slow to speak, and slow to get angry, ²⁰ because human anger doesn't reflect the good character of God.* ²¹ So get rid of all that's filthy and evil. Humbly accept the word that's been implanted within you—for this is what can save you. ²² But do what the word says—don't just listen to it and delude yourselves. ²³ If you just listen to the word, and don't act on it, it's like staring at your own face in a mirror. ²⁴ You see yourself, but then you leave, and immediately forget what you looked

* **1:1** Referring to the twelve tribes of Israel, of course. † **1:10** Referring primarily to the way each group is viewed by God (1:9-10); not necessarily their position in society... ‡ **1:17** James seems to be referring to the varying movements of heavenly bodies and eclipses (shadows).

§ **1:18** Usually thought to refer to God's call and provision for us to be born again spiritually.

* **1:20** Literally, “achieve God's righteousness.”

like. ²⁵ But if you look to the perfect law of freedom and follow it, not as someone who just listens and then forgets, but as someone who acts on it—then you will be blessed in what you do. ²⁶ If you think you're religious, but don't control what you say, you deceive yourself—your religion is pointless. ²⁷ In the eyes of our God and Father, religion that's pure and genuine is to visit orphans and widows in their suffering, and to keep yourself from being contaminated by the world.

2

¹ My friends, as trusting believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, you must not show favoritism. ² Imagine that a man comes into your synagogue wearing gold rings and fine clothes, and then a poor man comes in dressed in rags. ³ If you pay special attention to the well-dressed man, and say, "Please sit here in a seat of honor," while you say to the poor man, "Stand over there, or sit on the floor by my feet," ⁴ haven't you discriminated and judged with bad motives? ⁵ Listen, my dear friends: Didn't God choose those who the world considers poor to be rich in their trust in him, and to inherit the kingdom he promised to those who love him? ⁶ But you've treated the poor shamefully. Isn't it the rich who oppress you and drag you before the courts? ⁷ Don't they insult the honorable name* of the one who called you and to whom you belong?

⁸ If you really observe the royal law of Scripture: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself,"† then you do well. ⁹ But if you show favoritism, you're sinning. The law convicts you as guilty of breaking it. ¹⁰ Someone who observes everything in the law but fails in just one part is guilty of breaking it all. ¹¹ God told you not to commit adultery, and he also told you not to kill. So if you don't commit adultery, but you do kill, you've become a law-breaker.‡ ¹² You should speak and act as people who will be judged by the law of freedom. ¹³ Anyone who doesn't show mercy will be judged without mercy. Yet mercy wins out over judgment!§

¹⁴ My friends, what's the good of someone saying they trust in God when they don't do what's good and right? Can such "trust" save them? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister doesn't have clothes, or food for the day, ¹⁶ and you say to them, "Blessings on you! Stay warm and have a good meal!" and you don't provide what they need to survive, what's the good of that? ¹⁷ By itself even your trust-based faith in God is dead and worthless if you don't actually do what's good and right.

¹⁸ Someone may argue, "You have your trust in God; I have my good deeds." Well, show me your trust in God without good deeds, and I will show you my trust in God by my good deeds! ¹⁹ You believe that God is one God? That's great—but demons believe in God too, and they're scared of him! ²⁰ You foolish people! Don't you know that trust in God without doing what's right is worthless? ²¹ Wasn't our father Abraham

* **2:7** Usually understood to be the name of Jesus. † **2:8** Quoting Leviticus 19:18. ‡ **2:11** Quoting Exodus 20:13-14 or Deuteronomy 5:17-18. § **2:13** The exact meaning of this verse is debated, but the fundamental point is to emphasize the merciful character of God.

made right* by what he did—by offering his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You notice that his trust in God worked together with what he did, and through what he did his trust in God was made complete. ²³ In this way scripture was fulfilled: “Abraham trusted God, and this was considered as him doing right,”† and he was called the friend of God.‡

²⁴ You see that people are made right by what they do, and not just by trusting God. ²⁵ In the same way, wasn't Rahab the prostitute made right by what she did when she looked after the messengers and then sent them away by a different road? ²⁶ Just as the body is dead without the spirit, trust in God is dead if you don't do what's right.

3

¹ My friends, not many of you should become teachers, because you know that we who teach will have a heavier responsibility in the judgment. ² All of us make mistakes in many ways. Anyone who doesn't make mistakes in what they say is truly a good person who can keep the whole body under control. ³ We put bridles into the mouths of horses so that they'll obey us, and we can direct them wherever we want. ⁴ Look at ships as well: even though they're very big and are driven along by strong winds, they're steered by a very small rudder in the direction the pilot wants to go.

⁵ In just the same way the tongue is a very small part of the body, but it makes great boasts! Think how a big forest can be set on fire by a very small flame! ⁶ And the tongue is a fire! The tongue is a world of evil among the parts of the body. It disgraces all you are as a person, and can burn down the whole of your life, since it is set on fire by Gehenna.* ⁷ People have tamed all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and sea creatures, ⁸ but no one can tame the tongue—it's an evil thing, hard to control, full of deadly poison. ⁹ We use the same tongue to bless our Lord and Father, as well as to curse people who are made in God's image— ¹⁰ blessings and curses come from the same mouth! Friends, it shouldn't be this way! ¹¹ Does a spring send both sweet and bitter water out of the same opening? ¹² My friends, a fig tree can't produce olives, and a vine can't produce figs, any more than a salt water spring can produce fresh water!

¹³ Who among you has wisdom and understanding? Let their good lives demonstrate what they do—doing what is right with wise kindness and consideration.

¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, don't boast about it and don't lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This kind of “wisdom” doesn't come from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. ¹⁶ Wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition you'll also find confusion and all kinds of evil practices.

¹⁷ However, wisdom that comes from above is first of all pure, and it also brings peace. It is kind and open to reason. It is full of mercy

* **2:21** Or “shown to be right.” † **2:23** Quoting Genesis 15:6. ‡ **2:23** See Isaiah 41:8.

* **3:6** Gehenna: the trash dump outside of Jerusalem where fires were used to burn the trash. The word is used symbolically as the endpoint for the wicked.

and produces good things. It is genuine and not hypocritical. ¹⁸ Those who sow peace will harvest the peace of what is truly good and right.

4

¹ Where do the fights and quarrels you're having come from? Aren't they due to the sensual passions that are in conflict within you? ² You burn with desire, but don't get what you want. You kill for what you lust after, but don't get what you're looking for. You argue and you fight, but you don't get anything, because you don't pray for it. ³ You pray, but don't receive anything, because you ask with a wrong motive, wanting to spend what you'd receive on your selfish pleasures. ⁴ You adulterous people! Don't you realize that friendship with the world is hatred towards God? Those who want to be friends of the world make themselves enemies of God.

⁵ Do you think Scripture doesn't mean what it says: that the spirit that he put in us is very jealous? ⁶ But God gives us even more grace, as Scripture says: "God is against those who are arrogant, but gives grace to those who are humble." ⁷ So place yourself under God's direction. Confront the devil, and he will run away from you. ⁸ Come close to God and he will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners. Purify your way of thinking, you people with divided loyalties. ⁹ Show some remorse, cry and weep! Turn your laughter into mourning, and your joy to sadness. ¹⁰ Be humble before the Lord and he will lift you up.

¹¹ Friends, don't speak badly of one another. Anyone who criticizes a fellow-believer and condemns[‡] them, criticizes and condemns the law. If you condemn the law you're not someone who keeps the law, because you're sitting in judgment of it. ¹² There's only one lawgiver and judge—the one who can either save or destroy you—so who are you to judge your neighbor?

¹³ Come on now!—you people who say, "Either today or tomorrow we'll go to such-and-such a city, spend a year in business there, and make a profit." ¹⁴ You have no idea what will happen tomorrow! What's your life like? It's just a mist that appears for a little while, and then is gone. ¹⁵ What you should say is, "If it's the Lord's will, we'll live like this and plan to do that." ¹⁶ But right now you're caught up in your vain ideas. All this boasting is evil. ¹⁷ For it is a sin if you know to do what's right but don't do it.

5

¹ Come on, you rich people! You should weep and wail for all the problems that are coming your way! ² Your wealth is ruined, and your clothes have been eaten by moths. ³ Your gold and your silver are corroded, and this corrosion will be evidence against you, eating away your flesh like fire. You hoarded up your wealth in these last days. ⁴ Look, the wages of your farm workers that you cheated are crying out against you—the cries of the farm workers have reached the ears

* **4:5** Or "God has placed a spirit in us that is filled with strong desires." † **4:6** Quoting Proverbs 3:34. ‡ **4:11** Or "judges."

of the Lord Almighty. ⁵ You've enjoyed a life of luxury here on earth, full of self-indulgent pleasure, fattening yourselves up for the day of slaughter! ⁶ You have condemned and killed the innocent who didn't even resist you.

⁷ Friends, be patient as you wait for the Lord's return. Think of the farmer waiting patiently for the earth's precious harvest as it grows with the early and later rains. ⁸ You need to be patient too. Stay strong for the Lord's return is near. ⁹ My friends, don't complain about each other, so you won't be judged. Look, the judge is standing right at the door! ¹⁰ Take the prophets as an example, my friends—see how they spoke in the Lord's name as they suffered and waited patiently. ¹¹ Notice that we say that those who endure are blessed. You've heard about the patience of Job, and you've seen how the Lord brought this to a positive conclusion—for the Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

¹² Above all, my friends, don't swear. Not by heaven, not by earth, and not by any other kind of oath. Just let your yes be yes, and your no be no, so you won't fall under condemnation. ¹³ Are any of you suffering? You should pray. Are some of you cheerful? You should sing songs of praise. ¹⁴ Are any of you sick? You should call for the church elders and have them pray over you, and anoint you with oil in the Lord's name. ¹⁵ Such a prayer, trusting in God, will heal those who are sick, and the Lord will make them well. If they've committed sins, they will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Admit the wrongs you've done to each other, and pray for one another so that you'll be healed. Earnest prayer from those who live right is very effective. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man who had the same human nature as we do. He prayed earnestly that it wouldn't rain, and it didn't rain on the earth for three and a half years. ¹⁸ He prayed again—heaven sent rain and the earth gave its harvest.

¹⁹ My friends, if any one of you strays from the truth and someone brings you back, ²⁰ let them know that whoever rescues a sinner from the error of their ways will save them from death, and will gain forgiveness for many sins.

First Peter

¹ This letter comes from Peter, apostle of Jesus Christ, and is sent to God's chosen people: exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. ² You were chosen by God the Father in his wisdom, made holy by the Spirit, so that you might obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with his blood. May you have grace and peace more and more!

³ Praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Through his great mercy we have been born again and given a living hope* through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. ⁴ This inheritance is eternal, it never spoils or fades, and it is kept safe in heaven for you. ⁵ Through your trust in him, God will protect you by his power until salvation arrives—the salvation that is ready to be revealed at the last day.

⁶ So be glad about this, even though you may be sad for a short while as you endure various trials. ⁷ These prove that your trust in God is genuine, just as fire is used to prove if gold is genuine—even though that too can be destroyed—and your faith is more valuable than gold! In this way your trust in God will be recognized and you will receive praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ appears.

⁸ You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you cannot see him now, you trust in him and you're filled with wonderful, indescribable happiness. ⁹ Your reward for trusting in him is that you will be saved! ¹⁰ It was this salvation that the prophets searched for and investigated when they spoke of the grace that was prepared for you. ¹¹ They tried to find out when and how this would take place, for the Spirit of Christ inside them spoke clearly about Christ's sufferings and glory to come. ¹² It was explained to them that they were not doing this for themselves, but for you—since what they spoke about you've now learned from those who shared the good news with you by the Holy Spirit that heaven sent. Even the angels are eager to find out about all this!

¹³ Make sure your minds are in gear. Be clear-headed. Fix your hope exclusively on the grace you'll be given when Jesus is revealed. ¹⁴ Live like children that do what they're told. Don't allow yourselves to be shaped by your former sinful desires when you didn't know any better. ¹⁵ Now you need to be holy in everything you do, just as the one who called you is holy. ¹⁶ As Scripture says, "You are to be holy, for I am holy."†

¹⁷ Since you call him Father, and recognize he judges everyone impartially based on what they do, take your time here on earth seriously, respecting him.

¹⁸ You already know that you were not set free from your pointless way of living that you inherited from your forefathers by things that don't have lasting value, like silver or gold. ¹⁹ You were set free by the costly blood of Christ, who was like a lamb with no flaw or defect.

* **1:3** Or "a hope that brings us life." † **1:16** Quoting Leviticus 11:44-45 or Leviticus 19:2

²⁰ He was chosen before the world was created, but he was revealed in these last days[‡] for your benefit. ²¹ Through him you trust in God who raised him from the dead, and glorified him, so that you could have confidence and hope in God. ²² Now that you've dedicated yourselves by following the truth, love each other sincerely like a true family.[§] ²³ You've been born again, not the product of a mortal "seed,"* but immortal, through the living, eternal word of God. ²⁴ For: "All people are like grass, and all their glory like wildflowers. The grass withers and the flowers fall. ²⁵ But the word of the Lord remains forever."[†] This word is the good news that was explained to you.

2

¹ So give up all the evil things that you do: all your dishonesty, hypocrisy, and jealousy, all the ways you speak badly about others. ² You should become like newborn babies who only want pure spiritual milk, so you can grow in salvation ³ now you've tasted how good the Lord really is. ⁴ As you come to him—the living stone that people rejected as useless, but is chosen by God and precious to him— ⁵ you also become like living stones, being built into a spiritual house. You are a holy priesthood that offers spiritual sacrifices that God welcomes through Jesus Christ. ⁶ As Scripture* says, "See! I'm setting in Zion its main cornerstone, specially-chosen and valuable. Whoever trusts in him will not be disappointed."[†] ⁷ He is very valuable to you who do trust. But for those who don't, "The stone the builders rejected that became the main cornerstone"[‡] ⁸ is "The stone that trips you up and the rock that makes you fall."[§] People stumble over this message because they refuse to accept it—which for them is entirely predictable.

⁹ In complete contrast, you are a specially-chosen family, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God. Consequently you can reveal the wonderful things he's done, calling you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ In the past you were nobodies, but now you are God's people. In the past you hadn't received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

¹¹ My friends, I'm pleading with you as foreigners and strangers* in this world not to give in to physical desires that are in conflict with what is spiritual. ¹² Be sure to act appropriately when you're with non-Christians, so even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see the good things you do and glorify God when he comes.[†]

¹³ Obey human authority for the Lord's sake, whether it is the king as the highest authority, ¹⁴ or governors that God appoints to punish those who do evil and to commend those who do good. ¹⁵ By doing what is good and right God wants you to silence the ignorant accusations of foolish people. ¹⁶ Yes, you are free people! So don't use your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but live as God's servants. ¹⁷ Respect everyone.

[‡] **1:20** Or "at the end of time." **§** **1:22** Or "with brotherly love." * **1:23** The emphasis here is that different "seeds" produce different kinds of "life." [†] **1:25** Quoting Isaiah 40:6-8.

* **2:6** Quoting Isaiah 28:16. [†] **2:6** Or "ashamed." [‡] **2:7** Quoting Psalms 118:22. **§** **2:8** Quoting Isaiah 8:14. * **2:11** "Foreigners and strangers"—not seeing this world as home.

[†] **2:12** Literally, "day of visitation."

Show your love to the community of believers. Have reverence for God. Respect the king. ¹⁸ If you are a servant then submit to your master—not just those who are good and kind, but those who are harsh masters as well. ¹⁹ For this is what grace is: to endure life's pain and unfair suffering, keeping your focus on God. ²⁰ However, there's no credit when you're punished for doing something wrong. But if you suffer for doing what is good and right, and you put up with it, then God's grace is with you.

²¹ In fact this is what you were called to do, because Christ suffered for you and gave you an example, so you should follow in his footsteps. ²² He never sinned, he never lied;‡ ²³ and when he was badly treated, he didn't retaliate. When he suffered, he didn't threaten to take revenge. He simply placed himself in the hands of the one who always judges rightly. ²⁴ He took the consequences of our sins on himself in his body on the cross, so that we could die to sin and live rightly.§ “By his wounds you are healed.”* ²⁵ At one time you were like sheep who had lost their way,† but now you've returned to the Shepherd—the one who watches over you.

3

¹ Wives, accept your husbands' authority in the same way, so that if some husbands refuse to accept the word, they may still be won over without words by the way you behave, ² recognizing your pure and reverent behavior. ³ Don't focus on outward attractiveness—hairstyles, gold jewelry, or fashionable clothes— ⁴ instead let it come from within, the lasting attractiveness of a gentle and peaceful spirit on the inside. That's what God values. ⁵ This is how holy women of the past who put their confidence in God made themselves beautiful, yielding to their husbands, ⁶ like Sarah who obeyed Abraham, and called him “lord.”* You are her daughters if you do what's good and right and are not intimidated.

⁷ Husbands, in just the same way, be considerate to your wives as you live together with them. Though she may not be as strong as you are, you should honor her since she will inherit equally with you God's gift of life. Make sure to do this so nothing will get in the way of your prayers.

⁸ Finally, you should all have the same attitude. Be sympathetic and love each other. Be compassionate, and humble. ⁹ Don't pay back evil for evil, or retaliate when you're abused, instead you should give a blessing—because that's what you were called to do, so you could gain a blessing yourself. ¹⁰ Remember: “Those who want to love life, and to see good days, must refrain from speaking evil, and not tell lies. ¹¹ Turn away from evil and do good; search for peace—run after it!

‡ **2:22** Quoting Isaiah 53:9. § **2:24** “The consequences of our sins”: it is the results of sin that are demonstrated in Jesus' death. Sins are innately non-transferable—they are committed by the sinner and cannot be passed to anyone or anything else, since sins are the specific actions of the individual sinner. * **2:24** Quoting Isaiah 53:5, explaining that salvation is to do with the healing of our fatal sin-sickness, not some legal readjustment with God, or payment to him. † **2:25** Referencing Isaiah 53:6. * **3:6** Or “master.” Today such formality in a marriage relationship would be unusual.

12 For God sees those who do right, and he hears their prayers, but he opposes those who do evil.”†

13 Who will harm you if you're keen to do good? 14 For even if you suffer for doing what's right, you're still better off. Don't be scared over what people threaten, don't worry about it; 15 just keep your mind focused on Christ as Lord. Always be ready to explain to anyone who asks you the reason for the hope that you have. Do this in a gentle and respectful way. 16 Make sure your conscience is clear, so that if anyone makes accusations against you, they will be embarrassed for speaking badly about the good way you live your life in Christ. 17 It's certainly better to suffer for doing good, (if that's what God wants), than to suffer for doing wrong! 18 Jesus died because of sins, once and for all, the one who is completely true and good and right died for those who are bad,‡ so that he could bring you to God. He was put to death in the body, but he came to life in the spirit.

19 He went to speak to those “imprisoned”§ 20 that refused to believe, when God patiently waited in the time of Noah while the ark was being built. Only a few—in fact eight people—were saved “through water.” 21 This water symbolizes baptism that now saves you, not by washing off dirt from your body, but as a positive response to God that comes from a clear conscience. It is the resurrection of Jesus Christ that makes your salvation possible. 22 Having ascended to heaven, he stands at God's right hand, with angels, authorities, and powers placed under his control.

4

1 Since Christ suffered physically, you must prepare yourselves with the same attitude he had—for those who suffer physically have turned away from sin.* 2 You will not live the rest of your lives following human desires, but doing what God wants. 3 In the past you've spent enough time following the ways of the world: immorality, sexual indulgence, drunken orgies, partying, binge drinking, and revolting idol-worship. 4 People think it's strange that you don't join them anymore in this wild and excessive lifestyle, so they curse at you. But they will have to explain what they've done to the one who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 5 That's why the good news was shared with those who've already died— 6 so that although they were rightly judged as far as being sinful human beings is concerned, they could live in the spirit as far as God is concerned.

† 3:12 Quoting Psalms 34:12-16. ‡ 3:18 Literally, “the right for the unright.” In this verse the inevitable results of sin are made clear through the death of Jesus. He experienced the consequences of sin in the most dramatic and conclusive way possible, and also proved it was not God who kills, but that sin itself brings its inevitable fatal result (see Romans 6:23).

§ 3:19 Or “imprisoned souls.” There has been much debate over this phrase. The same word used for “souls” should note the same word is used for the eight people in verse 20. Some understand those “imprisoned” as those people at the time of the Flood who were “held captive” by their sinfulness (see Genesis 6:5).

* 4:1 This is a difficult verse, since clearly suffering does not mean sinlessness. The implication is that just as Christ suffered unjustly, when Christians suffer unjustly they take part in the experience of Christ.

⁷ Everything is coming to an end! So think clearly and stay alert when you pray. ⁸ Most of all, you should love one another very deeply, for love covers many of the wrong things people do. ⁹ Show hospitality to each another, and don't complain. ¹⁰ Whatever gift you've been given, share it with others among you, as people who wisely demonstrate God's grace in all its different forms. ¹¹ Anyone who speaks should do so as though God is speaking through them. Anyone who wants to help others should do so through the strength that God gives, so that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. May glory and power be his forever and ever. Amen.

¹² My friends, don't be alarmed at the "ordeals of fire"[†] you're having, as if these were unexpected. ¹³ Be happy to the extent that you share in Christ's suffering, because when he appears in his glory, you will be incredibly happy! ¹⁴ If you are cursed in Christ's name, you're blessed, for God's glorious spirit rests on you. ¹⁵ If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer, or a thief, or a criminal, or as a gossip— ¹⁶ but if it's as a Christian, then you don't need to be ashamed. Instead praise God that you're called by that name!

¹⁷ For the time of judgment has come—and it begins with the house of God. If it begins with us, what will be the end of those who reject God's good news? ¹⁸ "If it's hard for those who live right to be saved, what will happen to sinners, those who oppose God?"[‡] ¹⁹ So then those who suffer according to the will of God, the trustworthy Creator, should make sure they are doing good.

5

¹ I want to encourage the elders among you. I'm also an elder, a witness to Christ's sufferings, and I will share in the glory that is to come. ² Look after God's flock you have been given to care for, watching over it not because you're forced to, but gladly, as God wants you to. Do this willingly, not looking to make a profit from it. ³ Don't be arrogant, lording it over those who have been put in your care, but be an example to the flock. ⁴ When the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive a glorious crown that will never fade.

⁵ Young people, do what the elders tell you. Indeed all of you should serve one another in humility, because "God is against the proud, but favors the humble."^{*} ⁶ Humble yourself before God's powerful hand so that he will lift you up at the appropriate time. ⁷ Surrender all your worries to him, because he cares for you. ⁸ Be responsible, and stay alert. The devil, your enemy, is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Stand firm against him, trusting in God. Remember that your fellow-believers around the world are going through similar troubles. ¹⁰ After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace who called you into his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore you, support you, strengthen you, and give you a solid foundation. ¹¹ To him be power forever and ever! Amen.

[†] **4:12** Literally, "a burning to test you." [‡] **4:18** Quoting Proverbs 11:31. ^{*} **5:5** Quoting Proverbs 3:34.

¹² With the help of Silvanus, whom I consider a trustworthy brother, I send this letter to you. In these few words I've written I want to encourage you and testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in God's grace! ¹³ The believers here in "Babylon,"[†] chosen together with you, send their greetings to you, as does Mark, my son. ¹⁴ Greet each other with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

[†] **5:13** Literally, "those in Babylon." Babylon in the New Testament is frequently a symbol for Rome.

Second Peter

¹ This letter comes from Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who share with us the same priceless trust in our God and Savior Jesus Christ, the one who is truly good and right. ² May you have ever more grace and peace as you grow in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. ³ Through his divine power we have been given everything that's important to live a God-centered life. This comes through knowing him who called us to himself by his own glory and goodness.

In this way he's given us wonderful, priceless promises. ⁴ Through these promises you can share in the divine nature, being rid of the corruption caused by this world's evil desires. ⁵ For this same reason, do everything you can! Add to your trust in God, goodness; add to goodness, knowledge; ⁶ add to knowledge, self-control; add to self-control, patience; add to patience, reverence; ⁷ add to reverence, affection for fellow-believers, add to affection for fellow-believers, love.

⁸ The more you have these qualities, the more they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For anyone who doesn't have such qualities is short-sighted, or blind. They forget that they've been cleansed from their past sins. ¹⁰ So, brothers and sisters, be all the more determined to make sure you are truly "called and chosen." If you do this, you won't ever fall.* ¹¹ You will receive a tremendous welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

¹² That's why I always remind you about these things, even though you know them already, and you stand firm in the truth that you possess. ¹³ But I still think it's a good idea to encourage you by giving you reminders while I live. ¹⁴ I know the time when I shall leave this life will be coming soon—our Lord Jesus Christ has made this clear to me. ¹⁵ I will do my best so that when I'm gone you will always be able to remember these things.

¹⁶ We didn't follow made-up myths when we told you about the coming in power of our Lord Jesus Christ—we saw his majesty for ourselves.† ¹⁷ He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice of majestic glory spoke to him and announced, "This is my Son, the one I love, and who truly pleases me."‡ ¹⁸ We ourselves heard this voice speak from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.

¹⁹ We also have the confirming word of prophecy that's absolutely trustworthy, and you will benefit from paying close attention to it. It's like a lamp that shines in a dark place until the day dawns, and the morning star shines to illuminate your minds. ²⁰ Most of all you should realize that no prophecy of scripture is a matter for interpretation

* **1:10** There has been much debate over this verse. The idea is that you are meant to do all you can to hold onto salvation. It does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that you cannot lose salvation. † **1:16** This passage is a reference to the Transfiguration. ‡ **1:17** Quoting Matthew 17:5 or parallel passage.

based on the whims of an individual,²¹ for no prophecy originated in human ideas, but prophets spoke for God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

2

¹ But just as there were false prophets among the people then, there will be false teachers among you. They subtly introduce false and destructive teachings, even denying the Lord who redeemed them, quickly bringing destruction on themselves. ² Many will follow their immoral perversions, and because of them people will condemn the way of truth. ³ They will greedily exploit you with false tales. However, they are already condemned: their sentence has been hanging over them for a long time, their destruction won't be postponed. ⁴ For God didn't even spare the angels when they sinned. He threw them into Tartarus,* holding them in dark pits ready for judgment. ⁵ God didn't spare the ancient world either, but he protected Noah who told people about the God who did right. He was one of the eight who were saved when God sent a flood upon a world of evil people.

⁶ God condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to total destruction, burning them to ash, as an example of what will happen to those who live evil lives. ⁷ But God rescued Lot because he was a good man, sickened by the disgusting immorality of his neighbors. ⁸ (Lot lived among them, but he did what was good and right. He saw and heard what they did day after day, and their wickedness tormented him.)

⁹ As you can see, the Lord is able to rescue from their troubles those who respect him, and to keep the wicked until the day of judgment when their punishment is completed. ¹⁰ This is especially so for those who follow their corrupt human desires, and contemptuously disregard authority. Arrogant and proud, they're not even afraid to defame heavenly beings. ¹¹ Angels, on the other hand, even though they are stronger and more powerful, don't disparage them before the Lord.

¹² These people are like mindless beasts, produced like farm animals to be captured and slaughtered. They condemn things they don't know anything about, and just like animals they will be destroyed. ¹³ They will be paid back in harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of fun is to commit their evil lusts in broad daylight. They are stains and blemishes on your community. They enjoy their deceptive pleasures even while they eat together with you. ¹⁴ They're always on the lookout for adulterous relationships—they just can't stop sinning. They seduce the vulnerable; they have trained themselves in greed; they are offspring under a curse. ¹⁵ They have abandoned the right path and went astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved to be paid for doing evil. ¹⁶ But he was told off for his evil actions—a dumb donkey spoke with a human voice and stopped the prophet's foolishness!

* **2:4** "Tartarus." This is often translated as "hell," however this word has associations from other mythologies. It seems that "Tartarus" was used to represent the word "sheol" of the Old Testament, meaning the place of the dead.

¹⁷ People like these are springs without water, mists blown away by the wind. They are destined for blackest darkness—forever. ¹⁸ Inflated with their own nonsense, they appeal to sensual desires, luring back into immorality those who have only just escaped from those who live in error. ¹⁹ They promise them freedom, even though they themselves are slaves to depravity. “You are a slave to whatever conquers you.” ²⁰ If people manage to escape from the evil influence of the world by knowing the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and then get tangled up in sin again and are defeated, they are worse off than they were in the first place. ²¹ It would have been better not to have known the right way of truth, than to have known it and then turn away from the sacred instructions they’d been given. ²² This proverb has come true for them: “The dog has returned to its own vomit, and the washed pig has gone back to rolling in the mud.”[†]

3

¹ My friends, this is my second letter to you. In both of them I’ve tried to stir you up and remind you to think clearly with pure minds. ² Remember the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets, and what the Lord and Savior commanded through your apostles. ³ Above all you should know that derisive people will come in the last days, full of mockery and following their own evil desires.* ⁴ “So what happened to this coming he promised?” they ask. “Right from the time our ancestors died, everything’s continued as it always has, ever since creation began.” ⁵ But they deliberately ignore the fact that by God’s command the heavens were created long ago. The earth came into existence from the water, and was surrounded by water. ⁶ It was through water that the world that then existed was destroyed—through being flooded by water. ⁷ But by means of that same divine command the heavens and the earth that now exist are reserved for destruction by fire[†] at the day of judgment when the wicked will be destroyed.

⁸ However, my friends, don’t forget this one thing: that for the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day.[‡] ⁹ The Lord is not delaying the fulfillment of his promise, as some define delay, but he is being very patient with you. He doesn’t want anyone to be lost, but everyone to come and repent.

¹⁰ However, the day of the Lord will come, unexpectedly like a thief. The heavens will explode with a thunderous roar, and the elements[§] will be destroyed as they are burned up. The earth and everything in it will vanish.* ¹¹ Since everything is going to be destroyed in this way, what kind of people should you be? You should be living lives that are pure, dedicated to God, ¹² waiting expectantly and being eager for the coming of the day of God. That day the heavens will catch fire and be destroyed, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³ But as for us, we

[†] **2:22** Quoting Proverbs 26:11. * **3:3** See Jude 1:18. † **3:7** “Destruction by fire”: Literally, “in fire”. ‡ **3:8** See Psalms 90:4. § **3:10** It is not clear exactly what these “elements” refer to. * **3:10** Or “will be seen for what it is.”

are looking for new heavens and a new earth that God has promised where everything is good and right.[†]

¹⁴ So, my friends, since you're anticipating these things, make sure you'll be found pure and blameless, and at peace with God. ¹⁵ Remember that it is our Lord's patience that gives the opportunity for salvation. That's what our dear brother Paul was explaining to you in all his letters with the wisdom given to him by God. ¹⁶ He spoke about these things, though some of what he wrote is certainly hard to understand. Some ignorant and unbalanced people have twisted what he wrote to their own loss—just as they do other scriptures. ¹⁷ My friends, since you already know this, make sure that these errors of the wicked don't lead you astray, and you don't fall from your firm position. ¹⁸ May you grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May he have glory, both now and forever! Amen.

[†] **3:13** Or "where righteousness dwells."

First John

¹ This letter is about the Word of Life which existed from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our very own eyes and gazed upon, and which our hands have touched.* ² This Life was revealed to us; we saw it and give evidence about it. We are telling you about the one who is Eternal Life, who was with the Father, and who was revealed to us. ³ What we have seen and heard we are now explaining to you, so that you may also share in this friendship† together with us—this friendship that is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ We're writing to tell you about this in order to make our happiness complete.

⁵ This is the message we received from him and that we declare to you: God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in him at all.‡

⁶ If we claim to share this friendship with him and yet go on living§ in darkness, we're lying, and not living in the truth. ⁷ But if we are living in the light, as he is in the light, then we share in this friendship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, makes us clean from every sin.

⁸ If we claim to be sinless we only fool ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ But if we confess our sins, he is trustworthy and right so that he can forgive us our sins and make us clean from all that is not right in us. ¹⁰ If we claim we haven't sinned, we turn him into a liar, and his word is not in us.

2

¹ My dear children, I'm writing this to you so you shouldn't sin. But if anybody should happen to sin, we have someone who defends us before the Father—Jesus Christ, who is truly good and right. ² Through him our sins are forgiven—and not only our sins, but those of the whole world. ³ We can be sure that we do know him if we follow his commands. ⁴ Anyone who says, “I know him,” but doesn't do what he says, is a liar. They don't have the truth. ⁵ But those who follow God's word have his love totally fill their minds. This is how we know that we live in him. ⁶ Whoever claims to be living in him should behave like Jesus.

⁷ My friends, I'm not writing to you giving some new commandment, but an old commandment you've had from the beginning. This old commandment is one you have already heard. ⁸ But in a sense I am giving you a new commandment. Its truth is revealed in Jesus and in you, for the darkness is coming to an end and the true light is already shining. ⁹ Those who say they live in the light but hate a fellow Christian* still have the darkness inside them. ¹⁰ Those who love their fellow Christians live in the light, and don't cause others

* **1:1** The Greek sentence structure has been adjusted to make better sense in English. † **1:3** Literally, “fellowship.” ‡ **1:5** In the Greek there is a double negative for emphasis, literally, “darkness in him not there is, not at all.” § **1:6** Literally, “walking.” Also in 1:7. * **2:9** Literally, “brother.”

to sin.† ¹¹ Those who hate a fellow Christian are in darkness. They stumble around in the dark, not knowing where they're going because the darkness has blinded them.

¹² Dear friends, I'm writing to you children,‡ for your sins have been forgiven through the name of Jesus. ¹³ I'm writing to you fathers, for you know him who has existed from the beginning. I'm writing to you young people, for you have defeated the evil one. ¹⁴ I write to you little children, for you know the Father. I write to you fathers, for you know him who has existed from the beginning. I write to you young people, for you are strong. The word of God lives in you, and you have defeated the evil one.

¹⁵ Don't be in love with the world, and don't long for the things of this world. If you love the world, you won't have the Father's love in you. ¹⁶ For all the things of this world—our sinful desires, wanting everything we see, boasting about what we've accomplished in life—these things don't come from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷ The world and its evil desires are coming to an end, but those who do the will of God will live forever.

¹⁸ Dear friends, this is the last hour. As you've heard, the antichrist is coming. Many antichrists have already come. This is how we know this is the last hour. ¹⁹ They left us, but they didn't belong with us, for if they did, they would have remained with us. When they left they showed that none of them belonged with us.

²⁰ But you have been anointed§ with the Holy Spirit's blessing, and all of you know what's true. ²¹ I'm not writing because you don't know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie comes from the truth. ²² Who is the liar?—anyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ.* The antichrist is anyone who denies the Father and the Son. ²³ Anyone that denies the Son does not have the Father; anyone who acknowledges the Son has the Father too. ²⁴ As for you, make sure what you heard from the beginning continues to live in you. If what you heard from the beginning lives in you, you will also live in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵ Eternal life—this is what he has promised us!

²⁶ I'm writing this to warn you against those who want to lead you astray. ²⁷ But the anointing you received from him means the Spirit† lives in you, and you don't need to be taught by anyone. The Spirit's anointing teaches you about everything. It is the truth and not a lie. So live in Christ, just as you've been taught!

²⁸ Now, my dear friends, continue to live in Christ, so that when he appears, we can be confident and not feel ashamed before him at his coming. ²⁹ If you know he is good and right,‡ then you also know that everyone who does what is right has been born of God.

† **2:10** Literally, "there is no snare." In other words something that trips others up. ‡ **2:12** John identifies three groups: children, fathers, and young people. They probably refer to different ages of Christian experience rather than literal groups. § **2:20** Anointing is an act of pouring a liquid (usually oil) on someone's head to indicate they are specially blessed and set apart for a particular role (like kingship in the Old Testament). Here anointing refers to the blessing of the Holy Spirit who, in the words of Jesus, leads to all truth. * **2:22** Meaning Messiah. (Christ in Greek.) Both refer to one who is anointed. † **2:27** Spirit, supplied from verse 20. ‡ **2:29** Literally, "righteous"—however this word is normally only used in a religious connection today and does not have much meaning in general English.

3

¹ Look at the amazing kind of love the Father has for us! This is why we can be called God's children—for that's who we are! The reason why the people of this world don't recognize us as God's children is because they don't recognize him. ² My friends, we are already God's children; however what we shall become hasn't been revealed just yet. But we do know that when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he really is. ³ All those who have this hope in them make sure they are pure, just as he is pure. ⁴ All those who sin are lawless, because sin is lawlessness. ⁵ But of course you know that Jesus came to take away sins, and that there is no sin in him. ⁶ All those who live in him don't go on sinning; all those who keep on sinning haven't seen him and haven't known him.

⁷ Dear friends, don't let anyone fool you: those who do what is right *are* right, in the same way as Jesus is right. ⁸ Those who sin are of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. That's the reason why the Son of God came—to destroy what the devil has done. ⁹ All those who are born of God don't keep on sinning, for God's nature* lives in them. They can't keep on sinning because they are born of God. ¹⁰ This is how God's children and the devil's children can be distinguished: all those who don't do what's right don't belong to God, nor do those who don't love their fellow Christians.

¹¹ The message you've heard from the beginning is simply this: we should love one another. ¹² We cannot be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one, and murdered his brother. Why did he murder him? Because Cain did what was evil, while his brother did what was right. ¹³ So don't be surprised, my friends, if this world hates you!

¹⁴ The reason we know that we have changed from death to life is because we love our Christian brothers and sisters. Anyone who doesn't love remains dead. ¹⁵ All those who hate their Christian brothers and sisters are murderers, and you know that no murderers have eternal life within them! ¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our Christian brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ If one of you is living well in this world and you see your Christian brother or sister in need, but you don't show compassion—how can God's love be living in you? ¹⁸ Dear friends, let's not just say we love with words, but show our love in what we do and how we demonstrate the truth. ¹⁹ This is how we will know that we belong to the truth, and how we will set our minds† at rest before God ²⁰ whenever we think we're in the wrong. God is greater than how we think, and he knows everything. ²¹ Dear friends, if we're reassured we're not in the wrong, we can have confidence before God. ²² We'll receive from him whatever we ask him for, because we follow his commands and do what pleases him. ²³ This is what he commands: we should trust in the name‡ of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us to do. ²⁴ Those who keep his commands continue to live in him, and he lives in them. We know that he lives in us by the Spirit he has given us.

* **3:9** Literally, "his seed." † **3:19** Literally, "hearts." It was believed that the heart was where you did your thinking. ‡ **3:23** Name in the sense of character and reputation rather than just a given name.

4

¹ Dear friends, don't trust every spirit, but put the spirits to the test to find out whether they're from God, for there are many false prophets out there in the world. ² How can you recognize God's Spirit? Every spirit that accepts Jesus Christ came with a human body is from God; ³ while every spirit that doesn't accept Jesus, that spirit isn't from God. In fact it is the spirit of the antichrist which you heard was coming, and which is already in the world.

⁴ But you belong to God, my friends, and you have defeated them,* for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. ⁵ They belong to the world, so they speak like people of the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶ We belong to God and whoever knows God listens to us, while whoever doesn't belong to God doesn't listen to us. This is how we can distinguish the spirit of truth from the spirit of deception.

⁷ Dear friends, let's go on loving one another, for love comes from God. All those who love are born of God and know God. ⁸ Those who don't love don't know God, for God is love. ⁹ How was God's love shown to us? God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we could live through him. ¹⁰ This is love! It's not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and he sent his Son to be the reconciliation for our sins.

¹¹ Friends, if this is the way God loves us, we ought to love one another like this too. ¹² No one has ever seen God. However, if we love one another then God lives in us, and his love is fulfilled in us. ¹³ How can we know that we live in him, and that he lives in us? He's given us the ability to love† by his Spirit.

¹⁴ For we are witnesses to what we have seen and testify that the Father sent the Son as the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ God lives in everyone who declares that Jesus is the Son of God, and they live in God. ¹⁶ We have experienced and trusted in the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who live in love, live in God, and God lives in them. ¹⁷ This is how love is made complete in us so that we can be confident on judgment day: by the fact that we live just like him in this world. ¹⁸ Where there is love there can be no fear. God loves us completely, and this love drives all our fears away. If we do fear, it's because we fear being punished, and this shows that we have not been fully remade by the completeness of God's love. ¹⁹ We love because he loved us first. ²⁰ Anyone who says, "I love God," but hates a Christian brother or sister, is a liar. Anyone who doesn't love a brother whom they can see, can't love God whom they can't see. ²¹ This is the command he gave to us: those who love God love their brothers and sisters too.

5

¹ Whoever trusts that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the father also loves his child. ² How do we know that we love God's children? When we love God and follow his commands. ³ Loving God means that we follow his commands, and his commands are not hard to bear. ⁴ Everyone who is born of God defeats the world. The

* **4:4** Referring back to the false prophets and the spirit that inspires them. † **4:13** Implied.

way we gain victory and defeat the world is by trusting God. ⁵ Who can defeat the world? Only those who trust in Jesus, believing he is the Son of God. ⁶ He is the one who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ. He did not only come by water, but by water and blood.* The Spirit gives evidence to confirm this, for the Spirit is the truth. ⁷ So there are three that give evidence: ⁸ the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and all three agree as one.†

⁹ If we accept the evidence that human witnesses provide, then the evidence that God provides is much more important. The evidence that God provides is his testimony about his Son. ¹⁰ Those trusting in the Son of God have accepted and hold on to this evidence. Those who don't trust God make God out to be a liar, because they don't believe the evidence God has given about his Son. ¹¹ The evidence is this: God has given eternal life to us, and we have this life through his Son. ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever doesn't have the Son of God doesn't have life. ¹³ I'm writing to tell those of you who trust in the name of the Son of God so you can be certain you have eternal life. ¹⁴ We can be confident that he will listen to us as long as we ask in accordance with his will. ¹⁵ If we know that he hears our requests, we can be sure that we will receive what we've asked him for. ¹⁶ If you see your Christian brother or sister committing a sin that is not a deadly sin,‡ you ought to pray and God will grant life to the one who's sinned. (But not for a deadly sin. There's a sin that is deadly, and I'm not saying people should pray about that. ¹⁷ Yes, all that is not right is sin, but there's sin that is not deadly.)

¹⁸ We recognize that those who are born of God don't keep on sinning. The Son of God§ protects them and the devil cannot harm them. ¹⁹ We know that we belong to God, and that the world is under the power of the evil one. ²⁰ We also know that the Son of God has come, and has helped us to understand so we can recognize the one who is true. We live in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and is eternal life.* ²¹ Dear friends, stay away from idol worship.

* **5:6** This is often interpreted to mean the water of baptism and the blood meaning his death.

† **5:8** The authenticity of verses 7 and 8 has been disputed. ‡ **5:16** Deadly sin. Literally, "a sin to death." § **5:18** Literally, the One born of God, following the concept at the beginning of the verse. The identification is made clear in the following verse. * **5:20** This can be understood to mean he gives eternal life, and also that he lives eternally.

Second John

¹ This letter comes from the elder* to the chosen lady† and her children, whom I love in the truth. Not just from me, but from everyone who knows the truth, ² because the truth lives in us and will be with us forever. ³ May grace, mercy and peace continue to be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and in love.

⁴ I was delighted to discover that some of your children are following the truth, just as the Father commanded us. ⁵ Now I'm telling you, dear lady, not as a new instruction, but following what we've understood from the beginning, that we should love one another. ⁶ This is what love is: we should follow God's commands. The command, just as you heard right from the beginning, is that you should live in love.‡

⁷ I'm telling you this because many deceivers have left and gone out into the world. They don't accept that Jesus Christ has come as a human being. Anyone like this is a deceiver and an antichrist. ⁸ Be careful that you don't lose what we've worked so hard for, and that you receive all that you should.

⁹ All those who become extremists§ and don't continue to follow the teaching of Christ don't have God with them. Those who continue to follow the teaching of Christ have both the Father and the Son with them. ¹⁰ If people come to you and don't show evidence of Christ's teaching, don't take them in, don't welcome them— ¹¹ for if you encourage them you share in their evil work.

¹² I have so many things to tell you that I won't write any more with paper and ink, for I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face. How happy that would make us! ¹³ Greetings to you from the children of your chosen sister.

* **1:1** Understood to be John. † **1:1** The "chosen lady" could refer to a church, or to a specific Christian lady. Similarly in verse 13. ‡ **1:6** Or "that you should behave this way."

§ **1:9** Literally, "who go too far."

Third John

¹ This letter comes from the elder* to Gaius, my dear friend, whom I love in the truth. ² My friend, I pray most of all that you're doing well and are in good physical health, for I know you're doing well spiritually.

³ I was delighted when some fellow-believers arrived and told me about your commitment to the truth, and how you continue living in the truth. ⁴ Nothing makes me happier than to hear how my dear friends are following the truth. ⁵ My friend, you show you are trustworthy in what you're doing by looking after the brothers,† even those you don't know. ⁶ They have spoken well about your love in front of the church. Please be so kind as to send them on their journey in a way that God would appreciate, ⁷ for they are traveling in his name, not accepting anything from non-believers.‡ ⁸ We ought to support them so we can share together in the truth.

⁹ I did write about this to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves being in charge,§ refuses to accept our authority. ¹⁰ So if I do visit, I will make it clear what he's been doing. He's been making malicious accusations against us. Not satisfied with doing that, he refuses to welcome any other brothers. He won't let anyone else welcome them either, and throws those who do so out of the church.

¹¹ My friend, don't imitate what is evil, but what is good. Those who do what's good belong to God; those who do evil don't know God.*

¹² Everyone speaks well of Demetrius—and the truth does so too! We also speak well of him, and you know we tell the truth. ¹³ I have so much to say to you, but I don't want to do it in writing with pen and ink. ¹⁴ I hope to see you soon so we can talk face to face. ¹⁵ May peace be with you! The friends here send their greetings to you. Please personally greet our friends there by name.

* **1:1** Usually understood to refer to John, the writer of this letter. † **1:5** Christian believers traveling around spreading the good news. ‡ **1:7** Literally, "Gentiles." § **1:9** Literally, "loves to be first." * **1:11** Literally, "have not seen God."

Jude

¹ This letter comes from Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and James' brother. I am writing to those who are called and loved by God the Father, and who are kept safe by Jesus Christ: ² May God's mercy, peace, and love increase in your experience!

³ My friends, I was already looking forward to writing to you about the salvation that we share. But now I need to write urgently to you and encourage you to vigorously defend the truth about God,* given once and for all time† to God's holy people. ⁴ For some people have quietly crept in among you. They were written about and condemned a long time ago, for they are wicked people who pervert God's grace, turning it into a license to immorality, while also denying our Lord and master Jesus Christ.

⁵ Even though you already know this, I want to remind you that though the Lord saved his people out of the land of Egypt, later he still destroyed those who disbelieved. ⁶ Even those angels that were not content with their God-given positions but abandoned their rightful places—he has placed them in eternal‡ chains of darkness until the great Day of Judgment. ⁷ In just the same way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the towns nearby that pursued immorality and perverted sex are provided as an example of those that experience the punishment of eternal fire.

⁸ Likewise these dreamers§ pollute their bodies, disregard authority, and insult heavenly beings. ⁹ Even the archangel Michael, when he was arguing with the devil over Moses' body, didn't dare to condemn him with a slanderous insult, but said, "May the Lord rebuke you." ¹⁰ But these people ridicule whatever they don't understand; and what they do understand they instinctively follow like unthinking animals—this is what destroys them. ¹¹ They're in terrible trouble! For they have followed Cain's way. Like Balaam and his delusion, they have abandoned themselves to the profit motive. Like Korah and his rebellion, they have destroyed themselves. ¹² These people spoil your fellowship meals, for they are selfish shepherds that don't have the slightest sense of shame—they only take care of themselves. They're clouds blown along by the wind that bring no rain. They're bare trees without fruit—twice dead, pulled out by the roots. ¹³ They're violent ocean waves, foaming in their own disgrace. They're false stars, doomed forever to utter darkness.

¹⁴ Enoch, seven generations on from Adam, spoke prophetically about these people: "Look! The Lord is coming, together with

* **1:3** Literally: "faith," or "belief." † **1:3** "Given once and for all time": since God revealed the truth about himself at many different times in history, probably the idea here is the consummate revelation of God by himself in the Person of Jesus. ‡ **1:6** Eternal in the sense of consequence, not in duration—as is obvious from the context in that this "eternal" aspect ends with the judgment. The same applies to the "eternal fire" in verse 7 that is exemplified by Sodom and Gomorrah—the effects are eternal, but the towns are not burning now, nor "forever." § **1:8** The reference is to the people mentioned in verse 4.

thousands and thousands of his holy ones ¹⁵ to judge everyone, to reveal all the wicked things people have done, and all the terrible things hostile sinners have said against him.” ¹⁶ Such people are grumblers, always complaining. They follow their own evil desires, speaking boastfully about themselves, and flattering others to get what *they* want.

¹⁷ But you, my dear friends, please remember what you were told by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ They explained to you that in the last times mockers would come, following their own wicked desires.* ¹⁹ They cause divisions; they are worldly people who don't have the Spirit.

²⁰ But you, my friends, are to build yourselves up through your trust in God. Pray in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves safe in God's love, and wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ who brings eternal life. ²² Show kindness to those who doubt. ²³ Save those you can by snatching them out of the fire. Show mercy—but with great care, hating even the “clothing” that is contaminated by sinful human nature.†

²⁴ Now to him who can keep you from falling,
and who can bring you into his glorious presence without fault,
and with great joy,

²⁵ to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord,
be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time, now, and
forever.
Amen.

* **1:18** See 2 Peter 3:3. † **1:23** In other words, while being merciful to the sinner, be very careful about the “sinful clothing” human beings have on them, so as to avoid becoming “infected” yourself.

Revelation

¹ This is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what will happen soon. He sent his angel to reveal it to his servant John ² who confirmed everything he saw concerning the word of God and the testimony* of Jesus Christ.

³ Anyone who reads† this is blessed, as are those who hear these prophetic words and pay attention to what's written, because the time is near.

⁴ This letter comes from John and is sent to the seven churches in the province of Asia.‡ May you have grace and peace from the one who was, who is, and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ the trustworthy witness, the firstborn from the dead, the ruler of earthly kings. To Jesus who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶ who made us into his kingdom, priests to his God and Father—to Jesus be glory and authority for ever and ever. Amen.

⁷ Look, he is coming surrounded by clouds, and everybody shall see him, even those who killed him. All the peoples of the earth will weep because of him. May it be so! Amen.

⁸ “I am the Beginning and the End,”§ says the All-powerful Lord God, who was, who is, and who is to come.

⁹ I am John, your brother who shares with you in the suffering and in the kingdom and in the patient waiting that are our experience in Jesus. I was detained on the island of Patmos for sharing the word of God and the truth as revealed by Jesus. ¹⁰ I was filled by the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard a loud voice behind me that sounded like a trumpet. ¹¹ It told me, “Write down in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.”

¹² I turned round to see who was speaking to me. When I turned I saw seven golden candlesticks, ¹³ and standing among the candlesticks was someone who looked like a Son of man.* He was wearing a robe that reached down to his feet with a golden sash across his chest. ¹⁴ His hair looked like white wool, and his eyes like flaming fire. ¹⁵ His feet looked like polished brass that had been refined in a furnace. His voice sounded like a thundering waterfall.

¹⁶ He was holding seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp double-edged sword came out of his mouth. His face shone like the sun at its brightest. ¹⁷ When I saw him I fell down at his feet as if I were dead. But he touched me with his right hand and said, “Don't be afraid, I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ the living one. I was dead, but look! Now I am alive for ever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and the grave.†

* **1:2** That is, the witness and evidence given by and about Jesus. † **1:3** Referring particularly to those who read this book out loud to others. ‡ **1:4** In Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey. § **1:8** Literally, “Alpha and Omega,” the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.

* **1:13** Son of man: the term Jesus often used to describe himself, and also an apocalyptic term used in the book of Daniel: Daniel 7:13. † **1:18** Literally, “Hades.”

¹⁹ So write down what you've seen—what's happening in the present and what will happen in the future. ²⁰ The meaning of the seven stars that you saw me holding in my right hand and the seven golden candlesticks is this: the seven stars are the angels[‡] of the seven churches and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches.”

2

¹ “Write this to the angel of the Ephesus church: This is what the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand says, the one who walks among the seven golden candlesticks: ² I know what you've accomplished, your hard work and perseverance. I know you can't tolerate evil people, and how you investigated those who claimed to be apostles but are not, and discovered they were frauds. ³ I know about your patience, and what you endured for my sake—and that you didn't give up!

⁴ But I have something against you: you have neglected your first love. ⁵ So remember how far you've fallen—repent and go back to what you were doing at first. Otherwise I'll come to you and I will remove your candlestick from where it is—unless you repent. ⁶ However, you do have this to your credit: you hate the actions of the Nicolaitans,* just as I do. ⁷ If you have ears, listen to what the Spirit is telling the churches.† I will give to those who are victorious the privilege of eating from the tree of life, which stands in the Paradise of God.

⁸ Write this to the angel of the Smyrna church: This is what the first and last says, the one who was dead and came back to life: ⁹ I know the troubles you are going through, and how poor you are (but you are rich), and the abuse from those who say they are Jews but are not, but belong to Satan's synagogue. ¹⁰ Don't be afraid about what you are going to suffer. Yes, the devil will throw some of you into prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Just remain faithful, even if it means death, and I will give you the crown of life! ¹¹ If you have ears, listen to what the Spirit is telling the churches. The second death will not harm those who are victorious.

¹² Write this to the angel of the Pergamum church: This is what the one holding the sharp two-edged sword says: ¹³ I know you're living where Satan has his throne, and that you have stayed true to me. You have not denied your trust in me, even when my faithful witness Antipas was killed right among you there where Satan lives!

¹⁴ But I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak[‡] how to entrap the children of Israel by means of eating food sacrificed to idols and committing sexual sins. ¹⁵ Similarly you also have some who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. ¹⁶ So repent, or soon I will come to you and fight against them using the sword of my mouth. ¹⁷ If you have ears, listen to what the Spirit is telling the churches. I will give the

‡ **1:20** Angel means “messenger.” * **2:6** Nicolaitans: little is known about this group. It is suggested that they taught the physical had no impact on the spiritual, so the kind of life you led was not important. † **2:7** In other words, if you are able to hear what is said, then listen and pay attention. ‡ **2:14** Referring to the story in Numbers 22 and following.

hidden manna to those who are victorious. I will give them a white stone with a new name written on it that nobody knows except those who receive it.

¹⁸ Write this to the angel of the Thyatira church: This is what the Son of God says, the one who has eyes like flaming fire and feet like polished brass. ¹⁹ I know what you have accomplished, your love and faithfulness and service and perseverance, and that you are doing more now than when you first believed.

²⁰ But I have something against you: you are allowing the woman called Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess to teach my followers, leading them astray into sexual sins, and to eat food sacrificed to idols. ²¹ I gave her time to repent of her sexual sins, but she's not willing to repent. ²² So I'm throwing her into a bed together with her adulterous partners and they will suffer terribly unless they repent of what they have done with her. ²³ I will put her children to death. Then all the churches will know that I am the one who examines thoughts and motives. [§] I will repay each of you according to what you've done.

²⁴ For the rest of you there in Thyatira who don't follow this teaching, who have not learned Satan's 'deep depravities' as they are called, I don't place on you any other burden. I say to you, ²⁵ 'Just hold on to what you have until I come.' ²⁶ I will give authority over the nations to those who are victorious and who do what I say until the end. ²⁷ He will rule the nations with an iron rod, breaking them into pieces like clay pots.* In the same way that I received authority from my Father, ²⁸ I will give them the morning star.† ²⁹ If you have ears, listen to what the Spirit is telling the churches."

3

¹ "Write this to the angel of the Sardis church: This is what the one who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars says: I know what you have accomplished, and that you give the appearance of being alive—but in reality you are dead. ² Wake up, and try to revive what is left that's about to die! For I have discovered that from the perspective of my God, nothing you've done has been finished.

³ So remind yourselves of how this message came to you, and what you heard. Observe what you were told to do, and repent. If you don't watch out, I'll come unexpectedly like a thief, and you won't know at what time I'll come to you!

⁴ But there are some among you in Sardis who have not ruined their clothes,* and they will walk with me dressed in white, for they deserve to do so. ⁵ Those who are victorious will be dressed in white like this. Their names will not be removed from the book of life, and I will speak for them in the presence of my Father and his angels. ⁶ If you have ears, listen to what the Spirit is telling the churches.

§ 2:23 "Thoughts and motives"—Literally, "kidneys and hearts." * 2:27 See Psalms 2:8-9.
 † 2:28 "Morning star"—an ancient reference to the planet Venus, associated with victory. It is also a title given to Christ. * 3:4 Meaning that they had not defiled themselves by doing evil.

⁷ Write this to the angel of the Philadelphia church: This is what the one says, the one who is holy and true, who has the key of David.[†] He can open and nobody is able to shut, he can shut, and nobody is able to open: ⁸ I know what you have accomplished—look, I've opened a door for you that no one can shut. I know that you only have a little strength, but you did what I told you, and you did not deny me. ⁹ From Satan's synagogue I will bring those who say they are Jews, (but are not, they are liars), making them come and worship at your feet, so that they will acknowledge that I love you. ¹⁰ Because you have persevered as I told you to, I will take care of you during the testing time that is coming on the whole world when those who live on the earth will be on trial.

¹¹ I am coming soon! Keep a tight grasp on what you have, so that no one takes your crown. ¹² Those who are victorious I will make into pillars in the Temple of my God. They won't ever have to leave. I will write on them the name of my God, the name of the city of my God called New Jerusalem which descends from heaven from my God, and my own new name. ¹³ If you have ears, listen to what the Spirit is telling the churches.

¹⁴ Write this to the angel of the Laodicea church: This is what the Amen says, who is the faithful, true witness, highest ruler of God's creation: ¹⁵ I know what you have accomplished—you're neither hot nor cold. I wish you were hot or cold! ¹⁶ But because you're lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I'm going to spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ You say to yourselves, 'I'm rich, I have wealth, and don't need anything.' But you don't know that you are miserable and pitiful and poor and blind and naked. ¹⁸ I advise you to buy from me gold refined[‡] by fire so you may be rich; and have white clothes so you can be properly dressed and you won't reveal your nakedness and shame; and ointment to put on your eyes so you can see.

¹⁹ Those I love I correct and discipline. So be really sincere, and repent. ²⁰ Look, I'm standing at the door, knocking. If anyone hears me calling and opens the door, I will come in and eat with them, and they with me. ²¹ I will have those who are victorious sit down with me beside my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down beside my Father on his throne. ²² If you have ears, listen to what the Spirit is telling the churches."

4

¹ After this I saw a door that had been opened in* heaven. The voice that I'd heard before, the one that sounded like a trumpet, told me, "Come up here, and I will show you what will happen next."

² Immediately I was filled by the Spirit and saw a throne set up in heaven, with someone sitting on the throne. ³ The one sitting there shone like jewels, like jasper and carnelian, and there was a rainbow that circled the throne, shining like an emerald. ⁴ Around the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and twenty-four elders were sitting on these thrones, dressed in white and wearing golden crowns on their

[†] 3:7 "The key of David": see Isaiah 22:22. [‡] 3:18 Or "purified." * 4:1 Or "into."

heads. ⁵ From the throne lightning flashed and thunder roared. Seven torches blazed in front of the throne—these are the seven Spirits of God. ⁶ Stretching out in front of the throne was a sea of glass, as clear as crystal. In the center and all around the throne were four living creatures covered in eyes, both front and back. ⁷ The first creature looked like a lion, the second like a young bull, the third had a human face, and the fourth looked like a flying eagle. ⁸ The four living creatures each had six wings also covered with eyes. Day and night they never stop saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the All-powerful Lord God, who was, who is, and who is to come.”

⁹ Whenever the living creatures glorify, honor, and thank the one that sits on the throne, who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him that sits on the throne. They will worship the one who lives for ever and ever, and throw down their crowns before the throne. They say, ¹¹ “Our Lord and our God, you are worthy to be given glory, and honor, and authority, for you created everything. Your will brought Creation into existence.”

5

¹ I saw the one sitting on the throne holding a scroll in his right hand.* The scroll was written on both sides and was sealed with seven seals. ² I saw a powerful angel shouting in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” ³ Nobody in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth† was able to open the scroll and read it. ⁴ I cried many tears because nobody could be found who was worthy to open the book and read it. ⁵ One of the elders spoke to me and said, “Don’t cry. Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the descendant of David, has won the battle and can open the scroll and its seven seals.”

⁶ I saw a Lamb that looked as if it had been killed standing in the center by the throne and the four living creatures, among the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes that are the seven Spirits of God that are sent out to all the earth. ⁷ He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one that sat on the throne. ⁸ When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each of them had a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the believers. ⁹ They sang a new song, “You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, for you were slain and with your blood you redeemed for God people from every tribe, language, people, and nation. ¹⁰ You made them into a kingdom and priests for our God, and they will reign on the earth.”

¹¹ As I looked I heard the voices of millions of angels around the throne, together with the living creatures and the elders, ¹² shouting loudly together: “The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive authority, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing.”

¹³ Then I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, in the sea—every creature everywhere—replying: “To the one

* 5:1 “Right hand.” This is assumed, the Greek simply says “in/on his right.” † 5:3 “In heaven, or on earth, or under the earth.” This is simply referring to “everywhere.” It does not necessarily imply that there are people who are conscious “under the earth.” Also 5:13.

who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb be blessing, honor, glory, and authority, for ever and ever.”¹⁴ The four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

6

¹ I watched as the Lamb broke open the first of the seven seals. I heard one of the four living creatures shout with a thunderous voice, “Come!”^{*} ² I looked and saw a white horse. Its rider was holding a bow. He was given a crown, and he rode out conquering so that he would be victorious.

³ When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!” ⁴ Another horse came out, a red one. Its rider was given a large sword, and the power to take away peace from the earth so that people would slaughter one other.

⁵ When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” I looked and saw a black horse. Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶ I heard what seemed to be a voice coming from among the four living creatures that said, “Two pounds of wheat cost a day’s wages, and three pounds of barley cost the same.”[†] But don’t damage the oil or the wine.”[‡]

⁷ When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the fourth living creature say, “Come!” ⁸ I looked and saw a pale horse. The rider was called Death, and Hades followed him.[§] They received authority over a quarter of the earth to kill people by the sword, by famine, by plague, and by wild beasts.

⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar those^{*} who had been killed because of their dedication to the word of God and their faithful witness. ¹⁰ They cried out, shouting, “How long, Lord who is holy and true, before you will judge and bring to justice those on earth who spilled our blood?” ¹¹ Each one of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait for a little longer until their number was complete—their fellow-believers and brothers who would be killed like them.

¹² When he opened the sixth seal there was a tremendous earthquake. The sun turned black like hair sackcloth and the whole moon turned red like blood. ¹³ The stars of heaven fell to earth like unripe figs falling from a fig tree shaken by a windstorm.

¹⁴ The sky disappeared like a scroll rolling up, and all the mountains and islands were moved from where they were. ¹⁵ The kings of the earth, the great leaders, the wealthy, the powerful, and all people, slave or free, hid themselves in caves and among the rocks in the mountains.

^{*} **6:1** The command could also be, “Go!” [†] **6:6** Two pounds/three pounds—an approximate measurement. The Greek measure is about one quart, or just over one liter. The point being made here is just how expensive basic foods have become. [‡] **6:6** The command to the rider is not to inflict damage on these other staple food items. [§] **6:8** Hades—the Greek word for the grave, the place of the dead. ^{*} **6:9** “Those.” In the original the word means “lives,” often translated as “souls.” However, the Biblical concept of the “soul” references a living person (e.g. Genesis 2:7) and can die (Ezekiel 18:20) and is not the disembodied spirit of Hellenistic thought. Like many aspects in Revelation the fact that these dead martyrs should speak is symbolic rather than literal.

16 They called on the mountains and the rocks, telling them, "Fall upon us! Hide us[†] from the face of the one who sits on the throne, and from the judgment[‡] of the Lamb. 17 For the terrible day of their judgment has come, and who can stand against it?"

7

1 Then I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth* holding back the earth's four winds to prevent any wind from blowing on the earth, or over the sea, or against any tree. 2 I watched another angel rise up from the east, holding the seal of the living God. He shouted in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given the power to damage the earth and the sea, 3 "Don't hurt the earth or the sea or the trees until we have placed a seal on the foreheads of God's true followers!"

4 I was told the number of those who were sealed: one hundred and forty-four thousand. Those who were sealed came from every tribe of the children of Israel: 5 twelve thousand from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand from the tribe of Reuben, twelve thousand from the tribe of Gad, 6 twelve thousand from the tribe of Asher, twelve thousand from the tribe of Naphtali, twelve thousand from the tribe of Manasseh, 7 twelve thousand from the tribe of Simeon, twelve thousand from the tribe of Levi, twelve thousand from the tribe of Issachar, 8 twelve thousand from the tribe of Zebulun, twelve thousand from the tribe of Joseph, twelve thousand from the tribe of Benjamin.

9 After this I looked and saw a great crowd that nobody could count, made up of every nation, tribe, people and language. They were standing in front of the throne and the Lamb, dressed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. 10 They gave a loud shout, "Salvation is from our God who sits on the throne, and from the Lamb."

11 All the angels surrounding the throne, and the elders and the four living creatures, fell down on their faces before the throne, worshipping God. 12 "Amen!" they said. "Blessing, glory, wisdom, gratitude, honor, power, and strength, be to God for ever and ever. Amen."

13 One of the elders spoke to me and asked, "Who are those who are dressed in white robes, and where have they come from?" 14 I replied, "My Lord, you know the answer." He told me, "These are the ones who have passed through great persecution. They washed their robes, making them white through the blood of the Lamb. 15 That's why they can stand in front of God's throne, and they serve him day and night in his Temple. The one who sits on the throne will protect them with his presence.[†] 16 They will never be hungry ever again, or thirsty; the sun will not beat down on them and they will not suffer scorching heat,[‡]

[†] **6:16** "Fall upon us! Hide us": the reference is from Hosea 10:8. [‡] **6:16** Literally, "anger," and in the following verse. However, this human emotion when applied to God can misrepresent what is meant here. The old term "wrath" includes something of the idea of judgment and punishment, but is obsolete. What is clearly happening here is the execution of God's judgment which is right and true, and does not fit with human aspects of anger that include "being mad" or "furious rage." * **7:1** In ancient times the earth is seen as having these four corners from where the winds blow. [†] **7:15** "Protect with his presence": literally, "tents among them," using the same word for Jesus' coming in John 1:14. [‡] **7:16** Quoting Isaiah 49:10.

17 because the Lamb who is at the center of the throne will be their shepherd,[§] and will lead them to springs of living water,^{*} and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”[†]

8

1 When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for around half an hour. 2 I saw the seven angels that stand before God. They were given seven trumpets. 3 Then another angel came and stood at^{*} the altar. He had a golden censer[†] and he was given a large quantity of incense to add to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar that stands in front of the throne. 4 The smoke of the incense rose together with the prayers of the saints before God from the hand of the angel. 5 The angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it down upon the earth; there was the sound of thunder, with lightning flashes, and a terrible earthquake. 6 Then the seven angels holding the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

7 The first angel blew his trumpet. Hail and fire mixed with blood rained down on the earth. One third of the earth was burned up, one third of the trees were burned up and all the green grass was burned up.

8 The second angel blew his trumpet. Something looking like a huge mountain of flaming fire was thrown into the sea. One third of the sea turned to blood, 9 and one third of the creatures that lived in the sea died, and one third of all ships were destroyed.

10 The third angel blew his trumpet. A great star fell from heaven, blazing brightly. It fell on a third of the rivers and springs of water. 11 The name of the star is Wormwood, and one third of the water turned bitter,[‡] and many people died from drinking the water because it had become poisonous.[§]

12 The fourth angel blew his trumpet. One third of the sun, moon, and stars were struck so a third of them would be darkened, and a third part of the day would not give light, similarly the night.

13 I saw and heard an eagle^{*} flying in mid-heaven, shouting loudly, “Disaster, disaster, disaster is coming to those who live on the earth because of what is going to happen when the three remaining angels blow their trumpets.”

9

1 The fifth angel blew his trumpet. I watched a star fall from heaven to earth. He^{*} was given the key to the opening of the Abyss.[†] 2 He opened the entrance to the Abyss, and smoke came up out of the Abyss like the smoke of a huge furnace. The sun and the atmosphere became dark because of the smoke from the Abyss. 3 Locusts came out of the

§ 7:17 See Psalms 23:1. * 7:17 Quoting Isaiah 49:10. † 7:17 Quoting Isaiah 25:8. * 8:3 Literally, “on.” † 8:3 An object that is used to hold burning incense. ‡ 8:11 In Greek, “Wormwood” is synonymous with “bitter.” § 8:11 A different word is used here, “to make bitter or sour,” but due to its effects it is probably best to translate this as “poisonous.” * 8:13 Or vulture. * 9:1 “He”—referring to the star. † 9:1 Sometimes translated “bottomless pit.”

smoke onto the earth, and they were given power like that possessed by scorpions. ⁴ They were told not to harm the grass or any vegetation or any trees, only those who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵ They were not allowed to kill, but they could torture these people for five months. The torture was like that of a scorpion when it stings someone.

⁶ During that time people will look for death, but won't find it; they will want to die, but death will run away from them! ⁷ The locusts looked like war-horses. They wore what seemed to be golden crowns on their heads, and their faces looked human. ⁸ They had long hair like women and had teeth like lions. ⁹ Their breastplates looked like they were made of iron, and the noise made by their wings sounded like many horses and chariots racing into battle. ¹⁰ They had tails like scorpions, complete with stingers. They had the power to hurt people for five months with their tails. ¹¹ Ruling over them as their king was the angel of the Abyss who is called Abaddon in Hebrew and Apollyon in Greek.‡ ¹² The first Disaster is over, but there are still two more to come.

¹³ The sixth angel blew his trumpet. I heard a voice come from the horns of the golden altar that stands in front of God ¹⁴ speaking to the sixth angel that had the trumpet: "Release the four angels that are tied up beside the great River Euphrates."

¹⁵ The four angels who had been kept ready for this particular hour, day, month and year were released to kill one third of humanity. ¹⁶ I was told the number of the army of soldiers on horseback: it was 200 million.

¹⁷ In my vision I saw the horses and their riders who wore breastplates as red as fire, and dark blue and yellow.§ The heads of the horses looked like lions, and fire and smoke and sulfur streamed out of their mouths.

¹⁸ One third of humanity was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and smoke and sulfur streaming out of their mouths. ¹⁹ The horses' power was in their tails as well as their mouths, for their tails were like serpents' heads that they used to hurt people.

²⁰ But the rest of humanity who were not killed by these plagues did not repent of what they were doing. They did not stop worshiping demons and idols of gold, silver, bronze, and stone—which can't see or hear or walk! ²¹ They did not repent of their murders, their witchcraft, their sexual sins, or their thefts.

10

¹ Then I saw another powerful angel descending from heaven, with a cloud wrapped around him and with a rainbow over his head. His face looked like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. ² He was holding a small scroll that had already been opened. He placed his right foot on the sea, and this left foot on the land. ³ He gave a great shout, like a lion roaring. When he shouted, the seven thunders responded. ⁴ When the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write down what

‡ 9:11 Abaddon in Hebrew means "destruction" while Apollyon in Greek means "destroyer."

§ 9:17 Literally, "hyacinth and sulfur."

they said when I heard a voice from heaven that told me, “Keep under seal what the seven thunders said. Don’t write them down.”⁵ The angel I saw standing on the sea and on the land held up his right hand to heaven.⁶ He made a sacred oath by the one who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and everything in them, and the earth and everything in it, and the sea and everything in it. “No more delay!” he said.⁷ But at the time when the seventh angel speaks, when he blows his trumpet, then the mystery* of God will be completed—the good news he announced through his servants the prophets.

⁸ Then I heard again the voice from heaven telling me, “Go and take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel that stands on the sea and on the land.”⁹ So I went to the angel, and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, “Take it and eat it up. It will be sour in your stomach, but sweet as honey in your mouth.”[†]¹⁰ I took the little scroll from the angel and ate it up. In my mouth it was as sweet as honey, but it was sour in my stomach.¹¹ I was told, “You must prophesy again regarding many peoples, nations, languages, and kings.”

11

¹ I was given a measuring rod and told, “Get up and measure the Temple of God, and the altar, and count those who are worshiping there.² Don’t measure the court outside the Temple, leave that, because it has been handed over to the nations. They will trample down the holy city for forty-two months.

³ I will give my two witnesses power, and they will prophesy 1,260 days, dressed in sackcloth.”⁴ They are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks that stand in front of the Lord of the earth.*⁵ If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes out of their mouths and burns up their enemies. This is how anyone who tries to harm them will be killed.⁶ These two witnesses have the power to close the sky so that it will not rain during the time of their prophecy. They also have the power to turn the waters into blood, and to strike the earth with all kinds of plagues, as often as they want.⁷ When they finish their testimony, the beast coming from the Abyss will attack them, defeat them, and kill them.⁸ Their dead bodies will lie on the open street of the great city, called Sodom and Egypt in spiritual symbolism—also the place where their Lord was crucified.[†]⁹ For three and a half days those from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will look at their dead bodies, and will not allow their corpses to be buried.¹⁰ The inhabitants of the earth are delighted they are dead, and celebrate, sending gifts to each other, because these two prophets had been a torment to them.¹¹ But three and half days later God’s life-giving breath entered them and they stood on their feet. Those who saw this were absolutely terrified.[‡]¹² The two witnesses heard a loud voice from heaven telling them, “Come up here!” So they ascended to heaven in a cloud while their enemies watched.¹³ At the same

* **10:7** As always, this is a “revealed mystery.” In other words, “God’s mysterious plan will be accomplished.”[†] **10:9** For reference see Numbers 5:24 and Ezekiel 3:3. * **11:4** A reference to Zechariah 4:14. [†] **11:3** Clearly referring to Jerusalem. [‡] **11:11** The verb tense in this passage (11:7-11) in Greek changes from future to present to past. This translation has maintained this change.

time there was a huge earthquake, and one tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

¹⁴ The second Disaster is over; the third Disaster is about to arrive! ¹⁵ The seventh angel blew his trumpet, and loud voices shouted in heaven, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." ¹⁶ The twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones in God's presence fell down on their faces and worshipped God. ¹⁷ They said, "We thank you, Lord God, the All-powerful One, who is and was, because you have taken up your great power and have asserted your rule."

¹⁸ The nations became furious, but your judgment has come, § the time when the dead will be judged. This is the time when your servants the prophets and the believers will be given their reward, those who respect your authority, both the weak and the powerful. This is also the time when you will destroy those who destroy the earth.

¹⁹ Then the Temple of God in heaven was opened, and the Ark of the Agreement* could be seen inside his Temple. There were lightning flashes, the sound of thunder, an earthquake, and a great hailstorm.

12

¹ Then an amazing sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars on her head. ² She was pregnant, and she cried out because of her labor pains, groaning as she was giving birth. ³ Another sign appeared in heaven: a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, with seven small crowns* on his heads. ⁴ His tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them down to the earth. The dragon stood right in front of the woman who was giving birth, so that he could eat her child as soon as it was born.

⁵ She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all nations with an iron rod.† Her son was snatched up to God and his throne. ⁶ The woman ran away into the desert, where God had prepared a place for her, so that she could be looked after for 1,260 days.

⁷ There was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought with the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought ⁸ but he was not strong enough, and they could no longer remain in heaven. ⁹ The great dragon, the ancient serpent called the Devil and Satan who deceives the whole world, was thrown down to the earth, and his angels with him.

¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, "Now salvation has come, and power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. The Accuser of the believers‡ has been thrown down—the one who accuses them in God's presence day and night. ¹¹ They conquered him through the blood of the Lamb and through their

§ **11:18** In other words, the day of judgment. On the issue of human anger as opposed to divine anger see on 6:16. * **11:19** Or "covenant." * **12:3** Or "diadems" (also 13:1). The Greek word used here is different to that used in 12:1. † **12:5** See Psalms 2:9. ‡ **12:10** Literally, "brothers."

personal testimony—they did not love their lives so much that they were willing to die if necessary.

¹² So celebrate, heaven, and everyone who lives there! Mourn, earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you and is very angry, knowing his time is short.”

¹³ When the dragon realized he had been thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman that had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴ The woman was given the wings of a large eagle so she could fly away to a deserted place where she could be looked after for a time, times, and half a time, protected from the serpent.

¹⁵ The serpent spewed water like a river out of his mouth, trying to sweep her away in the flood. ¹⁶ The earth came to the woman's aid by opening its mouth and swallowing up the river that the dragon spewed out of his mouth. ¹⁷ The dragon was furious with the woman, and went off to attack the rest of her offspring, those who keep God's commandments and have the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁸ §

13

¹ And the dragon stood on the sea shore. Then I saw a beast rising out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten small crowns on his horns, and had blasphemous names on his heads. ² The beast I saw looked like a leopard, but his feet looked like those of a bear, and his mouth looked like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power, his throne, and great authority. ³ One of his heads seemed to have suffered a death-blow, but this fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder at the beast, ⁴ and they worshiped the dragon because he had given his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, asking “Who is like the beast? Who could defeat him?” ⁵ He was given the ability* to make great boasts and speak blasphemies, and he was also given the authority to do this for forty-two months. ⁶ As soon as he opened his mouth he spoke blasphemies against God, insulting his character,† his sanctuary,‡ and those who live in heaven. ⁷ The beast was given power to attack believers and defeat them, and he was also given authority over every people, tribe, language, and nation. ⁸ Everybody living on earth will worship him, those whose names had not been written in the book of life—the book of life that belongs to the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world. ⁹ If you have ears, listen! ¹⁰ Anyone who has to go into captivity will go into captivity; anyone who has to die by the sword will die by the sword.§ This demonstrates the patient endurance and confidence in God of the believers.

¹¹ Then I saw another beast, rising up from the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. ¹² He imposed the same

§ **12:18** Some versions place the first line of verse 1 of the following chapter here as the last verse of chapter 12. * **13:5** Literally, “given a mouth.” † **13:6** Literally, “name.” ‡ **13:6**

Sanctuary: or “dwelling place.” § **13:10** There are two textual variants here. The text could also say that those who kill with the sword will themselves be killed with the sword, paralleling Matthew 26:52. However, in view of the next verse that encourages the believers to endure persecution, rather than expecting retribution, the text as translated is the one preferred here. See Jeremiah 15:2.

authority as the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and those who live there worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. ¹³ He performed great miracles, even bringing fire down from heaven to earth while people watched. ¹⁴ He deceived those who live on the earth by the miracles he performed on behalf of the beast, ordering the people that they should make an image for the beast who had received the fatal sword wound but came back to life.

¹⁵ He was permitted to breathe life into the image of the beast so that it could speak, ordering anyone who did not worship it put to death. ¹⁶ He made everyone, whether weak or powerful, rich or poor, free or slave, receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads. ¹⁷ Nobody was permitted to buy or sell except those who had the mark, which was the name of the beast or the number of his name.

¹⁸ Wisdom is needed here. Whoever has understanding should calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. His number is 666.

14

¹ I looked, and saw the Lamb standing on Mount Zion. With him were 144,000 who had his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads. ² I heard a voice from heaven that sounded like rushing water and loud thunder and many harps being played. ³ They sang a new song in front of the throne and the four living creatures and the elders. Nobody could learn the song except the 144,000, those who had been redeemed from the earth. ⁴ They have not become morally impure by sinning with women; spiritually they are virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were redeemed from humankind as the firstfruits to God and the Lamb. ⁵ They speak no lies; they are without fault.

⁶ Then I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven. He had the eternal good news to announce to those who lived on the earth, to every nation, tribe, language, and people. ⁷ He cried out in a loud voice, "Give God reverence and glory, for the time of his judgment has come. Worship the one who made heaven and earth and sea and springs of water."

⁸ A second angel followed, calling out, "Babylon the great has collapsed into ruins!*" She made all the nations drink the wine of her sexual immorality that brings God's furious opposition."[†]

⁹ A third angel followed the first two, and cried out in a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives a mark on their forehead or on their hand, ¹⁰ they will also drink of the wine of God's furious opposition that is poured undiluted into the cup of his anger;[‡] and they will suffer anguish[§] in fire and burning sulfur before the holy angels and the Lamb. ¹¹ The smoke of their anguish ascends

* **14:8** See Isaiah 21:9. † **14:8** This alludes to Jeremiah 51:7. In view of verse 10 that follows and the Jeremiah allusion is seems appropriate to conclude that it is this "wine of God's furious opposition" that is in view here. Of course human language is being used to describe God so while his intense opposition to sin is clear, words like "fury" and "anger" should not be understood in terms of fallen human nature. ‡ **14:10** Or "indignation." § **14:10** Or "tortured." Note that the term here (also used in the following verse) is in the passive.

for ever and ever. They don't have any relief day or night, those who worship the beast and his image and who receive the mark of his name." ¹² This means the believers must patiently endure, keeping God's commandments and trusting in Jesus.

¹³ Then I heard a voice from heaven that told me, "Write this down! Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, because they can rest from their troubles. What they have accomplished will speak for them."*

¹⁴ I looked and I saw a white cloud. Sitting on the cloud was someone that looked like the Son of man,[†] wearing a golden crown on his head and holding a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵ Another angel came out of the Temple and shouted in a loud voice to the one sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and start reaping, for it is harvest-time, and earth's harvest is ripe." ¹⁶ The one sitting on the cloud swung his sickle towards the earth, and reaped earth's harvest.

¹⁷ Another angel came out of the Temple in heaven. He also had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸ He was followed by an angel coming from the altar that was in charge of the fire, who called in a loud voice to the angel with the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and harvest the bunches of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe." ¹⁹ The angel swung his sickle on the earth and harvested the grapes from the vine, and threw them into the great winepress of God's judgment.[‡] ²⁰ They were trampled in the winepress outside the city. Blood flowed out of the winepress to the height of a horse's bridle, and to a distance of 1,600 stadia.[§]

15

¹ Then I saw another amazing, important sign in heaven. Seven angels held the seven last plagues which complete God's judgment. ² I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire. Standing beside the sea of glass were those who had defeated the beast and his image and the number of his name. They had harps given to them by God ³ and they sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: "What you have done is tremendous and marvelous, Lord God, the All-powerful One. Your ways are right and true, King of the nations.* ⁴ Who would not be in awe of you, Lord? Who would not glorify your name? For only you are holy. All nations will come and worship you because you have demonstrated by your actions that you do what is right!"

⁵ After this I looked and the Temple of the "Tent of Witness" was opened.[†] ⁶ Out of the Temple came the seven angels who held the seven plagues, wearing clean, white linen clothes and golden sashes on their chests. ⁷ One of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the judgment of God, who lives for ever and ever. ⁸ The Temple was filled with smoke that came from the

* **14:13** Literally, "will follow after them." † **14:14** See Daniel 7:13. ‡ **14:19** Literally, "fury," (also 15:7, 16:1, 19:15), but see note on "anger" in footnote to 6:16. § **14:20** 184 miles (296 kilometers). * **15:3** Or "King of the ages." † **15:5** There is some debate as to what is referred to here.

glory of God and from his power. Nobody was able to enter the Temple until the seven plagues that came from the seven angels were over.

16

¹ Then I heard a loud voice coming from the Temple telling the seven angels, "Go and pour out the seven bowls of God's judgment on the earth."

² So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and terrible, painful sores broke out on those who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image. ³ The second poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse and everything living in the sea died. ⁴ The third poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and the water turned into blood. ⁵ I heard the angel who had power over the waters declare, "You are truly right, you who are and was, the Holy One, as this judgment demonstrates. ⁶ These people shed the blood of believers. Now you've given them blood to drink, as they deserve!" ⁷ I heard a voice from the altar saying, "Yes, Lord God, the All-powerful One, your judgments are right and true!"

⁸ The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was given the power to scorch people with fire. ⁹ They were scorched by intense heat, and they cursed the name of God who controlled these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory. ¹⁰ The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the beast's throne, and darkness fell over his kingdom. The people bit their tongues because of the pain they felt, ¹¹ and they cursed the God of heaven because of their pain and their sores, but they did not repent and stop what they were doing.

¹² The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the mighty River Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that a way could be prepared for the kings that come from the east. ¹³ Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs coming out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. ¹⁴ These are demonic spirits that perform miracles, going out to gather together all the kings of the whole world for the battle on God the All-powerful One's great day of judgment.

¹⁵ (Pay attention! I will come like a thief.* Blessed are those who keep watch, and have their clothes ready so that they don't have to go out naked and be embarrassed.) ¹⁶ The evil spirits gathered the kings for battle at a place called Armageddon in Hebrew.

¹⁷ The seventh angel poured out his bowl on the air, and a loud voice came from the Temple, from the throne, shouting out, "It's over!" ¹⁸ Lightning flashed and thunder boomed, and a massive earthquake shook the earth. It was the worst earthquake that had ever happened since people lived there. ¹⁹ The great city was split into three. The cities of the nations were destroyed. Babylon the great was remembered in God's presence so that she should be given the cup filled with the wine of his hostility.

²⁰ All the islands vanished, and all the mountains disappeared. ²¹ Huge hailstones, each one weighing one hundred pounds,† rained

* **16:15** That is, unexpectedly. † **16:21** The Greek says a "weight of a talent."

down from the sky on people. The people cursed God because the plague of hail was so terrible.

17

¹ One of the seven angels with the seven bowls came and talked with me. "Come here," he said, "and I will show you the judgment of the infamous prostitute that sits* beside many waters.† ² The kings of the earth have committed adultery with her, and those who live on the earth became drunk on the wine of her immorality." ³ Then he carried me off in the Spirit to a deserted place, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that had seven heads and ten horns and was covered in blasphemous names. ⁴ The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and wore jewelry made of gold and gems and pearls. She held in her hand a golden cup full of obscene things and her disgusting immorality. ⁵ A name of mystery‡ was written on her forehead: Babylon the Great, the Mother of Prostitutes and of the World's Obscene Things. ⁶ I saw that the woman was drunk on the blood of believers, and on the blood of martyrs who had died for Jesus. When I saw her, I was totally amazed.

⁷ The angel asked me, "Why were you amazed? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and the beast she rode which has seven heads and ten horns. ⁸ The beast you saw once was, but is not,§ will soon come up again out of the Abyss, and will then be completely destroyed. Those that live on the earth who don't have their names written in the book of life will be amazed when they see the beast that once was but is not, and yet shall return.

⁹ A mind that has understanding is needed here. The seven heads are seven hills where the woman sits,* ¹⁰ they are seven kings. Five have already fallen, one is reigning now, and the last is still to come—and his reign will be short. ¹¹ The beast that was, and is not, is also an eighth king and belongs to the seven. He too will be completely destroyed.

¹² The ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not begun to reign yet. However, they will be given authority to reign as kings together with the beast for one hour. ¹³ They have one agreed purpose: to give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴ They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will defeat them for he is Lord of lords and King of kings. His followers are called and chosen, and they trust in him."

¹⁵ The angel went on to explain to me, "The waters that you saw where the harlot was sitting represent peoples, crowds of people, nations, and languages. ¹⁶ The ten horns that you saw and the beast will detest the prostitute, and will take away everything she has and strip her naked, eat her flesh and burn her to ashes.

* **17:1** To be seated has a similar idea to that in English of being "seated" as a ruler; also in verse 9. † **17:1** This is a reference to the city of Babylon and its rivers. ‡ **17:5** "Mystery": having a hidden meaning; now revealed. § **17:8** Or "that once existed but does not exist now." * **17:9** Again the idea here is of being seated as a ruler; see also verse 1.

¹⁷ For God put into their minds to do what he wanted, to have one agreed purpose: to give their kingdom to the beast—and so God's words will be fulfilled. ¹⁸ The woman you saw is the great city which rules over the kings of the earth."

18

¹ After this I saw another angel descending from heaven. He had great power* and the earth was lit up by his glory. ² He shouted out in a powerful voice, "Babylon the great has collapsed into ruins!† She has become a place where demons live, the refuge of every unclean spirit, and the roost of every unclean and detestable bird. ³ For all the nations have drunk‡ the wine of her mad sexual immorality. The kings of the earth have committed adultery with her, and the traders of the earth have grown rich from her excessive sensuality."

⁴ Then I heard another voice from heaven calling out, "My people, come out of her,§ so that you don't participate in her sinful ways, and so that you don't experience her plagues. ⁵ Her sins have piled up all the way to heaven, and God is very much aware of her wickedness. ⁶ Give back to her what she gave; repay her double for what she did. In her own cup mix double the trouble she mixed for others. ⁷ As much as she boasted about herself and indulged her lusts, give her back just as much anguish and sorrow. She told herself, 'I reign* as queen. I am no widow; I will never be in mourning.' ⁸ Because of this her plagues will come upon her in just one day: death, mourning, and famine. She will be completely destroyed by fire, for the Lord God who condemns† her has great power.

⁹ The kings of the earth who had committed adultery with her and indulged their lusts with her will cry and mourn over her when they see the smoke of the fire that destroys her. ¹⁰ Standing off at a distance because they are afraid they will suffer the same agony as her, they say, 'Disaster, disaster has struck Babylon, the great city! In just one hour your sentence of doom was executed!'

¹¹ The traders of the earth cry and grieve over her, because nobody is buying their goods any more— ¹² products made of gold, silver, gems and pearls; fine linen, purple cloth, silk, and scarlet material; all kinds of objects made of scented wood, or from ivory, or expensive woods, or bronze, iron, or marble; ¹³ shipments of cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, olive oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and wagons, and slaves and prisoners.‡

¹⁴ You've lost the sweet pleasures§ you loved so much; all your luxurious, glittering possessions are gone—you'll never get any of them back. ¹⁵ The traders who sold these things and became rich from trading with her will stand at a distance because they are afraid they will suffer the same agony as her. They will cry and grieve, saying, ¹⁶ 'Disaster, disaster has hit the great city! She was clothed in fine

* **18:1** Or "authority." † **18:2** See Isaiah 21:9. ‡ **18:3** Or "have fallen because of..."

§ **18:4** See Jeremiah 51:45. * **18:7** Literally, "sit." † **18:8** Or "judges." ‡ **18:13**

Literally, "bodies and souls of men." § **18:14** Literally, "ripe fruit."

linen and purple robes, and wore jewelry made of gold and gems and pearls. ¹⁷ In just one hour all this wealth was destroyed! Every sea captain and everyone who travels by sea and every sailor and everyone who earns their living from the sea stood at a distance. ¹⁸ As they watched the smoke of the fire that destroys her, they shouted out, 'What city could ever compare to this great city?' ¹⁹ They threw dust on their heads, shouting and crying and grieving, 'Disaster, disaster has struck the great city that made every ship-owner rich because of her extravagance! In just one hour she was destroyed!'

²⁰ Celebrate what's happened to her, heaven and believers and apostles and prophets, for God has condemned her as she condemned you."

²¹ A powerful angel picked up a rock the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "With this kind of violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, and will never exist again."

²² "Never again will anyone hear music in you: the sound of harps, singers, flutes, and trumpets. Never again will craftsmen of any trade work in you. Never again will the sound of a mill be heard in you. ²³ Never again will the light of a lamp shine in you. Never again will the voices of bridegroom and bride be heard in you. Your traders led the world. Through your witchcraft all the nations were deceived. ²⁴ In her the blood of prophets and believers was found, and of all those who have been killed on the earth."

19

¹ After this I heard what sounded like the noise of an enormous crowd in heaven, shouting, "Hallelujah! Salvation, glory, and power describe our God, ² because his judgments are true and right, for he has condemned the infamous prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has brought her to justice for her murders of his servants."* ³ Again they shouted, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her destruction ascends for ever and ever." ⁴ The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God who sits on the throne. "Amen! Hallelujah!" they shouted.

⁵ A voice spoke from the throne that said, "Praise our God, everyone who serves him and respects him, from the smallest to the greatest."

⁶ Then I heard what sounded like the noise of an enormous crowd, like rushing water and loud thunder, shouting, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the All-powerful One, he reigns! ⁷ Let's celebrate and be glad and give him the glory, because the wedding day of the Lamb has arrived, and his bride has prepared herself." ⁸ She was given fine linen to wear, white and clean. (Fine linen represents the good works of believers.)

⁹ The angel told me, "Write this down: How happy are those who are invited to the Lamb's wedding feast." Then he said to me, "These are God's true words." ¹⁰ I fell down at his feet to worship him. He told me, "Don't do that! I am one of God's servants just as you are, and

* **19:2** Literally, "for the blood of his servants at her hand."

those who accept Jesus' testimony. Worship God, for Jesus' testimony is the prophetic spirit."

¹¹ I saw heaven was opened. A white horse was standing there. Its rider was called Trustworthy and True. He is right when he judges, and he is right when he makes war. ¹² His eyes were like flaming fire. On his head were many crowns. He had a name written on him which no one but he himself knows. ¹³ He wore a robe covered in blood, and his name is The Word of God.

¹⁴ Heaven's armies were following him, riding on white horses and clothed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ From his mouth came a sharp sword to strike the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod,[†] and he himself treads the winepress of the All-powerful God's judgment.[‡] ¹⁶ Written on his robe and on his thigh was the name, King of kings and Lord of lords.

¹⁷ I saw an angel standing in the sun, shouting in a loud voice to all the birds that fly in the sky, "Come and gather together for God's great feast. ¹⁸ Here you can eat the flesh of the dead: kings, leaders, and powerful men, as well as that of horses and their riders, the flesh of all people, free and slave, great and small."

¹⁹ I saw the beast and the kings of the earth gathered together to wage war on the one sitting on the horse and his army. ²⁰ The beast was captured, along with the false prophet who performed miracles in his presence (by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped the beast's image). Both of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. ²¹ The rest were killed with the sword of the one sitting on the horse—the sword that came out of his mouth. All the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

20

¹ I saw an angel descending from heaven, holding the key of the Abyss and a large chain in his hand. ² He seized the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him in chains for one thousand years. ³ The angel threw him into the Abyss and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would no longer be able to deceive the nations until the thousand years were over. After that he has to be set free for a little while.

⁴ I saw people sitting on thrones who had been given the responsibility to judge, and the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony about Jesus and for sharing the word of God.* They had not worshiped the beast or his image, nor had they received the mark on their foreheads or their hands. They lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ This is the first resurrection. (The rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years had ended.) ⁶ Blessed and holy are those who take part in the first resurrection! The second death has no power over them. They will be priests of God, and of Christ, and they will reign with him for one thousand years.

[†] 19:15 See Psalms 2:9. [‡] 19:15 Literally, "of the fury of the anger." See on 14:9, and 6:16.

* 20:4 Some believe those who are sitting on the thrones are the same as those who have been beheaded.

⁷ Once the thousand years are over, Satan will be set free from his prison, ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations, symbolized by Gog and Magog,[†] to gather them together for battle from the four corners of the world. Their number is as uncountable as sand on the seashore. ⁹ They marched over the earth on a broad front and encircled the camp of the believers, the beloved city. But fire rained down from heaven and burned them up. ¹⁰ The devil, who had deceived them, was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet had also been thrown, and they will suffer in anguish day and night for ever and ever.

¹¹ Then I saw a large white throne with the one who sits on it. Heaven and earth vanished, and they were never seen again.[‡] ¹² I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened. Another book, the Book of Life, was opened and the dead were judged based on what was written in the books about what they had done. ¹³ The sea handed over the dead in it, and death and Hades handed over the dead that were in them,[§] and everyone was judged according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵ Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

21

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.* The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared, and the sea no longer existed. ² I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven, prepared like a bride made beautiful for her husband. ³ I heard a loud voice from the throne say, “Now God’s home[†] is with human beings and he will live with them. They will be his people. God himself will be with them as their God.[‡] ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes,[§] and death will never happen again. There will be no mourning or crying or pain ever again for the former world no longer exists.”

⁵ The one who sits on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” He told me, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶ Then he said to me, “Everything’s done! I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. To anyone who is thirsty I will give the free gift of water from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ Those who are victorious will inherit all these things, and I will be their God and they shall be my children. ⁸ But anyone who is a coward, who doesn’t trust me, who does disgusting things, who is a murderer, who is sexually immoral, who practices witchcraft, who worships idols, who tells lies—their chosen place* is in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. This is the second death.”

[†] **20:8** See Ezekiel 38:1-2. [‡] **20:11** This does not mean that the universe disappeared, but that God is recreating damaged Creation. [§] **20:13** In other words, all those who have died, wherever they were buried, will be judged. * **21:1** See Isaiah 65:17, Isaiah 66:22. [†] **21:3** The word is Literally, “to pitch a tent.” [‡] **21:3** “As their God” is not found in all ancient manuscripts. [§] **21:4** Quoting Isaiah 25:8. * **21:8** “Their chosen place”: or “their lot.”

⁹ One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls containing the seven last plagues came and spoke to me. He told me, “Come with me. I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.”

¹⁰ He took me in the Spirit to the top of a very high mountain. There he showed me the holy city Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven, ¹¹ shining with the glory of God’s presence. The light sparkled like that from a gemstone, a jasper, clear and bright. ¹² The city wall was high and thick, with twelve gates guarded by twelve angels. On the gates were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. ¹³ There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south, and three on the west. ¹⁴ The city wall had twelve foundations, and inscribed on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

¹⁵ The angel who spoke to me had a golden measuring rod to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁶ The city was square. The length was the same as the width. He measured the city with the rod, it was 12,000 furlongs.† The length, width, and height were all the same. ¹⁷ He measured the wall and it was 144 cubits‡ thick in human measurements that the angel was using.

¹⁸ The wall was built out of jasper. The city was made of pure gold that looked like glass. ¹⁹ The foundations of the city wall were decorated with all kinds of gemstones. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth, chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.

²¹ The twelve gates were made of pearl, each one made from a single pearl. The main street was made of pure gold, clear like glass. ²² I did not see a temple there, because the Lord God the All-powerful One, and the Lamb, they are its temple. ²³ The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it because the glory of God provides its light—the Lamb is its lamp. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory into the city. ²⁵ The gates of the city will never be shut during the day (and there will be no night there). ²⁶ The nations’ honor and glory will be brought into the city. ²⁷ Nothing unclean will ever enter into it, or anyone who worships idols, or who is a liar—only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

22

¹ The angel showed me the river of water of life, crystal-clear, flowing out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, ² right in the middle of the main street of the city. On both sides of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve crops of fruit, one every month. The leaves of the tree were used to heal people from all nations. ³ There will no longer be any curse.* The throne of God and of the Lamb will be there in the city, and his servants will worship him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ There will be no more night, and

† **21:16** About 1,500 miles. ‡ **21:17** Over 200 feet. * **22:3** Or “anything under a curse.”

they will not need the light of a lamp, or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will give them light. They shall reign for ever and ever.

⁶ The angel told me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord God, who gave his Spirit to the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants what is about to happen."

⁷ "I am coming soon![†] Blessed are those who obey the prophetic words of this book."

⁸ I am John who heard and saw all this. When I heard and saw them, I fell down at the feet of the angel who had shown me these things to worship him. ⁹ He told me, "Don't do that! I am one of God's servants just as you are, together with your brothers the prophets, and those who obey the words of this book. Worship God!"

¹⁰ Then he told me, "Don't seal up the words of prophecy of this book and keep them secret, for the time is near. ¹¹ Whoever doesn't do what is right, let them stay that way. Whoever is impure, let them stay that way. Whoever does what is right, let them stay that way. Whoever is holy, let them stay that way.

¹² I am coming soon, and I am bringing my reward to give to everybody based on what they've done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. ¹⁴ Blessed are those who wash their robes[‡] so that they have the right to the tree of life, and can enter into the city through the gates.

¹⁵ Those outside the city are dogs, those who practice witchcraft, those who are sexually immoral, those who murder, those who worship idols, and all those who love and invent lies.

¹⁶ I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony to share with the churches. I am both the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Whoever hears this, say, "Come." Whoever is thirsty, come, and whoever wants to, freely drink of the water of life. ¹⁸ I solemnly declare to everyone who hears the prophetic words of this book that if anyone adds to them then God will add to them the plagues described in this book. ¹⁹ If anyone takes away the prophetic words of this book, God will take away their share of the tree of life and of the holy city that are described in this book.

²⁰ He who confirms all this says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen, come, Lord Jesus. ²¹ May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with the believers. Amen.

[†] 22:7 These are understood to be the words of Jesus, see also verses 12 and 20. [‡] 22:14 Or "who keep his commandments."

Psalms

1

- 1 Happy are those who don't follow the advice of the wicked. They refuse to adopt the ways of sinful people, and they don't make fun of others.
- 2 Instead they love to do what the law of the Lord says, and they think about it day and night.
- 3 They're like trees growing by flowing rivers, producing fruit every season. Their leaves never wither, and they are successful in all they do.
- 4 But it's not like that for the wicked! They are like chaff, blown away by the wind.
- 5 For this reason the wicked will not survive the judgment—sinners have no place among those who live right.*
- 6 For the Lord watches over those who follow the right way, but the way of the wicked leads to death.

2

- 1 Why are the nations plotting rebellion?† The peoples devise schemes, but they're pointless.
- 2 The kings of the world prepare to attack,‡ and the rulers conspire together against the Lord and his anointed one,§ saying,
- 3 "Let's break the chains and throw away the cords that bind us."
- 4 But the one who sits enthroned in heaven laughs. The Lord mocks them.
- 5 He will thunder at them, and terrify them in his fury, saying,
- 6 "It is I who placed my king on Zion, my holy mountain."
- 7 "I will proclaim the Lord's decree," says the king. "He told me, 'You are my son. Today I have become your father.¶
- 8 Ask me, and I will give you the nations as your possessions—the whole earth will belong to you.
- 9 You will break them with a rod of iron, smashing them like pottery.' "
- 10 So then you kings, be wise!* Be warned, you rulers of the world!
- 11 Serve the Lord in reverence, celebrate with trembling!

* 1:5 "Those who live right": literally, "the righteous." However, this term is little used in general non-church language and so in this translation it is replaced with phrases such as "those who live right" or "those who do good/right" etc. This is more than being correct, it means living a life that is morally right. † 2:2 "To attack"—implied. ‡ 2:2 In this context "anointed one" means the king of Israel. § 2:7 Literally, "begotten you." * 2:10 Referring back to those mentioned in verse 2.

12 Submit to his son[†] so that he will not become angry and you die suddenly. His anger[‡] flares up quickly, but how happy are all those who go to him for protection.

3

A psalm of David concerning the time he had to flee from his son Absalom.

- 1 Lord, my enemies have become so many; so many are rebelling* against me.
- 2 So many are telling me, "God can't save you!" Selah.
- 3 But you, Lord, are a shield protecting me. You give me victory;† you hold my head high.
- 4 I cry out to the Lord for help, and he answers me from his holy mountain. Selah.
- 5 I lie down to sleep, and in the morning‡ I wake up because the Lord takes care of me.
- 6 I'm not afraid of tens of thousands who surround me, people who are against me.
- 7 Stand up for me, Lord! Save me, my God! Hit all my enemies on the cheek; break the teeth of the wicked!
- 8 Salvation belongs to you, Lord; may you be a blessing to your people. Selah.

4

For the music director. A psalm of David, to be accompanied by string instruments.

- 1 When I call, please answer me, God who vindicates me. When I was hemmed in by troubles, you gave me a way out. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer.
- 2 How long will you people ruin my reputation? How long will you love what is worthless and tell lies? Selah.
- 3 You should realize that the Lord shows special favor to the faithful. The Lord listens when I call to him.
- 4 Be in awe,* do not sin. When you rest, reflect on this, and keep quiet! Selah.
- 5 Offer sacrifices with the right attitude. Trust in the Lord.
- 6 Many say, "Who is going to show us some good?" Lord, may your face shine upon us.†
- 7 The happiness you give me is better than those who have a plentiful harvest of grain and new wine.
- 8 I will lie down in peace and sleep, for you, Lord, alone keep me safe.‡

† 2:12 "Son": referring to verse 7. ‡ 2:12 "Anger": throughout the Psalms God is spoken of as becoming angry, usually in response to sin and wickedness. However, this should not be equated to the human form of anger with its volatile, unpredictable, and emotional elements. It is really describing God's strong hostility to evil. * 3:1 Since David is the writer this is clearly a reference to a widespread rebellion against him as king. † 3:3 Literally, "you are my glory" which makes little sense in English. ‡ 3:5 Implied. * 4:4 Some translate this word as "anger," but the sense of this verse is to realize God's abilities and consequently to turn away from sinful actions. † 4:6 See Numbers 6:26. ‡ 4:8 Alternatively: "for you Lord keep me safe, even being alone."

5

For the music director. A psalm of David, to be accompanied by flutes.

- 1 Lord, please listen to me. Don't ignore my groans of distress.
- 2 Hear me pleading for help, my King and my God, because I'm praying to you.
- 3 Please listen to what I have to say in the morning, Lord. Every morning I put my requests to you* and wait for your reply.†
- 4 For you are not a God who has any pleasure in wickedness; evil has no place with you.
- 5 The proud cannot come into your presence; you hate everyone who does evil.
- 6 You destroy those who tell lies. The Lord loathes bloodthirsty and deceptive people.
- 7 But because of the greatness of your trustworthy love, I can come into your house; in awe of you I bow down towards your holy Temple.
- 8 Lead me, Lord, you who always does what is right, save me from my enemies. Make your way clear to me.
- 9 Nothing they‡ say can be trusted; their main desire is to destroy. Their throat is like an open grave; their tongues are full of flattery.
- 10 God, condemn them as guilty! Make them fall because of their evil plans. Throw them out because of all their sins, for they have rebelled against you.
- 11 But may all those who trust in you be happy—may they sing for joy forever. May you spread your protection over them so that everyone who loves your character may celebrate.
- 12 For you, Lord, bless those who live right; you protect them with your shield of love.

6

For the music director. To be accompanied by stringed instruments, according to the sheminith.* A psalm of David.

- 1 Lord, please don't condemn me because you're angry with me; please don't punish me because you're angry with me!
- 2 Have mercy on me, Lord, for I am weak; heal me, Lord, for I am sick to the bone.
- 3 I'm shaking all over in fear. How long will it be, Lord, before you do something?
- 4 Turn,† Lord, and rescue me! Save me because of your trustworthy love!
- 5 For no one remembers you when they're dead. Who is able to praise you from the grave?
- 6 My groaning has exhausted me. Every night I soak my bed with my crying; I drench my couch with my tears.
- 7 With all my crying I can hardly see; my eyes grow weak because of the trouble my enemies cause me.

* 5:3 "I put my requests to you." Alternatively "I offer a sacrifice to you." † 5:3 Implied.

‡ 5:9 Referring to David's enemies. * 6: The meaning of this term is not known. † 6:4 This could either mean to turn towards the psalmist, or for the Lord to change his mind and heal the psalmist.

- ⁸ Leave me alone, all you people who do evil, for the Lord has heard me crying!
- ⁹ The Lord has heard me calling out for help; the Lord answers my prayer.
- ¹⁰ All who hate me will be shamefully defeated and terrified; they will run away in disgrace.

7

A psalm (shiggaion) of David, which he sang to the Lord concerning Cush, from the tribe of Benjamin.

- ¹ Lord my God, you are my protection. Save me from those who persecute me; please rescue me!
- ² Otherwise they will tear me apart like a lion, ripping me to pieces with no one to save me.
- ³ If I have done what I'm accused of,* if my hands are guilty,
- ⁴ If I have paid back a friend with evil, if I have robbed my enemy for no reason,
- ⁵ Then let my enemies chase me down; let them trample me in the dust and drag my reputation through the dirt. Selah.
- ⁶ Stand up, Lord, in your anger, rise up against the fury of my enemies; wake up, Lord, and bring me justice!†
- ⁷ Bring together the nations before you; rule them from your throne on high.
- ⁸ The Lord judges all people. Defend me, Lord, because I do what is right, because of my integrity.
- ⁹ Please bring an end to the evil done by the wicked; vindicate those who do good, for you are the God of right who examines hearts and minds.
- ¹⁰ The Most High God is my defense, the one who saves those who live right.
- ¹¹ God is a fair judge who is always hostile to evil.
- ¹² If people do not change their minds, he will sharpen his sword. He has bent and strung his bow.
- ¹³ He has prepared weapons of death, he has his flaming arrows ready.
- ¹⁴ See how the wicked conceive evil! They are pregnant with trouble. They give birth to dishonesty.
- ¹⁵ They dig a deep hole to catch people, but then fall into it themselves.
- ¹⁶ The trouble they cause rebounds to hit them on the head; their violence against others comes down on their own skulls.
- ¹⁷ I will thank the Lord because he does what is right; I will sing praises to the name of the Lord Most High.

8

For the music director. On the gittith. A psalm of David.

* **7:3** "Done what I'm accused of": literally, "done this." † **7:6** The psalmist is using imagery that is very human to describe God. Telling God to wake up is surely not meant to be taken literally, but a plea for God to act. Similarly the appeal for God's anger to be directed against the fury of his enemies reflects a desire to be vindicated, not a description of the nature of God.

- 1 Lord, our Lord, your magnificent reputation* fills the earth! Your majesty is greater than the heavens above,
 2 and is sung by the voices of children and infants. Your strength counters your opponents, silencing the enemy and the avenger.
 3 When I contemplate the heavens that your hands made, the moon and stars that you placed there,
 4 What are human beings that you should concern yourself with them? What are people that you should care for them?
 5 You created them a little lower than God,† crowning them with glory and majesty.
 6 You put them in charge of all that you made, giving them authority over everything:
 7 the sheep, the cattle, and the wild animals,
 8 the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea—everything that swims in the ocean.
 9 Lord, our Lord, your magnificent reputation fills the earth!

9

For the music director. According to Muth-labben. A psalm of David.*

- 1 I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all the amazing things you have done.
 2 I will be glad and celebrate in you; I will sing praises to your wonderful nature, Most High God.
 3 Those who hate me retreat; they fall back and die when you confront them.
 4 For you have judged that I am right; you have decided fairly from your throne of judgment.
 5 You have condemned the nations; you have destroyed the wicked; you have wiped out their names forever and ever.
 6 The enemies are finished, ruined forever; their cities are destroyed—even the memory of them is gone.
 7 But the Lord rules forever, his throne is set up for judgment.
 8 The Lord judges the world rightly; he judges the nations fairly.
 9 The Lord is a place of safety for those who are oppressed, a fortress in times of trouble.
 10 Those who know your nature† trust in you, for you don't abandon those who come to you.
 11 Sing praises to the Lord who reigns in Zion! Tell the nations what he has done!
 12 He does not forget to punish murderers; he does not ignore the cries of the suffering.
 13 Be gracious to me, Lord! Look at how my enemies are persecuting me! Grab me back from the gates of death,
 14 so I can praise you at Zion's gates, happy that you have saved me.
 15 The nations have fallen into their own pit they dug; their feet are trapped by their own net they set.

* **8:1** Literally, "name." In Hebrew thought name was a description of reputation and character. † **8:5** "God": or, "the angels" or "heavenly beings." The word used is "elohim," one of the usual names for God. * **9:** In some Hebrew manuscripts and the Septuagint, Psalms 9 and 10 are combined as one. † **9:10** Literally, "name."

- 16 The Lord is known for his fairness; the wicked are trapped by their own actions. Higgsaion. Selah.
- 17 The wicked depart, going to the grave—all nations who turn their backs on God.
- 18 But the needy will not be ignored forever, the hope of those who suffer will not always be dashed.
- 19 Stand up, Lord! Don't let human beings win! Let the nations be brought before you for judgment!
- 20 Lord, terrify them! Let them know they are only human! Selah.

10

- 1 Lord, why are you so distant? Why do you hide from me in times of trouble?
- 2 The wicked chase down the poor with impunity. May they be trapped by the evil schemes they themselves invented.
- 3 For the wicked boast about what they want to do. They praise the greedy, but treat the Lord with contempt.
- 4 The wicked are too proud to come to God. In all their thinking they never consider God.
- 5 What they do always seems to go well. They're unaware of God's judgments. They ridicule all their enemies.
- 6 They tell themselves, "Nothing bad is going to happen to me. I'll never be in trouble!"
- 7 Their speech is full of cursing, lies, and threats; their tongues are always ready to spread trouble and cause evil.
- 8 They hide out in ambush in the villages, ready to kill innocent passers-by. They are always on the lookout for their next victim.
- 9 They lie in ambush like a lion ready to attack, ready to leap out from their hiding place to seize their victim. They capture the helpless, throwing a net over them.
- 10 Their victims are knocked down, laid low.* They fall under the strength of the wicked.
- 11 They tell themselves, "God won't notice. He's looking the other way. He won't ever see anything."
- 12 Take a stand, Lord! Raise your hand to strike! Don't forget those who can't defend themselves.
- 13 Why do the wicked think they can treat God with such contempt? Why do they think that God won't make them accountable?
- 14 But you do see the trouble and grief they cause. Take it into your own hands. The helpless trust in you; you defend the orphans.
- 15 Destroy the power of the wicked, those evil people! Call each of them to account until there are none left!
- 16 Lord, you are King forever and ever! The nations will vanish from their lands.
- 17 Lord, you have heard the longing cries of those who are suffering. You will encourage them, for you will listen to them.

* **10:10** It is uncertain as to whether this line refers to the victims or the wicked. If it is the latter, it could be translated, "They crouch down and lie low."

18 You will defend the rights of orphans and the oppressed so that those who are mere human beings here on earth will never terrorize them again.

11

For the music director: A psalm of David.

- ¹ Lord, you are my protection. So how can you tell me, “Fly away to the mountains like a bird”?
- ² Look, the wicked are drawing their bows, loading them with arrows ready to shoot from the shadows at good people.
- ³ When the foundations of society are destroyed, what can those who live right do?
- ⁴ The Lord is in his Temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven. He keeps a close eye on everyone, watching them carefully.
- ⁵ The Lord examines both those who do right and those who do evil, but he hates those who love violence.
- ⁶ He will make blazing coals and sulfur rain down on the wicked; a scorching wind is what's coming on them.
- ⁷ The Lord does what is right, and he loves those who live right. Those who do good will see him face to face.

12

For the music director. To the Sheminith. A psalm of David.

- ¹ Help, Lord, for all the good people have gone! Those who trust in you have disappeared from among the people on earth.
- ² Everyone lies to their neighbors. They flatter with nice talk, but they don't mean what they say.*
- ³ Stop their flattery, Lord, and silence their boasts—
- ⁴ these people who say, “We will succeed through what we say; our mouths belong to us. We don't take orders from anyone!”
- ⁵ “Because of the violence the helpless have suffered, and because of the groans of the poor, I will rise up to defend them,” says the Lord. “I will give them the protection they have been longing for.”
- ⁶ What the Lord says is trustworthy, as pure as silver refined seven times in a furnace.
- ⁷ You, Lord will keep the oppressed safe; you will protect us from these kinds of people forever;
- ⁸ even though the wicked are all around us, and evil is being promoted everywhere.†

13

For the music director. A psalm of David.

- ¹ How long, Lord, are you going to forget me? Forever? How long will you turn away from me?

* **12:2** Literally, they have “double hearts.” † **12:8** “Everywhere”: literally, “among the offspring of humankind.”

- ² How long must I be in inner turmoil, feeling sad all day long? How long will my enemy be victorious over me?
- ³ Think about this, and answer me, Lord my God. Give me back my strength,* otherwise I'm going to die,
- ⁴ and my enemy will say, "I defeated him!" and my opponents will celebrate my downfall.
- ⁵ But I trust in your never-failing love, I will be happy because you save me.
- ⁶ I will sing to the Lord because he has treated me with such generosity!

14

For the music director. A psalm of David.

- ¹ Only fools tell themselves, "God doesn't exist." They are completely immoral; they commit terrible sins; not a single one of them does anything good.
- ² The Lord watches from heaven to see whether anyone understands—if there's anyone who wants to come to God.
- ³ They have all gone their own way, they are totally depraved; none of them does anything good, not even one.
- ⁴ Won't these people who do evil ever learn? They consume my people as if they were eating bread, and refuse to pray to the Lord.
- ⁵ Look, they will become terrified, because God is with those who live right.
- ⁶ The wicked dismiss the plans of the poor people, but the Lord looks after them.
- ⁷ If only the Lord's salvation would come from Zion! When the Lord restores* his people, the people of Jacob will celebrate, and the people of Israel will be glad.

15

A psalm of David.

- ¹ Who may enter your sanctuary, Lord?* Who may come into your presence on your holy mountain?
- ² Those who live without fault and do what is right, those who sincerely tell the truth.
- ³ They do not slander, do not treat their neighbors badly, do not gossip about people they know.
- ⁴ They reject people the Lord has rejected, but honor those who follow the Lord. They keep their promises even when it's hard to do. They don't change their minds.
- ⁵ They lend money without charging interest. They don't take bribes to testify against the innocent. Those who act like this will never ever fall.

* **13:3** Literally, "give light to my eyes." Bright eyes were seen as indicative of good health.

* **14:7** The term used here is often applied to the return from Exile, but here would apply to the blessings the people would receive when they returned to God. * **15:1** Literally, "Who may dwell in your tent?"

16

A psalm (miktam) of David.

- ¹ Take care of me, Lord, for I come to you for protection.
- ² I tell the Lord, "Apart from you Lord, I don't have anything that's good."
- ³ As for the holy people in the land, they are the ones who are truly great. I appreciate them.*
- ⁴ Those who run after other gods will face a lot of trouble. I will not participate in their offerings of blood, I will not even speak the names of their gods.
- ⁵ Lord, you alone are all I have; you give me what I need; you safeguard my future.†
- ⁶ The land divisions have worked out in my favor‡—my property is wonderful!
- ⁷ I will bless the Lord who gives me good advice; even at night my conscience§ tells me what is right.
- ⁸ I have always kept the Lord in front of me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me. ⁹ That's why I'm so happy! That's why I am full of joy! That's why my body lives in hope!
- ¹⁰ For you will not abandon me in the grave, nor will you allow your Holy One to experience decay.
- ¹¹ You have shown me the path of life, filling me with joy with your presence and the delight of living with you forever.

17

A prayer of David.

- ¹ Lord, please hear my cry for justice! Please pay attention to my call for help! Listen to the prayer of an honest man!*
- ² Vindicate me before you—for you see what is right.
- ³ You have observed my thoughts, you have visited me at night, you have examined me—and you have found nothing wrong. I promised myself I wouldn't say anything I shouldn't.
- ⁴ With regard to the actions of others: I have done what you told me and I have avoided what violent people do.†
- ⁵ I have not strayed from your path; my feet have not slipped from it.
- ⁶ God, I call out to you because I know you will answer; please listen carefully to what I have to say.
- ⁷ Show me how wonderful your trustworthy love really is, Savior of those who come to you for protection against their enemies!
- ⁸ Keep me safe as someone you love;‡ hide me underneath your wings.
- ⁹ Protect me from the attacks of the wicked who want to destroy me, from my enemies who surround me, intent on killing me.

* **16:3** The meaning of this verse is unclear. † **16:5** Literally, "You are my portion, my cup, and you maintain my lot." ‡ **16:6** Referring to the way in which land was divided up, particularly when the Promised Land was first settled. What the psalmist is saying is that the dividing lines produced land that was good for him. Literally, "The measuring lines have fallen for me in pleasant places." § **16:7** Literally, "my kidneys." * **17:1** Literally, "which is not among the lips of deceit." † **17:4** Or "I have seen what happens to violent people." ‡ **17:8** Literally, "Guard me as the pupil of your eye."

- 10 They have no compassion,[§] and all they have to say is pure arrogance.
- 11 They hunt me down and surround me, looking for the chance to knock me down in the dust.
- 12 They are like lions, longing to tear their prey apart; like fierce lions crouching in ambush.
- 13 Lord, stand up and confront them! Force them to back down! By your sword rescue me from the wicked!
- 14 Lord, by your power, save me from people whose only thought is for this world. May they be filled with what you have in store for them, their children too, with left-overs for their grandchildren!*
- 15 As for me, I shall see your face in all its goodness. When I awake, I will be so pleased to see you face to face.

18

To the music director. A psalm of David the servant of the Lord, who sang the words of this song to the Lord on the day when the Lord saved him from all his enemies, and from Saul. He sang:

- 1 I love you, Lord. You are my strength.
- 2 The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my Savior. He is my God, my rock who protects me. He shields me from harm, his power protects me,* he keeps me safe.
- 3 I call for help from the Lord who should be praised, and he saves me from those who hate me.
- 4 Ropes of death encircled me, surging waters of destruction flooded over me;
- 5 The grave wound its ropes around me; death set snares for me.
- 6 In my despair I called on the Lord—I cried out to my God for help. He heard my voice from his Temple—my cry for help reached his ears.
- 7 The earth shook to and fro; the foundations of the mountains trembled, shaking because of his anger.
- 8 Smoke came out of his nostrils, and fire came from his mouth; burning coals blazed before him.
- 9 He parted the heavens and came down, with dark clouds beneath his feet.
- 10 Riding on an angel[†] he flew, swooping on the wings of the wind.
- 11 He hid himself in darkness, covering himself with black thunderclouds.
- 12 Hailstones and burning coals flew out from his brightness, passing through his thick clouds.
- 13 The Lord thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High sounded among the hailstones and burning coals.
- 14 He fired his arrows, scattering his enemies;[‡] he routed them with his lightning bolts.

§ 17:10 Literally, "They close up the fat." * 17:14 The meaning of this verse is uncertain, even whether it is a blessing or a curse. From the context it is certainly an appeal for God to vindicate the good and punish the bad. * 18:2 Literally, "horn of my salvation." † 18:10 Literally, "cherub," but in English this has become associated with an angelic baby. ‡ 18:14 Implied.

- 15 You roared, Lord, and by the wind from the breath of your nostrils the valleys of the sea were exposed and the foundations of the earth were uncovered.
- 16 He reached down his hand from above and grabbed hold of me. He pulled me out of the deep water.
- 17 He rescued me from my powerful enemies, from those who hated me and who were much stronger than me.
- 18 They came at me at my worst possible moment[§], but the Lord supported me.
- 19 He set me free,^{*} he rescued me because he's my friend.[†]
- 20 The Lord rewarded me because I do what's right; he repaid me because I am innocent.[‡]
- 21 For I have followed the Lord's ways; I have not sinned by turning away from my God.
- 22 I have kept all his laws in mind; I have not ignored his commandments.
- 23 I am blameless in his sight; I keep myself from sinning.
- 24 The Lord rewarded me for doing what's right. I am innocent in his sight.
- 25 You show trust to those who trust; you show integrity to those with integrity,[§]
- 26 You show yourself pure to those who are pure, but you show yourself smart to those who are crafty.^{*}
- 27 You save the humble, but you bring down the proud.
- 28 You light my lamp! Lord, my God, you light up my darkness!
- 29 With you, I can charge down a troop of soldiers; with you, my God, I can climb a fortress wall.
- 30 God's way is absolutely right.[†] What the Lord says is trustworthy. He is a shield to all who come to him for protection.
- 31 For who is God except the Lord? Who is the rock, except our God?
- 32 God makes me strong and keeps me safe.
- 33 He makes me surefooted like the deer, able to walk the heights in safety.
- 34 He teaches me how to fight in battle; he gives me the strength to draw a bronze bow.
- 35 You protect me with the shield of your salvation; you support me with your powerful right hand; your help has made me great.
- 36 You gave me space in which to walk, and prevented my feet from slipping.
- 37 I chased my enemies, and caught up with them. I did not turn around until I had destroyed them.
- 38 I struck them down—they couldn't get up. They fell at my feet.
- 39 You made me strong for battle; you made those who rose up against me kneel down before me.
- 40 You made my enemies run away; I destroyed all my enemies.

[§] 18:18 Literally, "my day of disaster." ^{*} 18:19 Literally, "brought me out to a spacious place." [†] 18:19 Or "he delights in me." [‡] 18:20 Literally, "because of the cleanness of my hands." [§] 18:25 The word used here means "complete" or "sound." ^{*} 18:26 Both words used here have to do with being "twisted," the first in the sense of being clever; the second in the sense of being devious and perverse. [†] 18:30 The word used here, often translated as "perfect," is the same as in 18:25.

- 41 They cried out for help, but no one came to rescue them. They even called out to the Lord, but he did not answer them.
- 42 I ground them into dust, like dust in the wind. I threw them out like mud in the street.
- 43 You rescued me from rebellious people; you made me ruler over nations—people I didn't know now serve me.
- 44 As soon as they hear of me, they obey; foreigners cringe before me.
- 45 They lose heart, and come trembling in surrender from their strongholds.
- 46 The Lord lives! Blessed be my rock! May the God who saves me be praised!
- 47 God avenges me, he subdues peoples under me,
- 48 he rescues me from those who hate me. You keep me safe from those who rebel against me, you save me from violent men.
- 49 That's why I will praise you among the nations, Lord; I will sing praises about who you are.‡
- 50 You have saved the king so often,§ showing your trustworthy love to David, your anointed, and to his descendants forever.

19

For the music director. A psalm of David.

- 1 The heavens declare God's glory; the skies above announce what he has made.
- 2 Each day speaks constantly about God's glory to the next day; each night shares knowledge of God with the next night.
- 3 They speak without speech or words; their voice is not audible;
- 4 Yet what they say is heard all over the earth; their message goes to the whole world. God has made a home in the heavens* for the sun.
- 5 It's like a bridegroom coming out of his room, like a fit athlete happy to run a race.
- 6 It rises on one side of the heavens and travels across to the other. Nothing is hidden from its heat.
- 7 The Lord's law is beneficial,† renewing spiritual life. The Lord's teaching is trustworthy, making inexperienced people wise.
- 8 The Lord's instructions are right, making people glad. The Lord's commandments are sincere, helping people see what is good.
- 9 Reverence for the Lord is right, and lasts forever. The Lord's judgments are both true and fair.
- 10 They‡ are more to be valued than gold, even the finest gold; they are sweeter than honey, even the purest honey coming straight from the honeycomb.
- 11 They also warn§ your servant. By keeping them I'm richly rewarded.
- 12 Who's aware of their own mistakes? Don't punish me for these faults I'm unaware of.

‡ 18:49 "Of who you are": Literally, "to your name": the concept of name in Hebrew is far more than a simple designation; it refers to the character of the person. § 18:50 Or "You have given many victories to the king." * 19:4 Implied; literally, "in them." † 19:7 The word used here, often translated as "perfect," is the same as in 18:25 and 18:30, and indicates not only perfection but aspects that are wholesome and healthful. ‡ 19:10 Referring to God's laws. § 19:11 Or "enlighten."

- 13 Don't let your servant commit deliberate sins. Don't let them rule over me. Then I will be without fault, innocent of such rebellion.
 14 May you be pleased with the words I speak, and the thoughts I think, Lord my rock and my redeemer.

20

For the music director. A psalm of David.

- 1 May the Lord answer you when you are in trouble; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.*
 2 May the Lord send you help from the sanctuary, and may he support you from Zion.
 3 May the Lord remember all your offerings, and accept all your burnt sacrifices. Selah.
 4 May the Lord give you whatever you really want; may he make all your plans successful.
 5 May we shout for joy over your victory, and set up banners in the name of our God.† May the Lord answer all your requests.
 6 Now I know that the Lord saves the one he has anointed. He will answer him from his holy heaven, and save his anointed by his powerful right hand.
 7 Some trust in chariots and some in war horses, but we trust in who‡ the Lord our God is.
 8 They collapse and fall down, but we rise and stand up.
 9 May the Lord save the king! Please answer us when we call for help!

21

For the music director. A psalm of David.

- 1 The king celebrates your strength, Lord; he is so happy you made him victorious!
 2 You gave him everything he wanted; you didn't hold anything back he asked for.
 3 You welcomed him on his return with special blessings; you placed a crown of pure gold on his head.
 4 He asked you to give him a good life, and you gave him a long life, forever and ever.
 5 Your victories brought him great glory; you granted him splendor and majesty.
 6 You give him blessings forever. He is full of joy because you are with him.
 7 For the king trusts in the Lord; he stands firm because of the trustworthy love of the Most High.
 8 You, the king,* will find and capture all your enemies; you will seize everyone who hates you.
 9 When you appear on the scene you will burn them up like in a furnace; the Lord in his anger will destroy them, burning them up with fire.

* **20:1** The word "name" in the Old Testament represents not just the person but their nature and character. † **20:5** The people address the king and his victory, and then look to set up banners in celebration. ‡ **20:7** "Who": literally, "name." * **21:8** Implied.

- 10 You will wipe out their children from the earth, their descendants from humankind.
 11 Though they plot evil against you, their malicious schemes will not succeed.
 12 They will turn and run away when they see your arrows fired at them.
 13 Rise up, Lord, for you are strong! We will sing and praise your power!

22

For the music director. To the tune “Doe of the Dawn.” A psalm of David.

- 1 My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? Why are you so far away when I groan, asking for help?
 2 My God, every day I cry out to you, but you don't answer; at night too, but I get no rest.
 3 Yet you are holy, and the praises of Israel are your throne.*
 4 Our forefathers trusted in you; they trusted and you rescued them.
 5 They cried out to you for help, and they were saved. They trusted in you and were not defeated.†
 6 But I'm a worm, not a man, scorned and despised by everyone.
 7 People who see me mock me. They laugh at me‡ and shake their heads, saying,
 8 “He trusts in the Lord—well then, let the Lord save him! If the Lord is such a friend, then let the Lord rescue him!”
 9 However, you brought me safely through birth, and led me to trust in you at my mother's breasts.
 10 I was entrusted to you from birth; from the time I was born you have been my God.
 11 Do not be distant from me, because trouble is close by and no one else can help.
 12 Enemies surround me like a herd of bulls; strong bulls from Bashan have encircled me.
 13 Like roaring lions tearing at their prey they open their mouths wide against me.
 14 I feel like I'm being poured out like water. I'm falling apart as if all my bones have become loose. My mind feels like it's wax melting inside me.
 15 My strength has dried up like a piece of broken pottery. My tongue is stuck to the roof of my mouth. You're burying me as if I'm already dead.§
 16 Evil men surround me like a pack of dogs. They have pierced* my hands and feet.
 17 I'm so thin† I can count all my bones. People stare at me and gloat.
 18 They divide my clothing among them; they roll dice‡ for my clothes.

* 22:3 The image is thought to be of the Ark of Agreement within the Temple as the earthly location of the presence of God. † 22:5 “Defeated”: literally, “put to shame.” The concept of being disgraced is closely linked to defeat and is used in this connection in several psalms.

‡ 22:7 Literally, “they open wide their lips.” § 22:15 Literally, “you lay me down in the dust of death.” * 22:16 Dead Sea Scrolls. The Hebrew text reads “like a lion.” † 22:17 Implied. ‡ 22:18 Literally, “cast lots.”

- 19 But you, Lord, don't be far away from me! You are my strength—hurry, come and help me!
- 20 Save me from death by the sword! Save my life—the only one I have—from the dogs!
- 21 Rescue me from the mouth of the lion and from the wild bulls!
- 22 I will tell my people all the wonderful things you have done;[§] I will praise you in the congregation.
- 23 Praise the Lord, all who worship him! Honor him, every descendant of Jacob! Be in awe of him, every descendant of Israel!
- 24 For he has not ridiculed or scorned the suffering of the poor; he has not turned away from them, he has listened to their cries for help.
- 25 You are the subject of my praise in the great assembly. I will fulfill my promises before those who worship you.
- 26 The poor shall eat, and they shall be satisfied. All who come to the Lord will praise him—may you all live forever!
- 27 Everyone in the whole world will repent and return to the Lord; all the nations will worship before you.
- 28 For kingly power belongs to the Lord; he is the one who rules over the nations.
- 29 All who prosper come to feast and worship. Bow down before him, all those destined for the grave—for none can keep themselves alive.*
- 30 Our descendants will serve him; they will tell the next generation about the Lord.
- 31 They will come and tell those yet to be born how good the Lord is, and all that he has done!

23

A psalm of David.

- ¹ Since the Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need.
- ² He gives me rest in green fields. He leads me towards quietly flowing streams.
- ³ He revives me. He guides me along the right paths because that's the kind of person he is.
- ⁴ Even when I walk through the valley dark as death, I'm not afraid of any evil, because you are right there with me; your rod and your staff protect me.
- ⁵ You prepare a banquet for me before my enemies. You honor me by anointing my head with olive oil. My cup is so full it overflows!
- ⁶ I'm absolutely certain that your goodness and trustworthy love will be with me all through my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.

24

A psalm of David.

- ¹ The earth is the Lord's, and everything that is in it belongs to him. The world is his, and everyone who lives there.

[§] 22:22 Literally, "proclaim your name." * 22:29 The Hebrew of this verse is unclear.

- 2 For he is the one who laid its foundations on the seas, setting it in place on the waters.
- 3 Who is allowed to go up the Lord's mountain? Who is permitted to stand in his holy place?
- 4 Those who have clean hands* and pure minds, who don't worship idols,† and who don't lie under oath.
- 5 They will take with them the blessing of the Lord, vindicated by the God who saves them.
- 6 These are the kind of people who may go to the Lord and worship before you, God of Jacob. Selah.
- 7 Open up, you gates! Swing wide, you ancient doors! Let the King of glory come in!
- 8 Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and powerful, mighty in battle.
- 9 Open up, you gates! Swing wide, you ancient doors! Let the King of glory come in!
- 10 Who is this King of glory? The Lord Almighty, he is the King of glory! Selah.

25

A psalm of David.

- 1 Lord, I come to worship you.*
- 2 I trust in you, my God. Don't let me be humiliated, and don't let my enemies triumph over me.
- 3 No one who trusts in you will be humiliated, but humiliation comes to those who are deliberately dishonest.
- 4 Show me your ways, Lord; teach me to follow your paths.
- 5 Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation. All day long I put my trust in you.
- 6 Remember, Lord, your compassion and trustworthy love—they are eternal!
- 7 Please don't remember the sins of my youth when I rebelled against you. Instead, remember me according to your trustworthy love, remember me because of your goodness, Lord.
- 8 The Lord is good and he is right; that is why he shows the way to those who are lost.†
- 9 He leads those who are humble in doing what's right, teaching them his way.
- 10 The Lord's paths are those of trustworthy love and truth for those who keep his agreement‡ and do as he says.
- 11 Lord, because of your nature, forgive my many sins.
- 12 Who are those who respect the Lord? He will show them the path to choose.
- 13 They will continue to be prosperous, and their descendants will inherit the land.

* 24:4 "Clean" in the sense of innocent and not guilty of sin. † 24:4 "Don't worship idols" or "don't take the name of the Lord in vain." * 25:1 Literally, "I lift up my soul to you." † 25:8 "Those who are lost": often translated "sinners," the underlying meaning is "those who miss the right path," "go astray." ‡ 25:10 Or "covenant." Also verse 14.

- 14 The Lord is friends with those who respect him, explaining to them his agreement.
- 15 I always look to the Lord, for he rescues me when I'm trapped. §
- 16 Watch over me and be good to me, because I am all alone and suffering.
- 17 My problems get bigger and bigger. Please save me from all I'm going through.
- 18 See all my troubles and trials. Please forgive my sins.
- 19 Look at how many enemies I have, and how they really hate me!*
- 20 Please look after me and save me! Don't let me be humiliated, for you are the one who protects me.
- 21 May integrity and honesty defend me because I place my confidence in you.
- 22 God, please deliver the people of Israel from all their troubles!

26

A psalm of David.

- 1 Confirm that I'm innocent, Lord, for I have acted with integrity, and I have trusted in the Lord without fail.
- 2 Examine me, Lord, test me; investigate my thoughts and intentions.
- 3 For I always remember your trustworthy love, and I follow your truth.
- 4 I don't join in with liars and I don't associate with hypocrites.
- 5 I refuse to get together with those who do evil, and I won't involve myself with the wicked.
- 6 I wash my hands to show my innocence. I come to worship* at your altar, Lord,
- 7 singing my thanks, telling of all the wonderful things you have done.
- 8 Lord, I love your house, the place where you live in your glory.
- 9 Please don't sweep me away along with sinners. Don't include me with those who commit murder,
- 10 whose hands carry out their evil schemes and grab hold of bribes.
- 11 For I don't do that—I act with integrity. Save me and be gracious to me!
- 12 I stand for what's right, † and I will praise the Lord when we meet together to worship him.

27

A psalm of David.

- 1 The Lord is my light and my salvation! How could anyone scare me?
The Lord is my life's fortress! How could anyone terrify me?
- 2 When evil people come at me to tear me apart, it's my enemies, those who are against me, they're the ones who trip and fall.
- 3 Even if an army surrounds me, I won't be frightened. Even if I am attacked, I will still trust in God.

§ 25:15 "Rescues me when I'm trapped": literally, "pulls my feet out of the net" (for catching birds). * 25:19 Literally, "hate me with violent hatred." * 26:6 Literally, "I march around your altar"—part of the actions of worship. † 26:12 "I stand for what's right": literally, "My foot stands on level ground."

- 4 I only ask the Lord for one thing: I just want to live in the house of the Lord throughout my life, contemplating the Lord's goodness and thinking about his Temple.
- 5 When troubles come he will protect me and keep me safe, hiding me in his house,* as secure as if he'd placed me on a high rock.
- 6 He will hold my head high over my enemies who are all around me. I shall offer sacrifices in his house with shouts of joy, and I will sing praises to the Lord.
- 7 Listen to me, Lord, when I call for help. Be gracious and answer me.
- 8 You told me, "Come to me." I am coming to you, Lord.†
- 9 Don't refuse to talk to me. Don't be angry with your servant and turn away. You are the one who helps me, so please don't reject me and abandon me, God of my salvation.
- 10 Even if my father and my mother abandon me, the Lord will take care of me.
- 11 Lord, teach me your way and lead me along the right path, because my enemies are against me‡—
- 12 don't hand me over to them and their evil intentions, for they are making false accusations against me and threatening me with violence.
- 13 However, I'm absolutely sure that I will see the Lord's goodness even in this life.
- 14 Trust in the Lord! Be confident—he will give you courage! Trust in the Lord!

28

A psalm of David.

- 1 Lord, my rock, I'm calling out to you. Please listen to me! For if you don't respond, I'll be like those who go down into the grave.*
- 2 Listen as I appeal for mercy, as I call for help, as I hold up my hands in prayer towards your holy Temple.
- 3 Don't drag me off with the wicked, with those who do evil, who speak nicely to their neighbors while in their minds they're plotting evil.
- 4 Give them what they deserve for their evil actions. Pay them back for what they've done. Give them the reward they've earned!
- 5 For they don't pay any attention to what the Lord does, or to what he created. So he will destroy them—they will never be restored.
- 6 Praise the Lord! For he has heard my appeal for mercy!
- 7 The Lord is my strength and my shield. I trust in him and he helps me. I'm so happy, and I sing my thanks to him.
- 8 The Lord gives strength to his people; he is a safe refuge for the one he has anointed.†
- 9 Save your people! Bless your "special possession"!‡ Be their shepherd and carry them in your arms forever!

* 27:5 "House": literally, "tent." Also verse 6. † 27:8 Or "I told myself, 'I will go to the Lord.' Lord, I am coming to you." ‡ 27:11 "Are against me": implied. * 28:1 "Grave": literally, "pit." † 28:8 In context this probably referred to Israel's king. ‡ 28:9 The Lord's "special possession" is his people Israel.

29

A psalm of David.

- ¹ Honor* the Lord, children of God,[†] honor his glory and strength.
- ² Honor the Lord for his glorious character, bow in reverence to the Lord in his brilliant holiness.
- ³ The Lord's voice sounds over the sea. The God of glory thunders. The Lord thunders over the vast ocean.
- ⁴ The Lord's voice is powerful; the Lord's voice is majestic;
- ⁵ the Lord's voice shatters the cedars, even breaking the cedars of Lebanon.
- ⁶ He makes the mountains of Lebanon skip like a calf, and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.
- ⁷ The Lord's voice blazes out like lightning flashes.
- ⁸ The Lord's voice causes an earthquake in the desert; the desert of Kadesh shakes.
- ⁹ The Lord's voice makes the pregnant deer go into labor; it strips bare the forests. In his Temple all the worshipers shout, "Glory!"
- ¹⁰ The Lord sits on his throne above the floodwaters; the Lord is the eternal King.
- ¹¹ The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses them with peace.

30

A psalm of David. A psalm for the dedication of the Temple.

- ¹ I want to tell everyone how good you are, Lord, for you saved me, and you didn't let my enemies triumph over me.
- ² Lord, my God, I called out to you for help, and you have healed me.
- ³ Lord, you rescued me from the grave, you brought me back to life, saving me from going down into the pit of death.
- ⁴ You who trust the Lord, sing praises to him, and be thankful for his holy character!
- ⁵ For his anger only lasts a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime. You may spend the night in tears, but happiness comes with the morning.
- ⁶ When things were going well, I said, "Nothing will ever shake me!"
- ⁷ Lord, when you showed me your favor I stood as strong as a mountain; when you turned away from me I was terrified.
- ⁸ I called out to you for help, Lord. I asked the Lord for grace, saying,
- ⁹ What would you gain if I die, if I go down into the pit of death? Would my dust praise you? Would it tell of your trustworthiness?
- ¹⁰ Please listen to me, Lord, and be gracious to me! Lord, you are the one who helps me.
- ¹¹ You have turned my weeping into dancing. You have taken off my clothes of sackcloth* and dressed me in happiness,
- ¹² so I can sing praises to you and not keep quiet. Lord my God, I will thank you forever!

* **29:1** "Honor," often translated by the now rather archaic term, "ascribe," meaning to affirm a quality or attribute, give respect. † **29:1** Literally, "sons of gods." This may refer to angels or to all thinking beings. * **30:11** Wearing sackcloth was a sign of mourning.

31

A psalm of David. For the music director.

- 1 Lord, you are the one who keeps me safe; please don't let me ever be humiliated. Save me, because you always do what is right.
- 2 Please listen to me, and be quick to rescue me. Be my rock of protection, my strong fortress of safety.
- 3 You are my rock and my fortress. For the sake of your reputation, please lead me and guide me.
- 4 Help me escape from the hidden net that they set to trap me, for you are the one who protects me.
- 5 I put myself in your hands. Save me, Lord, for you are a trustworthy God.
- 6 I* hate those who devote themselves to pointless idols; I trust in the Lord.
- 7 I will celebrate, happy in your love that never fails, for you have seen the problems I face and have paid attention to my troubles.
- 8 You haven't handed me over to my enemies; you have set me free.†
- 9 Be kind to me Lord, for I am upset. I can hardly see from so much crying. I am completely wasting away.
- 10 Grief is killing me; my life is cut short by sadness; I am falling apart‡ because of my troubles; I am worn to the bone.
- 11 I am ridiculed by my enemies, particularly by my neighbors. My friends dread meeting me; people who see me in the street run the other way.
- 12 I have been forgotten as if I were dead; I'm ignored like a broken pot.
- 13 I hear many people whispering about me; terror surrounds me. They plot together against me, planning to kill me.
- 14 But I put my trust in you, Lord, saying, "You are my God!"
- 15 My whole life§ is in your hands! Save me from those who hate me and persecute me!
- 16 May you look kindly on me,* your servant. Save me because of your trustworthy love.
- 17 Lord, don't let me be disgraced, for I'm calling out to you. Instead let the wicked be disgraced, let them be silent in the grave.
- 18 Shut the mouths of those who tell lies against good people—those who speak contemptuously in their pride and arrogance!
- 19 How wonderful is the goodness you have reserved for those who honor you! In front of everyone you give this goodness to those who come to you for help.
- 20 You shelter and protect them with your presence, far from their enemies who scheme against them. You keep them safe from attacks and accusations.
- 21 Bless the Lord, for he has shown me his wonderful trustworthy love when my city was being attacked
- 22 Terrified I cried out, "I am being destroyed right in front of you!" But you heard my cry when I called out for you to help me.

* **31:6** Some manuscripts have "You." † **31:8** "You have set me free": literally, "you have set my feet in an open area." ‡ **31:10** "Falling apart": literally, "stumbling." § **31:15** "My whole life," literally, "my times." * **31:16** Literally, "Let your face shine upon me."

- 23 Love the Lord, all you who trust in him! The Lord takes care of those who trust him, but he pays back in full those who are arrogant.
 24 Be strong and be confident,[†] all you who put your hope in the Lord.

32

A psalm of David.

- 1 How happy are those whose wrongs are forgiven, whose sins are covered.*
 2 How happy are those whose sins the Lord does not count against them, those who do not act deceptively.
 3 When I kept quiet,[†] my body fell apart as I groaned in distress all day long.
 4 You beat me day and night,[‡] my strength dried up as in the heat of summer. Selah.
 5 Then I confessed my sins to you. I did not hide the wrongs I had done. I said to myself, "I will confess my disobedience to the Lord," and you forgave the guilt of my sins. Selah.
 6 Therefore let all who are faithful pray to you while there's time, so when trouble comes in like a flood it will not overwhelm them.
 7 For you are my refuge, you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of salvation. Selah.
 8 "I[§] will instruct you, teaching you the way to follow. I will advise you, watching out for you.
 9 You mustn't be like a horse or a mule that doesn't know which way to go without a bit or a bridle. Otherwise they can't be controlled."*
 10 The wicked have many problems, but those who trust in the Lord will be surrounded by his never-failing love.
 11 So be happy in the Lord and celebrate, you who do good. Shout for joy, all you who live right!

33

- 1 Let those who do good shout for joy—those who live right should praise him!
 2 Praise the Lord with the lyre, play music to him on the ten-stringed harp.
 3 Sing a new song to him; play your instruments well and shout for joy.

[†] 31:24 Literally, "strong of heart." * 32:1 The two verbs used here reflect differing ideas in relation to how sins are dealt with. In the first they are "carried away" (the Hebrew meaning of forgiveness), while in the second they are "covered" in the sense that they are no longer seen, rendered invisible. As in all metaphors, such concepts are limited since one can argue that sins cannot be "removed" in that the actions cannot be undone, nor are sins amenable to a "cover up" operation—meaning that while they are concealed they are still there. In all such discussions the wider concepts of the meaning of sin must be considered: as primarily a broken relationship with God, with wrong attitudes and actions that lead to separation and death. [†] 32:3 "Kept quiet"—not confessing his sin. The resulting inner turmoil and stress resulted in health issues. [‡] 32:4 Literally, "Your hand was heavy on me." [§] 32:8 It is not clear from the text whether "I" refers to the Lord or to the psalmist. Here the verse is placed in quote marks assuming these are words of the Lord. * 32:9 Literally, "or they will not come near you."

- 4 For the word of the Lord is true,* and he is trustworthy in everything he does.
- 5 He loves all that is good and right; the earth is full of the Lord's trustworthy love.
- 6 The Lord spoke the word and the heavens were made; his mouth breathed all the stars into existence.
- 7 He gathers the waters of the sea together; he keeps the ocean depths in store.
- 8 Let all the earth show reverence to the Lord; let all the world's inhabitants be in awe of him.
- 9 For he spoke and the world came into existence; he gave the command and it was created.
- 10 The Lord foils the decisions of the nations, he frustrates the plans of the peoples,
- 11 But the Lord's plan stands forever—what he decides lasts for all generations.
- 12 Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he has chosen as specially belonging† to him.
- 13 The Lord looks from heaven and sees the whole of humanity,
- 14 from his throne he watches all those who live on earth.
- 15 He created their minds,‡ so he knows everything they do.
- 16 Even the greatest army cannot save a king; the greatest strength cannot save a warrior.
- 17 Don't deceive yourself: a warhorse can't give you victory—even its incredible strength won't save you.
- 18 The Lord watches over those who reverently follow him, those who place their hope in his trustworthy love
- 19 to save them from death and to keep them alive when famine strikes.
- 20 We place our confidence in the Lord; he is our help and our defender.§
- 21 We are so happy about him, for we trust in his holy character.
- 22 Lord, let your trustworthy love rest upon us as we hope in you.

34

A psalm of David concerning the time he pretended to be mad in front of Abimelech who then sent him away.

- 1 I will always bless the Lord; my mouth will continually praise him.
- 2 From the bottom of my heart I am proud of the Lord; those who are humble will hear and be happy.
- 3 Glorify God with me; together let's honor his reputation.
- 4 I asked the Lord for help, and he answered me. He set me free from all my fears.
- 5 The faces of those who look to him will shine with joy; they will never be downcast with shame.
- 6 This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard me, and saved me from all my troubles.
- 7 The angel of the Lord stands guard over all those who honor him, keeping them safe.

* 33:4 Literally, "upright." † 33:12 Literally, "inheritance." ‡ 33:15 Literally, "hearts."

§ 33:20 Literally, "shield."

- 8 Taste, and you will see that the Lord is good! How happy are those who trust in his protection!*
- 9 Show your reverence for the Lord, you who are his holy people, for those who respect him have everything they need.
- 10 Lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who trust in the Lord have all that is good.
- 11 Children, listen to me! I will teach you how to respect the Lord.
- 12 Who of you wants to live a long and happy life?
- 13 Then don't let your tongue speak evil, or your lips tell lies.
- 14 Reject what is evil, do what is good. Look for peace, and work to make it a reality.
- 15 The Lord watches over those who do right, and he hears when they cry for help.
- 16 The Lord sets himself against those who do evil. He will wipe out even the memory of them from the earth.
- 17 But when his people† call out for help, he hears them and rescues them from all their troubles.
- 18 The Lord is close beside those who are broken-hearted; he saves those whose spirits are crushed.
- 19 Those who do right have many problems, but the Lord solves all of them.
- 20 He keeps them safe—not a single one of their bones will be broken.
- 21 Evil kills the wicked. Those who hate good people will suffer for their wrongdoing.
- 22 The Lord saves the lives of his servants. Those who trust in his protection will not suffer for their wrongdoings.

35

A psalm of David.

- 1 Oppose my opponents, Lord; fight those who are fighting against me.
- 2 Put your armor on, and pick up your shield. Get ready, come and help me.
- 3 Draw your spear and your javelin, confront those who are chasing me. Tell me, "I am your salvation!"
- 4 Shame them! Humiliate those who are trying to kill me! Turn them back! Disgrace those who are planning to hurt me!
- 5 Let them be like chaff blown by the wind; let the angel of the Lord drive them away.
- 6 May their path be dark and slippery, with the angel of the Lord chasing them down.
- 7 For no reason they set a net to catch me; for no reason they dug a pit to trap me.
- 8 Let disaster come on them suddenly; let the net they set catch them instead; let the pit they dug trap them instead.
- 9 Then I will be glad in the Lord; I will be happy in his salvation.
- 10 Every part of me* will say, Who can compare to you, Lord? You rescue the weak from the strong; the poor and needy from robbers.

* 34:8 Literally, "take refuge in him." † 34:17 Implied.

* 35:10 Literally, "all of my bones."

- 11 Hostile witnesses stand up to testify against me, accusing me of crimes I don't know anything about.
- 12 They pay me back with evil instead of good. I feel like giving up.†
- 13 But when they were sick, I put on clothes of sackcloth‡ in sympathy. I denied myself through fasting. May my prayer for them return to bless me too.§
- 14 I was upset for them, as if they were my own friends or family; I bowed down in grief as if I was mourning my own mother.
- 15 But when I was in trouble, they gathered around and laughed at me. Even strangers I don't know attacked me, constantly tearing me apart.
- 16 Like irreligious people mocking a cripple* they mock me and call me names, gnashing their teeth at me.
- 17 How long, Lord, will you sit by and just watch? Save me from their vicious attacks; defend the only life I have from these lions.
- 18 Then I will thank you in front of the whole congregation and praise you in front of all the people.
- 19 Don't let my enemies take pleasure in my troubles, those people who hate me and tell lies about me, gloating over me for no reason.
- 20 They are not looking for peace; they invent malicious and deceptive schemes against innocent peace-loving people.†
- 21 They open their mouths wide to make accusations against me, saying, "Look! Look! We saw it with our own eyes!"
- 22 But Lord, you've seen all this! Say something! Don't give up on me, Lord!
- 23 Wake up! Get up and defend me, my Lord and my God! Take up my case and make sure justice is done!
- 24 Vindicate me, my Lord and my God, because you are just and right. Don't let them gloat over me.
- 25 Don't let them say to themselves, "Look! We got what we wanted!" Don't let them say, "We completely destroyed him!"
- 26 Make them totally ashamed, all those who are happy for the trouble I'm in. Let those who are celebrating over me be covered with shame and dishonor.
- 27 Instead let those who are pleased I've been vindicated celebrate and shout for joy. Let them always say, "How great is the Lord! He is happy when his servants live in peace and have what they need."‡
- 28 I will tell others about your character of truth and right, praising you all day long!

36

For the music director. A psalm of David, servant of the Lord.

† 35:12 Literally, "my soul is forlorn." ‡ 35:13 "Clothes of sackcloth"—a sign of mourning.

§ 35:13 Literally, "my prayer returned to my bosom." * 35:16 The Hebrew here is unclear.

† 35:20 Literally, "the quiet ones of the land." ‡ 35:27 The word used here "shalom" is often translated as simply "peace." However, it is not simply the absence of conflict but also refers to a happy and prosperous life.

- 1 Evil* speaks to the wicked, deep down in their minds, for in their eyes they have no need to respect God.
- 2 In their own eyes they're so wonderful that they can't even see their sin and do something about it.†
- 3 Whatever they say is deceptive and deceitful. They no longer do anything wisely or for good.
- 4 Even when they're lying in bed they think up evil schemes. They commit themselves to a way of life that is no good. They choose evil, and don't reject it.
- 5 Lord, your faithful love reaches to the heavens, your trustworthiness to the clouds.
- 6 Your goodness is like the highest mountains, your fairness is like the deepest oceans. Lord, you save both the people and the animals.
- 7 God, how priceless is your trustworthy love! Everyone can find protection under the shelter of your wings.
- 8 They gain strength from the wonderful food you provide in your house; you give them drink from your refreshing river.
- 9 You are the source of life; you are the light by which we see.
- 10 Extend your trustworthy love to those who know you, and your goodness to those who truly live right.
- 11 Don't let the arrogant trample me down; don't let the wicked drive me out.
- 12 Now look! See how those who do evil have fallen—thrown down, unable to get up.

37

A psalm of David.

- 1 Don't be upset over wicked people, or be jealous of those who do wrong.
- 2 For like grass, they will quickly dry up; like plants, they will soon wither away.
- 3 Trust in the Lord, and do good. Live in the land and feed on faithfulness.
- 4 Find your happiness in the Lord, and he will give you what you want the most.
- 5 Entrust all that you do to the Lord. Place your confidence in him and he will help you.
- 6 He will make your vindication shine like a light, the rightness of your cause like the noonday sun.
- 7 Be still in God's presence; wait patiently for him. Don't be upset over people who prosper when they carry out their evil schemes.
- 8 Give up your anger! Let go your rage! Don't get mad—it only results in evil!
- 9 For the wicked will be destroyed, and those who trust in the Lord will take possession of the land.
- 10 In a little while the wicked will be no more—though you look for them you won't find them.

* 36:1 The word used here to personify evil is that normally used when God is speaking.

† 36:2 The Hebrew of this verse is unclear.

- 11 The humble will own the land; they will live there happily, in peace and prosperity.
- 12 The wicked plot evil against those who do good, gnashing their teeth at them.
- 13 But the Lord laughs at them, for he sees their coming day of judgment.
- 14 The wicked draw their swords, and bend their bows to destroy the poor and needy, to kill those who live right.
- 15 But the swords of the wicked* will slice through their own hearts, and their bows will be broken.
- 16 It's better to do right and only have a little, than to be wicked and rich.
- 17 For the power of the wicked will be broken, but the Lord supports those who do right.
- 18 The Lord knows what is happening to the innocent and grants them an eternal inheritance.
- 19 They will not be humiliated in bad times; even in days of famine they will have plenty to eat.
- 20 But the wicked will die. The enemies of the Lord are like the flowers of the field—they will vanish like smoke.
- 21 The wicked borrow, but don't repay; while those who do right give generously.
- 22 Those who are blessed by God will own the land, but those he curses will die.
- 23 The Lord shows the right path to those who follow him, and is happy with the way they live.
- 24 Though they may trip up, they will not fall to the ground, for the Lord holds their hand.
- 25 Once I was young, and now I've grown old, yet I've never seen those who do right abandoned, nor their children having to beg for bread.
- 26 They are always kind, and generous with their loans; their children are a blessing.
- 27 Reject evil, do what is good, and you will live forever in the land.
- 28 For the Lord loves fairness and he will never abandon those who are trustworthy. He will protect them forever. But the children of the wicked will die.
- 29 Those who do right will own the land and will live there forever.
- 30 People who do right give good advice, explaining what is fair.
- 31 God's law lives in their minds, so they will not slip from his way.
- 32 The wicked lie in wait for those who do good, intending to kill them.
- 33 But the Lord will not let them fall into the hands of the wicked, and he will not let those who do good be condemned when they are put on trial.
- 34 Trust in the Lord, and stay on his path. He will lift you up and give you the land to own. You will see when the wicked are destroyed.
- 35 I have watched the wicked acting brutally, spreading like a large tree in its native land.
- 36 But when I passed that way the next time, they were gone. I searched for them but couldn't find them.

* 37:15 Implied.

- 37 Observe the innocent, look at those who do right! Those who love peace have a future!
- 38 But those who are rebellious will be altogether destroyed; the wicked have no future.
- 39 The Lord saves those who live right; he is their protection in times of trouble.
- 40 The Lord helps them and rescues them from the wicked. He saves them because they go to him for protection.

38

A psalm of David, for a memorial.

- 1 Lord, please don't condemn me because you're angry with me; don't punish me because you're furious with me!
- 2 Your arrows have pierced me deeply, your hand has come down hard on me.
- 3 Because you're so upset with me, not a single part of my body is healthy; I am completely sick because of my sins.
- 4 I'm drowning in guilt—the burden is too heavy to bear.
- 5 My wounds are infected—they're smelling—all because of my stupidity.
- 6 I am bent over, doubled up in pain. The whole day I walk around crying my eyes out.
- 7 Inside I'm burning up with fever; no part of my body is healthy.
- 8 I'm worn out, totally down. I groan because of the anguish I feel in my heart.
- 9 Lord, you know what I desperately want, you hear every sigh I make.
- 10 My heart is racing, leaving me with no strength; my eyesight is failing.
- 11 My loved ones and my friends don't come near me because they're afraid of what I've got. Even my family keeps me at a distance.
- 12 Those who are trying to kill me set traps for me; those who want to hurt me make threats against me, working on their deceitful schemes all day long.
- 13 I act as if I'm deaf to what they're saying,* and pretend to be dumb so I don't have to speak.
- 14 Like a man who can't hear, and who doesn't reply—that's me!
- 15 For I'm waiting on you, Lord! You will answer for me, my Lord and my God.
- 16 I'm asking you, Lord, please don't let my enemies gloat over me, don't let them be glad when I trip up.
- 17 For I'm about ready to collapse—the pain never stops.
- 18 I do confess my sins; I am terribly sorry for what I've done.
- 19 I have many powerful enemies—they are very active, hating me for no reason.
- 20 They pay me back evil for good; they accuse me for the good I try to do.
- 21 Don't give up on me, my Lord and my God, don't stay away from me.
- 22 Hurry, come and help me, Lord my salvation.

* 38:13 Implied.

39

For Jeduthun, the music director. A psalm of David.

- ¹ I told myself, "I will be careful in what I do, and not sin in what I say. I will keep my mouth shut* when the wicked are around."
² So I was completely silent—I didn't even say anything good. But the pain inside only got worse.
³ My mind burned as if on fire; I had to say what I was thinking:
⁴ Lord, remind me.† How short is my life? How long do I have? Remind me how quickly my life will pass.
⁵ Just look at the tiny amount of days you have given me! In your eyes my whole lifetime is like nothing. Our lives here are just a breath... Selah.
⁶ Human beings are just shadows walking around. They pointlessly rush through life, trying to pile up possessions without knowing who will get them.
⁷ So Lord, what am I looking for? I put my hope in you.
⁸ Save me from my rebellion.‡ Don't let me be mocked by fools.
⁹ I will stay quiet, I won't say a word, for it's you who has done this to me.
¹⁰ Please stop hitting me! Your beating has worn me out!
¹¹ When you discipline us, reprimanding us for our sins, it's like a moth eating up what is precious to us. All of us are just a breath... Selah.
¹² Please hear my prayer, Lord! Listen to my cry for help! Don't be deaf to my weeping. Please treat me as your guest, passing through, just like my forefathers.
¹³ Please leave me alone so I can be cheerful again, before I am dead and gone.

40

For the music director. A psalm of David.

- ¹ I waited for the Lord patiently, and he turned to me—he heard my cry for help.
² He pulled me out of the pit of destruction,* out from the mud and the slime. He set me on a rock, and gave me a safe place to stand.
³ He gave me a new song to sing, a song of praise to our God. Many people will see and be in awe, and they will put their trust in him.
⁴ Happy are those who trust in the Lord, who do not look for help from the arrogant or from those who worship idols.†
⁵ Lord my God, you have done so many wonderful things for us, and you have so many plans for us. No one compares to you. I want to tell all that you've done—blessings too many to count.
⁶ You don't want sacrifices and offerings. Now you have helped me understand‡—you're not asking for burnt offerings or sin

* **39:1** Literally, "I will keep a muzzle over my mouth." † **39:4** The psalmist is not actually asking for information, but protesting that he is suffering when his life is so short. ‡ **39:8** Sin is often regarded as rebellion against God. * **40:2** The word used here is usually translated "tumult" or "roaring" but is here thought to mean "desolation" or "destruction." † **40:4** It is unclear from the text whether people or false gods are being described here. ‡ **40:6** Literally, "you have dug ears for me."

offerings.

7 Then I said, "Look! Here I am! I've come to do what is written about me in the scroll of the Book.

8 I am pleased to do your will, my God—your Law guides my mind."§

9 I have announced the good news of salvation to the whole congregation.* I don't keep quiet, Lord, as you know.

10 I have not kept the truth of your goodness hidden inside me—I have spoken of your trustworthiness and your salvation. I have not concealed your unfailing love and your faithfulness from the whole congregation.

11 Lord, please don't keep back your mercy from me. May your trustworthy love and faithfulness always be my protection.

12 For I'm experiencing so many problems—I can't even count them! My sins have piled up so high I can't see over them. They're more than the number of hairs on my head! I feel like giving up!†

13 Lord, please save me! Hurry, Lord, help me!

14 Please defeat and humiliate the people who are trying to kill me; turn back in disgrace those who want to hurt me.

15 May they be shocked at their defeat, those who taunted me.

16 But may everyone who comes to you be happy and glad; may those who love your salvation always say, "The Lord is great!"

17 As for me, I am poor and needy. May the Lord think about me. Help me! Save me! My God, please don't wait!

41

For the music director. A psalm of David.

1 How happy are those who take care of the poor! When they are in trouble the Lord will save them.

2 The Lord protects them and keeps them alive. They will live happily in the land, and they will not be handed over to their enemies.

3 The Lord looks after them when they're sick; he makes them well from their illness.

4 "Lord, please be gracious to me," I asked. "Please heal me, for I have sinned against you."

5 Those who hate me only say evil things about me. "When is he going to die, and people forget all about him?" they ask.

6 They come to visit me, but their sympathy is not sincere. They're only interested in the bad news, which they spread around as soon as they leave.

7 All who hate me talk in whispers about my condition, hoping for the worst.

8 "He's been cursed with some terrible disease,"* they say. "Now he's bed-ridden he'll never recover!"

9 Even my best friend,† the one I trusted, who shared meals with me—even he has turned against me.

§ 40:8 Literally, "your Law is in the midst of my intestines." * 40:9 Probably referring to the large meetings at the Temple. † 40:12 Literally, "my heart fails me." * 41:8 Literally, "a thing of wickedness has been poured out on him," suggesting they think is under some kind of punishment. † 41:9 Literally, "the man of my peace."

- 10 But you Lord, please be gracious to me, make me well so I can repay them!
- 11 I know you are pleased with me because you have not let my enemies win and shout in triumph over me.
- 12 You have supported me because of my integrity, you have brought me into your presence forever.
- 13 Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, from eternity to eternity! Amen and amen!

42

For the music director. A psalm (maskil) of the sons of Korah.

- 1 As a deer longs for flowing streams, so I long for you, God.
- 2 I am thirsty for God, the living God. When can I go and see God's face?*
- 3 My tears have been my only food, day and night, while people ask me all day long, "Where is your God?"
- 4 I am crushed† as I remember how I walked with the crowds, leading them in a procession to the house of God, with shouts of joy and songs of thanks among the worshipers at the festival.
- 5 Why am I so discouraged? Why do I feel so sad? I will hope in God; I will praise him because he is the one who saves me‡—
- 6 my God! Even though I am very discouraged, I still remember you: from the land of Jordan and Hermon, and from Mount Mizar.
- 7 You thunder through the raging waters, through the noise of the waterfalls. Your crashing waves surge over me—I feel like I'm drowning.§
- 8 But every day the Lord shows me his trustworthy love; every night he gives me songs to sing—a prayer to the God of my life.
- 9 I cry out, "My God, my rock, why have you forgotten me? Why must I go around weeping because of the attacks of my enemies?"
- 10 The mocking of my attackers crushes my bones. They're always asking me, "Where is your God?"
- 11 Why am I so discouraged? Why do I feel so sad? I will hope in God; I will praise him because he is the one who saves me—my God!

43

(Psalm 42 and 43 were originally one psalm.)

- 1 God, please vindicate me! Plead my case against an unfaithful nation; save me from these wicked and dishonest people.
- 2 For you, God, are my protection—so why have you turned your back on me? Why must I go around weeping because of the attacks of my enemies?
- 3 Send your light and your truth so they can guide me; let them lead me to your holy mountain, to the place where you live.
- 4 I will go to God's altar, to God who makes me truly happy. I will praise you on the harp, God, my God.

* 42:2 This phrase is thought to mean a spiritual experience, perhaps in the Temple. † 42:4 Literally, "I pour out within me my soul." ‡ 42:5 Literally, "the acts of salvation of his face, my God." § 42:7 Implied.

⁵ Why am I so discouraged? Why do I feel so sad? I will hope in God; I will praise him because he is the one who saves me—my God!

44

For the music director. A psalm (maskil) of the sons of Korah.

¹ God, we have heard with our own ears—our forefathers have told us—all you did in their times, long ago.

² Through your power you drove out the other nations so you could settle our ancestors there; you defeated* the nations and you sent our ancestors to occupy the land.

³ They did not conquer the land using their swords; it was not through their own strength that the victory was won—it was by your strength, your power, and your presence with them, because you loved them.

⁴ God, you are my King; command victories for Jacob!

⁵ Only through you can we repel our enemies; only in your name can we defeat our opponents.

⁶ I do not trust my bow; I do not have confidence in my sword to save me.

⁷ You are the one who saves us from our enemies; you defeat† those who hate us.

⁸ God, we proudly thank you all day long, and praise your name forever. Selah.

⁹ But now you have rejected and disgraced us; you no longer accompany our armies.

¹⁰ You made us run from our enemies, and those who hate us have taken whatever they wanted.‡

¹¹ You have handed us over like sheep to be slaughtered; you have scattered us among the other nations.

¹² You have sold your own people for next to nothing, making no profit on the sale.

¹³ You have made a mockery of us before our neighbors, we are ridiculed and laughed at by those around us.

¹⁴ You have made us a joke to the other nations; they scornfully shake their heads at us.

¹⁵ We are humiliated all day long; we hold our heads in shame,

¹⁶ because of all the insults from the people mocking us, because our vengeful enemies are right in front of us.

¹⁷ All this has happened to us even though we didn't forget you; we haven't been unfaithful to the promises we made to you.§

¹⁸ We have not turned away from you, not in thought, nor in action.*

¹⁹ Even so, you crushed us, and made us into a jackal's den. You have covered us with the darkness of death.

²⁰ If we had forgotten the name of our God, or worshiped other gods,†

²¹ wouldn't God have been aware of this, because he knows everyone's thoughts?

* 44:2 Literally, "afflicted." † 44:7 Or "humiliated." ‡ 44:10 Literally, "plundered us."

§ 44:17 Literally, "covenant." * 44:18 Literally, "Our hearts have not turned back and our steps have not turned aside from your way." † 44:20 Literally, "spread out our hands to another god."

- 22 But because of you we are killed all day long; we're considered just sheep to be slaughtered.
- 23 Lord, wake up! Why are you sleeping? Get up! Don't turn your back on us forever!
- 24 Why do you look away from us and take no notice of our suffering and misery?
- 25 We lie ruined in the dust, our bodies face down in the dirt.
- 26 Stand up! Come and help us! Save us because of your trustworthy love!

45

For the music director. To the tune "Lilies." A psalm (maskil) of the sons of Korah. A love song.*

- 1 I am moved to write about this wonderful subject. Let me share what I have written for the king. What I say comes from the pen of a skilled author.
- 2 You are more handsome than anyone else. You always speak graciously, for God has blessed you forever.
- 3 Strap on your sword, mighty warrior, stride out in glory and majesty!
- 4 In your majesty ride out to victory, in the defense of truth, humility, and right, because you are strong and act powerfully.†
- 5 Your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of your enemies; the nations fall under you.
- 6 Your throne comes from God, and lasts forever and ever. The scepter with which you rule is a scepter of fairness.
- 7 You love what is right and hate what is wrong. That is why God, your God, has placed you above everyone else by anointing you with the oil of joy.
- 8 Your robes are perfumed with aloes, myrrh, and cassia; music played on stringed instruments in palaces decorated with ivory makes you happy.
- 9 The daughters of kings are among the noblewomen; the queen stands beside you on your right, wearing jewelry made of gold from Ophir.
- 10 Listen to what I have to say, daughter;‡ please pay attention. Don't pine for your people and your family.
- 11 May the king desire you in your beauty; respect him, for he is your lord.
- 12 The people§ of Tyre will come with gifts; rich people will look for your favor.
- 13 Inside her preparation room the princess bride looks wonderful in her golden gown.
- 14 Wearing her beautiful clothes she is brought to the king, followed by her bridesmaids.
- 15 What a happy, joyful procession enters the king's palace!
- 16 Your sons will take the place of your fathers; as princes you will make them rulers throughout the land.

* 45: The theme is one of a royal wedding. † 45:4 Literally, "Let your right hand teach you fearful deeds." ‡ 45:10 The psalmist is addressing the queen. § 45:12 Literally, "daughter."

17 Through my words* you will be famous through all generations, and nations will praise you forever and ever.

46

For the music director by the sons of Korah. According to alamothe, a song.

- 1 God is our protection and our strength; always ready to help when troubles come.
- 2 So we will not be afraid though the earth shakes, though the mountains fall into the depths of the sea,
- 3 though the waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble as the waters surge violently! Selah.
- 4 A river flows to bring happiness to those in God's city, the holy place where the Most High lives.
- 5 God is in the midst of the city; it will never fall. God protects it as soon as it is light.*
- 6 Nations are in turmoil, kingdoms collapse. God raises his voice and the earth melts.
- 7 The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob protects us. Selah.
- 8 Come and see what the Lord has achieved! See the amazing things† he has done on the earth!
- 9 He stops wars all over the world. He smashes the bow; he breaks the spear; he sets shields on fire.
- 10 Stop fighting! Recognize I am God! I am the ruler of the nations; I am the ruler of the earth.
- 11 The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob protects us. Selah.

47

For the music director. A psalm of the sons of Korah.

- 1 Everyone, clap your hands! Shout with joy to the Lord!
- 2 For the Lord Most High is awe-inspiring; he is the great King of all the earth.
- 3 He subdues other peoples under us; he puts nations under our feet.
- 4 He chose the land for us to own; the proud possession of Jacob's descendants whom he loves. Selah.
- 5 God ascends his throne* with a great shout, the Lord is accompanied by the sound of the trumpet.
- 6 Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises!
- 7 For God is King of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm!
- 8 God rules over the nations; he sits on his holy throne.
- 9 The rulers of the nations gather together with the people of the God of Abraham, for the defenders† of the earth belong to God. He is highly honored everywhere.

* 45:17 Implied. Clearly the psalmist himself would not live through all generations. * 46:5 That is not to say that the city had no protection at night, but that as soon as there was enough light for an enemy to see to attack, God would protect the city. † 46:8 The word used here is often translated "desolation" but not all God's actions that are described are destructive.

* 47:5 Implied. † 47:9 Literally, "shields."

48

For the music director. A psalm of the sons of Korah.

- 1 The Lord is supreme! He deserves praise in the city of our God on his holy mountain.
- 2 Mount Zion is high and beautiful, bringing happiness to all the earth; on the northern side* is the city of the great King.
- 3 God himself is in the city's fortresses; he is recognized as its defender.
- 4 Look at what happened when foreign kings joined forces and came to attack the city.
- 5 As soon as they saw it they were astonished and ran away terrified.
- 6 They shook all over, and were in agonizing pain like a woman giving birth,
- 7 just as the strong east wind wrecks the ships from Tarshish.
- 8 Just as we had heard, but now we have seen the city of the Lord Almighty. This is the city of our God; he makes it secure forever. Selah.
- 9 God, we recall your trustworthy love as we worship in the Temple.
- 10 As is fitting for your reputation,† God, praises to you stretch all around the world. What you do is always right!
- 11 Let the people of Mount Zion be glad; let the people of Judah celebrate because your judgments are always fair!
- 12 Go and take a look at Zion. Count the towers as you walk around.
- 13 Inspect the fortifications. Examine the citadels, so you can describe everything to the next generation, telling them:
- 14 "This is who our God is. He is our God forever and ever. He himself will lead us until the very end."‡

49

For the music director. A psalm of the sons of Korah.

- 1 Listen to this, everyone! Pay attention, people of the world—
- 2 whether you are highborn or lowborn, rich or poor!
- 3 For what I say is wise, and my thinking is perceptive.
- 4 I pay attention to wise sayings; I answer hard questions to a tune on the harp.
- 5 Why should I be afraid when trouble comes, when evil enemies surround me?
- 6 They trust in their wealth; they boast about their riches,
- 7 but no one can pay to rescue another from death; no one can pay a ransom to God.
- 8 Redemption is beyond price; no one could ever pay enough
- 9 that they could live forever and not face the grave.
- 10 Everyone knows that the wise die, those who are foolish and stupid too, leaving what they have to the next generation.

* **48:2** One interpretation is that this refers to the northern extension of Jerusalem that was not originally part of the city captured from the Jebusites. This new northern part was where the Temple and palace of Solomon were built. † **48:10** Literally, "name." ‡ **48:14** "End." There is some debate as to how this psalm ends. Some take the phrase to mean "death," others "forever," while still others think it was part of the superscription for the following psalm.

- 11 They think* their homes will last forever, that where they live will continue for all generations.
- 12 But human beings, for all their fame, don't understand.† They die, just like the animals.
- 13 This is the way of foolish people, yet those who come after them think they were clever!‡ Selah.
- 14 Like sheep they are destined for the grave. Death will be their shepherd. Those who live right will rule over them in the morning.§ Their bodies will decay in the grave, far from their homes.
- 15 But surely God will rescue me from the power of the grave; he will grab me back. Selah.
- 16 Don't be disturbed when people become rich, filling their houses with possessions.
- 17 For they won't take anything with them when they die; their wealth will not go down into the grave* with them.
- 18 They congratulate themselves for all they possess—people always praise you when you do well—
- 19 but their destiny is the same as their forefathers: they will never again see the light of day.
- 20 Human beings, for all their fame, don't understand, and they die, just like the animals.

50

A psalm of Asaph.

- 1 The Lord, the Almighty God, speaks! He summons everyone on earth, from the east to the west.
- 2 God shines out of Mount Zion, perfect in beauty.
- 3 Our God arrives, and does not stay quiet. Fire flames before him, burning everything up; a violent storm rages around him.
- 4 He summons the heavens above and the earth to witness the judgment of his people.
- 5 "Bring me those who trust in me—those who confirmed the agreement* with me through sacrifice."
- 6 The heavens declare his decisions are right, for God himself is the judge. Selah.
- 7 "My people, listen to what I have to say. I am bringing charges against you, Israel. I am God, your God!
- 8 I'm not complaining about your sacrifices or burnt offerings that you offer all the time.
- 9 I do not require bulls from your barns or goats from your pens,
- 10 for I own all the animals of the forest, and the cattle on a thousand hills belong to me.
- 11 I know every bird of the mountains; all living things in the fields are mine.

* 49:11 Some believe the word used here has been misspelled and translate it as "their graves." † 49:12 "Don't understand" or "don't last a night." ‡ 49:13 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. § 49:14 The significance of this verse is not clear. * 49:17 "Into the grave" implied. * 50:5 Literally, "covenant," also verse 16.

- 12 If I were hungry, I wouldn't tell you, for the earth and everything in it are mine.
- 13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?
- 14 Give an offering of thanks to God; keep the promises you made to the Most High,
- 15 and call on me when you're in trouble. I will rescue you, and you will thank me."
- 16 But to the wicked God says, "What's the point of mechanically repeating my laws or making empty promises about obeying the agreement?
- 17 You hate my discipline,[†] and you toss my words away, leaving them behind you.
- 18 When you see people stealing, you admire them; you associate with adulterers.
- 19 With your mouth you say evil things; you use your tongue to spread lies.
- 20 You sit there and speak against your brother, slandering your own mother's son.
- 21 I kept quiet when you did these things. You thought I was someone just like you. But now I confront you, and bring my charges against you.
- 22 Think again, you people who dismiss God, or I will tear you apart, and no-one will be able to save you.
- 23 But those who give an offering of thanks honor me, and to those who follow the right I will show them the salvation of God."

51

For the music director. A psalm of David. When Nathan the prophet came to him after he had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

- 1 God, please be gracious to me, because of your trustworthy love, because of your infinite kindness* please wipe away my sins.
- 2 Wash away all my guilt; cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 I admit my rebellion; my sin always stares me in my face.
- 4 I have sinned against you, you alone. I have done evil in your sight. So you are right in what you say, and fair when you judge.
- 5 It's true that I was born guilty—sinful from the time my mother conceived me.
- 6 But you want truth on the inside; you teach me wisdom deep within.
- 7 Purify me with hyssop[†] so I can be clean; wash me so I can be whiter than snow.
- 8 Please let me hear joy and happiness again; let the bones you have crushed be glad once more.
- 9 Turn your face away from looking at my sins; please wipe away my guilt.
- 10 Create a pure mind in me, God, and make me trustworthy again.
- 11 Don't expel me from your presence; don't take away your Holy Spirit from me.

[†] 50:17 Or "teaching." * 51:1 The word used here, often translated "compassion" is related to intense feelings of love and pity. It is related to the Hebrew word for "womb." [†] 51:7 A plant used for cleansing, but this is not a useful image for most today.

- 12 Give me back the happiness of your salvation; help me to have a willing nature.
- 13 Then I will teach your ways to rebellious people, and these sinners will come back to you.
- 14 God, please forgive me for the blood I have shed, God of my salvation, and I will sing for joy of your goodness.
- 15 Open my lips so I can speak your praise!
- 16 For sacrifices don't make you happy, or I would bring one; burnt offerings aren't what pleases you.
- 17 The "sacrifices" that God wants are on the inside—the brokenness of repentance. God won't reject a broken and sorrowful heart.
- 18 Be kind to Zion, help the city; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
- 19 Then you will be pleased with sacrifices given in the right spirit, for all kinds of burnt offerings, and bulls sacrificed on your altar once more.‡

52

For the music director. A psalm (maskil) of David, concerning the time when Doeg the Edomite went to Saul and told him, "David has gone to the home of Ahimelech."

- 1 You great man, why do you boast about the evil things you've done?
God's trustworthy love lasts all day long.*
- 2 You plot to make people suffer; your words cut like a sharp razor, you liar!
- 3 You love evil more than good, and telling lies more than speaking the truth. Selah.
- 4 You love slanderous words that destroy others, you liar!
- 5 But God will strike you down so hard you'll never get up. He will grab hold of you and drag you from your tent. He will tear you out of the land of the living. Selah.
- 6 Those who do right will see all this. They will be astonished and laugh, saying,
- 7 "See what happens to those who don't go to God for help but instead rely on their great wealth and strength—which only brings their destruction!"
- 8 But I'm like an olive tree growing strongly in God's house. I trust in God's unfailing love forever and ever.
- 9 I will praise you forever, God, for all you have done. In the presence of your trustworthy people, I will place my hope in the kind of person you are,† for you are good.

53

For the music director. According to Mahalath. A psalm (maskil) of David.*

‡ 51:19 Some believe the last two verses are later additions. * 52:1 "God's trustworthy love lasts all day long." This is the meaning of the Hebrew text but the thought seems out of place here. † 52:9 Literally, "in your name." * 53: This psalm is almost identical to Psalms 14.

- 1 Only fools tell themselves, "God doesn't exist." They are completely immoral, they commit terrible sins, not a single one of them does anything good.
- 2 God watches from heaven to see if anyone understands, if anyone wants to come to God.
- 3 They have all fallen away, they are totally depraved; none of them does anything good, not even one.
- 4 "Won't these people who do evil ever learn? They consume my people as if they were eating bread, and refuse to pray to me."[†]
- 5 They will become completely terrified, more frightened than they have ever been. God will scatter the bones of those who fight against you; you will defeat[‡] them because God has rejected them.
- 6 If only God's salvation would come from Zion! When God restores[§] his people, the people of Jacob will celebrate, and the people of Israel will be glad.

54

For the music director. With stringed instruments. A psalm (maskil) of David, concerning the time when the Ziphites came to Saul and told him, "David is hiding among us."

- 1 God, because of your very nature,^{*} please save me! Vindicate me by your power!
- 2 God, please hear my prayer; listen to what I'm saying.
- 3 For strangers are coming to attack me—violent men who don't care about God are trying to kill me. Selah.
- 4 But God helps me; the Lord saves my life!
- 5 The evil my enemies have done will come back upon them. I depend on you to destroy them.
- 6 I will happily offer a sacrifice to you; I will praise the kind of person you are,[†] Lord, for you are good.
- 7 For he has saved me from all my troubles; and I have seen those who hated me defeated.[‡]

55

For the music director. With stringed instruments. A psalm (maskil) of David.

- 1 God, please hear my prayer; don't ignore my cry for help!
- 2 Please listen, and give me an answer. I'm terribly troubled by my problems! I'm frantic!
- 3 For my enemies are screaming at me; the wicked are intimidating^{*} me. They rain down suffering on me, angrily assaulting me in their hatred.
- 4 My heart thumps in agony! Terrified, I feel I'm about to die!

[†] 53:4 These are clearly the words of God so are placed within quotes. [‡] 53:5 Or "put them to shame." [§] 53:6 The term used here is often applied to the return from Exile, but here would apply to the blessings the people would receive when they returned to God. ^{*} 54:1 Literally, "name." [†] 54:6 Literally, "your name." [‡] 54:7 "Defeated": implied. Literally, "with my eye I have looked at those who hate me." ^{*} 55:3 Literally, "pressuring."

- 5 I'm in a panic, trembling with fear; feelings of horror wash over me.
 6 I tell myself, If only God would give me wings like a dove so I could fly away and be at peace!
 7 I would fly far away to escape, and stay in the wilderness. Selah.
 8 I would hurry to a place to hide, out of the wind, safe from the raging storm.
 9 Confuse them, Lord! Muddle what they're saying, for I see violence and conflict in the city.
 10 They patrol the city walls day and night, and wickedness and trouble are within the city.†
 11 The ones causing destruction are inside the city; frauds and cheats are always on the streets.
 12 The problem‡ is that it's not an enemy who mocks me—I could stand that. It's not someone who hates me who insults me—I could avoid them.
 13 No, it's you, a man just like me, my best friend who I know so well!
 14 Our friendship was so close. We used to have great talks together as we walked with everyone to the house of God.
 15 May death come quickly to them; may they go down into the grave alive, because evil finds its home in them.
 16 As for me, I cry out to God, and the Lord will save me.
 17 I weep and groan morning, noon, and night, and he listens to me.
 18 He rescues me, keeping me safe and sound from my attackers, because there are so many against me.
 19 God who has ruled from the beginning will hear me and answer them. Selah. For they refuse to change and don't respect God.
 20 As for my best friend,§ he attacked his friends who had no quarrel with him; he broke the promises he had made to them.
 21 What he says is as smooth as butter, but inside he plans war; his words are as soothing as oil, but they cut like sharp swords.
 22 Throw your burdens onto the Lord and he will take care of you. He will never allow those who live right to fall.
 23 But you, God, will bring down murderers and liars, throwing them into the pit of destruction before they have even lived half their lives. As for me, I will trust in you.

56

For the music director. According to "Dove on Distant Oaks." A psalm (miktam) of David concerning the time the Philistines captured him in Gath.

- 1 God, please be gracious to me, for people are persecuting me; my attackers fight against me all day long.
 2 My enemies chase me down all the time—there are many of them, attacking me in their arrogance.*
 3 But when I'm afraid, I trust in you.

† 55:10 This could mean that though the city walls are patrolled, the evil is inside the city; or that violence and conflict are symbolically the ones on patrol, so inevitably wickedness and trouble are within the city as well. ‡ 55:12 Implied. § 55:20 Implied. * 56:2 The word used here means "height" and it is thought this refers to superiority or arrogance.

- 4 I thank God for his promises. I trust in God, so why should I be fearful? What can mere human beings[†] do to me?
- 5 They constantly twist my words against me; they spend all their time thinking of evil things to do to me.
- 6 They gather together in their hiding places to keep watch on me, hoping to kill me.
- 7 Will they escape when they do so much evil? God, in anger bring these people down!
- 8 You've kept track of all my wanderings. You've collected all my tears in your bottle.[‡] You've kept a record of each one.
- 9 Then those who hate me will run away when I call for your help. For I know this: God is for me!
- 10 I thank God for his promises. I thank the Lord for his promises.
- 11 I trust in God, so why should I be fearful? What can mere human beings do to me?
- 12 God, I will keep my promises to you. I will give thank offerings to you,
- 13 for you have saved me from death and kept me from falling. Now I walk in the presence of God, in the light that gives life.

57

For the music director. According to "Do Not Destroy." A psalm (miktam) of David concerning the time he fled from Saul and hid in the cave.

- 1 Please be kind* to me, God! Be kind to me because I come to you for protection. I will shelter under the shadow of your wings until the danger is past.
- 2 I cry out for help to God Most High, to God who vindicates me.
- 3 From heaven he sends his help, and he saves me. He defeats[†] those who persecute me. Selah. God sends me his unfailing love, showing he is completely trustworthy.
- 4 I am surrounded by man-eating lions—I am forced to live with them! Their teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongues are swords.
- 5 God, your greatness is above the highest heavens; and your glory covers the whole earth!
- 6 They set a trap to catch me. I was so depressed. They dug a pit on my path but they were the ones who fell into it. Selah.
- 7 I have confidence in you, God, I have confidence in you. I will sing songs of praise to you.
- 8 I say to myself, "Wake up!" Wake up, harp and lyre! I will wake up the dawn!
- 9 I will thank you among the peoples, Lord; I will sing your praises among the nations.
- 10 Your faithful love reaches to the heavens; your trustworthiness to the clouds.
- 11 God, your greatness is above the highest heavens; and your glory covers the whole earth!

[†] 56:4 Literally, "flesh." [‡] 56:8 To record the extent of the psalmist's sorrow. * 57:1 Or "gracious." [†] 57:3 Or "disgraces."

58

For the music director. According to "Do Not Destroy." A psalm (miktam) of David.

- 1 You leaders,* do you really say what is right? Do you judge people fairly?
- 2 No, for in your minds you plan evil. You cause violence everywhere!
- 3 The wicked are sinners from birth; from the moment they're born they tell lies.
- 4 They have venom like that of a poisonous snake, and just like a cobra they stop listening,
- 5 refusing to hear the voice of the snake charmers or the spellbinders.
- 6 God, break their teeth, and smash the jaws of these lions, Lord.
- 7 May they vanish like water that flows away; when they shoot their arrows may they miss their mark.†
- 8 May they be like the slime of snails that dissolves away, like a stillborn child that never saw the light of day.
- 9 Before the cooking pot is hot from burning thorns, whether fresh or dry, God will blow them away.‡
- 10 Those who live right will be happy when they see there is punishment; they will wash their feet in the blood of the wicked.
- 11 They will say, "There is definitely a reward for those who live right; there is certainly a God who judges fairly on earth."

59

For the music director. According to "Do Not Destroy." A psalm (miktam) of David, concerning the time Saul sent out soldiers to watch David's house in order to kill him.

- 1 Rescue me from my enemies, God! Protect me from those who are attacking me!
- 2 Rescue me from these evil people! Save me from these murderers!
- 3 See how they're lying in wait to kill me! Powerful men are gathered against me, Lord, even though I have not sinned or done anything wrong.*
- 4 Even though I'm not guilty they hurry to prepare an attack on me. Please stand up, come and help me, and see what's going on.
- 5 You are God, the Lord Almighty, God of Israel. Stand up, and punish all the nations. Don't have any mercy on these evil traitors. Selah.
- 6 In the evening they return, snarling like dogs as they roam around the city.
- 7 See what evil talk comes pouring out of their mouths! Words sharp as swords, for they say to themselves,† "Who can hear us?"
- 8 But you, Lord, you laugh at them; you pour scorn on all the nations.
- 9 You are my strength! I will look to you, God, for you are the one who protects me.

* 58:1 The word in the Hebrew is unclear. One interpretation "gods" is surely incorrect.

† 58:7 The meaning of the second part of this verse is unclear. ‡ 58:9 The meaning of this verse is unclear.

* 59:3 This could be either some offense against the enemies or against God. † 59:7 Implied.

- 10 In his trustworthy love, God will come and save me. He will show me how my enemies are defeated.
- 11 Don't kill them right away, otherwise my people will quickly forget what you have done.‡ By your power make them stagger around and then fall down, Lord our protection.
- 12 Let them be caught out by the evil things they say, the words they proudly speak—brought down by their curses and the lies they tell!
- 13 Destroy them in your anger! Destroy them completely! Then everyone will know that God rules in Israel!§
- 14 In the evening they return, snarling like dogs as they roam around the city.
- 15 They wander around, looking for things to eat, and howl when they're not satisfied.
- 16 But I will sing of your strength; in the morning I will sing for joy about your trustworthy love. For you have been my protection; my place of safety in my time of trouble.
- 17 You are my strength, I sing praises to you, for you are the one who protects me—the God who shows me his trustworthy love!

60

For the music director. According to “Lily of the Testimony.” A psalm (miktam) of David, useful for teaching, about the time he fought against Aram-naharaim and Aram-zobah, and then Joab returned and killed 12,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt.

- 1 You, God, have rejected us! You have broken us; you have been angry with us; but now you have to welcome us back!*
- 2 You have sent earthquakes on our land and split it apart. Now heal the cracks, for the land is still having tremors.
- 3 You have been very hard on your people; you gave us wine that made us stagger around.
- 4 But you have given those who respect you the banner of truth to unfurl and rally around.† Selah.
- 5 Rescue those you love! Answer us, and save us by your power!
- 6 God has spoken from his Temple: “Triumphantly I divide up Shechem, and portion out the Valley of Succoth.‡
- 7 Both Gilead and Manasseh belong to me. Ephraim is my helmet, and Judah is my scepter.§
- 8 I will treat Moab as my washbasin; I will place my sandal on Edom; I will shout in triumph over Philistia.”*

‡ 59:11 Implied—the text simply says “lest my people forget.” § 59:13 Literally, “Jacob.” * 60:1 Literally, “restore.” † 60:4 The Hebrew is unclear and capable of many interpretations. ‡ 60:6 This presumably refers to the dividing up of the country when the Israelites entered the Promised Land. § 60:7 Ephraim was the tribe of many warriors, and synonymous with the northern kingdom, while Judah was the tribe from which the kings came, and symbolized the southern kingdom. * 60:8 These are all symbols of victory and subjugation.

- 9 Who will bring me into the fortified city? Who will lead me into Edom?[†]
- 10 Have you rejected us, God? Won't you lead our armies?
- 11 Please give us help against our enemies, for human help is worthless.[‡]
- 12 Our strength is in God, and he will crush our enemies.

61

For the music director. With stringed instruments. A psalm of David.

- 1 God, please hear my cry for help; please listen to my prayer.
- 2 From this distant place, far from home, I cry out to you as my courage fails. Take me to a rock high above me where I will be safe,*
- 3 for you are my protection, a strong tower where my enemies cannot attack me.
- 4 Let me live with you[†] forever; protect me under the shelter of your wings. Selah.
- 5 For you, God, have heard the promises I've made. You have given all those who love your character your special blessing.[‡]
- 6 Please give the king many extra years; may his reign last through generations.
- 7 May he always live in your presence; may your trustworthy love and faithfulness protect him.
- 8 Then I will always sing praises to you, and every day I will keep my promises to you.

62

For Jeduthun, the music director. A psalm of David.

- 1 Only in God do I find peace; my salvation comes from him.
- 2 He is the one who protects me and saves me; he keeps me safe so I will never be in danger.
- 3 How long are you* going to attack me? All of you against one man! To you I'm just a broken wall, a collapsed fence.
- 4 They plan to throw me down from my high position; they love to tell lies. They say nice things to me, but inside they're cursing me. Selah.
- 5 Only in God do I find peace; my hope comes from him.
- 6 He is the one who protects me and saves me; he keeps me safe so I will not be in danger.
- 7 My salvation and my success[†] come from God alone; God is my security and my protection.
- 8 My people, always trust in him. Pour out all your thoughts to him, for he is the one who looks after us. Selah.

[†] 60:9 Since it is unlikely that the speaker of these lines is God, it is conjectured that it is now the king that is speaking. The fortified city is probably Sela, the capital of Edom, later called Petra. [‡] 60:11 Literally, "the help of man is vain." * 61:2 "Where I will be safe": implied. [†] 61:4 "Live with you": literally, "dwell in your tent." [‡] 61:5 Literally, "you have given an inheritance to those who fear your name." The "inheritance" was originally linked to the possession of the Promised Land, and then expanded to mean all of God's blessings to his people. * 62:3 The psalmist now addresses his enemies. [†] 62:7 Literally, "glory."

- ⁹ Ordinary people are mere breaths, while leaders are just fakes. Put them all together and weigh them on scales and they wouldn't weigh more than air!
- ¹⁰ Don't trust in money made by extortion or robbery. Don't be proud of your wealth even if you are successful—don't make money what you live for.
- ¹¹ God has already made it clear—I have heard it many times—power belongs to you, God.
- ¹² You show us trustworthy love. You give back to people in return for what they've done.

63

A psalm of David, when he was in the Judean desert.

- ¹ God, you are my God, I eagerly look for you. I am thirsty for you; all that I am longs for you in this dry, weary, waterless land.
- ² I see you in the Temple; I watch your power and glory.
- ³ Your trustworthy love is better than life itself; I will praise you.
- ⁴ I will thank you as long as I live; I lift up my hands as I celebrate your wonderful character.*
- ⁵ You satisfy me more than the richest food; I will praise you with joyful songs.
- ⁶ I think of you all night long as I lie on my bed meditating about you.
- ⁷ For you are the one who helps me; I sing happily from under your wings.
- ⁸ I hold on to you; your strong arms lift me up.
- ⁹ Those who are trying to destroy me will go down into the grave.
- ¹⁰ They will be killed by the sword; they will become food for jackals.
- ¹¹ But the king will be happy for what God has done. All who follow God[†] will praise him, but those who tell lies will be silenced.

64

For the music director. A psalm of David.

- ¹ God, please listen to my complaint.* Protect me because my enemies scare me.
- ² Shelter me from the plots of the wicked, from this evil mob.
- ³ What they say cuts like swords; they fire off poisonous words like arrows.
- ⁴ They shoot from their hiding places at innocent people—doing this without warning, not afraid of being caught.
- ⁵ They encourage one another to do evil, planning how to secretly trap people, telling themselves, "Nobody will notice."
- ⁶ They plot wicked things. "What a great plan we've created!" they say. There are no limits to the depths to which human minds and thoughts can sink.
- ⁷ But God will shoot them with arrows; all of a sudden they will be wounded.

* **63:4** Literally, "to your name." † **63:11** "Follow God": literally, "swear by God." * **64:1** Or "problem."

- 8 What they themselves say will trip them up; people who see them will mock them, shaking their heads at them.
- 9 Then everyone will be frightened. They will say that this is the work of God, and they will think about what he has done.†
- 10 Those who are right with the Lord will be happy in him, they will go to him for protection. Those who live right will praise him.

65

For the music director. A psalm of David. A song.

- 1 God, you deserve to be praised, and in Zion we will keep our promises to you.*
- 2 You hear our prayers; everyone comes to you.
- 3 Even though we're drowning in our sins and our disobedience, you forgive us.
- 4 Happy are those you choose to keep close to you, those who live in your courts! We are delighted with the blessings we receive in your house, your holy Temple!
- 5 In your goodness you answer us through the wonderful things you do, God of our salvation. You can be trusted by everyone on earth, including those sailing distant oceans.
- 6 You made the mountains by your power, for you have great strength.†
- 7 You calm the raging seas and crashing waves, you silence the noisy shouts of the nations.
- 8 Everyone, even those in distant lands, are amazed by the wonderful things you do, from the east to the west they sing for joy.
- 9 You care for the earth and water it; you make it very productive. God, your river is full of water to grow the grain—this is what you have planned.
- 10 You fill the ploughed furrows with water, you soften the ridges; you bless the growing crops.
- 11 You make the high point of the year a wonderful harvest, filling the wagons with good things.‡
- 12 The pastures in the wilderness grow lush; the hillsides are clothed in bright flowers.
- 13 The meadows are covered with flocks of sheep, and the valleys with fields of grain. Everything triumphantly sings for joy.

66

For the music director. A song. A psalm.

- 1 Everyone on earth, shout for joy to God!
- 2 Sing about his marvelous reputation; praise him for his goodness!
- 3 Tell God, "What you do is awesome! Your enemies are forced to bow before you because of your power.
- 4 Everyone on earth worships you, singing your praises—singing praises because of who you are."* Selah.

† 64:9 Or "They will announce God's works and understand his labor." * 65:1 Or "a vow to you will be fulfilled in Zion." † 65:6 Literally, "you are girded with might." ‡ 65:11 Literally, "You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon-tracks drip with fatness."

* 66:4 Literally, "your name."

- 5 Come and see what God has done! What he does for people is truly awesome!
- 6 He turned the Red Sea into dry land, and his people walked across through the waters. We celebrated there because of what he did.
- 7 He rules forever through his power. He keeps an eye on the nations, watching to make sure no rebels rise up in opposition. Selah.
- 8 Let all people everywhere bless our God, and loudly sing praises to him.
- 9 He has kept us alive, and he has not let us fall.
- 10 God, you have tested us, refining us like silver.
- 11 You caught us in your net; you placed heavy burdens on our backs.
- 12 You let people ride roughshod over us;† we suffered through fire and flooding, but you brought us to a safe place.
- 13 I will come to your Temple with burnt offerings; I will fulfill my promises to you,
- 14 the promises I made when I was in trouble.
- 15 I will sacrifice burnt offerings to you of fattened livestock—the smoke of the sacrifice of rams, offerings of bulls and goats. Selah.
- 16 Come and listen, everyone who honors God, and I will tell you all he has done for me.
- 17 I called out to him, and praised him with my voice.
- 18 If my thinking had been sinful,‡ the Lord would not have listened to me.
- 19 But God did hear me! He listened to what I had to say in my prayer!
- 20 Praise God, who did not disregard my prayer or take his trustworthy love from me.

67

For the music director. To be accompanied by stringed instruments. A psalm. A song.

- 1 May God be gracious to us and bless us. May he look favorably on us. Selah.
- 2 May everyone on earth come to know your ways, your salvation among all people.
- 3 May the people praise you, God; may all the people praise you.
- 4 May they be happy and sing for joy because you judge people fairly, and you guide everyone on earth. Selah.
- 5 May the people praise you, God; may all the people praise you.
- 6 The earth has produced its crops; and God, our God, has blessed us.*
- 7 God will bless us, and all people everywhere will respect† him.

68

For the music director. A psalm of David. A song.

- 1 Stand up, God, and scatter your enemies. Let those who hate him run away from him!

† 66:12 The image is of an enemy army overwhelming them. ‡ 66:18 Literally, “If I had seen evil in my heart.” It was believed that it was in the heart that thinking happened.

* 67:6 Or “May the earth produce its crops; may God, our God, bless us.” † 67:7 Literally, “fear.”

- 2 Blow them away as if they were smoke; melt them like beeswax in a fire. Let the wicked die in God's presence.
- 3 But those who are right with God are happy, and they celebrate in God's presence, full of joy.
- 4 Sing praises to God! Sing praises to his wonderful reputation!* Praise the rider of the clouds—his name is the Lord!† Be happy in his presence!
- 5 He is a father to the orphans, a protector of widows. This is who God is, who lives in his holy place.‡
- 6 God gives those who are abandoned§ a family to live with. He sets prisoners free with celebration.* But those who rebel live in a desert wasteland.
- 7 God, when you led your people out,† when you marched through the desert, Selah,
- 8 the earth quaked, and the heavens shook‡ before God, the one of Sinai; before God, the God of Israel.
- 9 You sent plenty of rain to water the promised land; refreshing it when it was dry.§
- 10 Your people settled there, and because of your kindness, God, you looked after the poor. Selah.
- 11 The Lord gives the command, and a great army of women spread the good news.
- 12 The kings of the foreign armies are quick to run away, and the women* who stayed at home divide the plunder!
- 13 Why are you staying at home?† There are ornaments in the shape of a dove with wings of silver and feathers of fine gold to be taken.‡
- 14 The Almighty scattered the foreign kings like a snowstorm on Mount Zalmon.
- 15 "Mountain of God," Mount Bashan, with your many high peaks, Mount Bashan,
- 16 why do you look enviously, mountain with many peaks, at the mountain God chose as his home, where the Lord will live forever?§
- 17 God's chariots can't be counted; there are thousands and thousands of them. He comes among them from Sinai into his Temple.
- 18 As you ascended to your high throne you led a procession of prisoners. You received gifts from the people, even from those who had rebelled against the home of the Lord God.

* **68:4** Literally, "name." † **68:4** Literally, "Yah," a short form of Yahweh. ‡ **68:5** "His holy place"—this may be a reference to heaven or the Temple. § **68:6** Or "lonely." * **68:6** Or "singing." This word only occurs once in the Old Testament. It has also been translated as "prosperity." † **68:7** Referring to the Exodus. ‡ **68:8** Or "poured down rain." § **68:9** This line could also be directly applied to the people of Israel, since the "inheritance" was both the land and the people. * **68:12** The women of Israel. † **68:13** The meaning here is uncertain. Literally, "you lie down by the hearthstones (or sheepfolds)." ‡ **68:13** "To be taken." Implied. Though the text is not clear it seems that this is related to the plunder mentioned in verse 12. § **68:16** While this verse is complex, it seems to be suggesting that there were those who questioned the superiority of Mount Zion, and that their own mountains (Mount Bashan) were equally acceptable as places for God to dwell and be worshiped. It's interesting to note that even much later this issue of "which mountain" was brought up by the Samaritan woman to Jesus, since the Samaritans identified Mount Gerizim as their holy mountain.

- 19 May the Lord be blessed, for every day he carries our burdens.* God is our salvation. Selah.
- 20 For us, God is a God who saves. The Lord God provides our escape from death.
- 21 But God will crush the heads of his enemies, the hairy heads† of those who continue to sin.
- 22 The Lord says, “I will drag them down from Bashan; I will drag them up from the depths of the sea,
- 23 so that you may walk in their blood. Even your dogs will have their share of your enemies.”
- 24 People watch your processions, God—the processions of my God and King as they go into the Temple.
- 25 The singers are at the front, the musicians at the back, and in the middle girls playing tambourines.
- 26 Praise God, everyone who has come to worship; praise the Lord, everyone who belongs to Israel.
- 27 There is the little tribe of Benjamin, followed by the many leaders from Judah; then come the leaders of Zebulun and Naphtali.
- 28 Display your power, God! Reveal your strength, Lord, as you have done for us in the past.
- 29 Because of your Temple in Jerusalem, kings bring tribute to you.
- 30 Condemn the beasts of the reeds, the bulls and calves!‡ May they be humbled and bring bars of silver in tribute! Scatter the war-loving nations!
- 31 Let Egypt come with bronze gifts;§ let Ethiopia come quickly and hand over their tributes to God!
- 32 Sing to God, kingdoms of the earth, sing praises to the Lord. Selah.
- 33 Sing to the rider of the ancient heavens,* his strong voice sounding like thunder!
- 34 Let everyone know of God’s power: how his majesty extends over Israel, how his strength is revealed in the heavens.†
- 35 How awesome is God in his Temple! The God of Israel gives strength and power to his people! Praise God!

69

For the music director. To the tune “Lilies.” A psalm of David.

- 1 God, please save me, because the water is up to my neck!
- 2 I’m sinking deeper into the mud—there’s no solid ground for me to stand. I find myself in deep water; floods wash over me.
- 3 I’m so tired of screaming out for help my throat is totally raw. My eyes are worn out looking for my God to help me.
- 4 Those who hate me for no reason are more than the number of hairs on my head. Many enemies try to destroy me by telling lies. How can I give back what I didn’t steal?
- 5 God, you know how foolish I am! My sins are not hidden from you.

* **68:19** Or “every day he carries us.” † **68:21** This may refer to the practice of warriors not cutting their hair during times of war. ‡ **68:30** The meaning of this line is not clear. It may refer to Egypt, and also to other foreign nations. § **68:31** The word only occurs here in the OT. Alternatively it may mean ambassadors, natron, or expensive cloth. * **68:33** In other words, the Creator. † **68:34** Literally, “clouds” as a symbol of heaven above.

- 6 Don't let those who trust you be ashamed because of me, Lord God Almighty. Don't let those who follow you be disgraced because of me, God of Israel.
- 7 For your sake I put up with the insults; my face shows my embarrassment.
- 8 I have become a foreigner to my brother Israelites; a stranger to my very own brothers.
- 9 My devotion for your house is burning me up inside; the insults of those who insulted you have fallen on me.
- 10 I wept and I fasted, but they mocked me;
- 11 I mourned in sackcloth, but they laughed at me.
- 12 People sitting by the town gate gossip about me. I'm the subject of rude songs sung by drunks.
- 13 But my prayer is to you, Lord, believing this is a good time to respond to me. God, in your wonderful trustworthy love, answer me with your sure salvation.
- 14 Please rescue me from the mud—don't let me sink! Save me from those who hate me and from drowning in the deep waters!
- 15 Don't let the flood waters wash over me. Don't let the deep waters pull me down. Don't let the grave close over me.
- 16 Please answer my prayers, Lord, for you are good and love me with your trustworthy love; because of your kindness, please help me.
- 17 Don't turn away from me, your servant. Please answer me quickly because I'm in trouble.
- 18 Come here and rescue me; set me free from my enemies.
- 19 You—you know my shame, my disgrace, my humiliation. You see everything my enemies are doing.
- 20 Insults have broken my heart—I am so sick there is no cure. I looked for some sympathy, but there was no one! Nobody showed me any compassion.
- 21 Instead they gave me bitter* herbs to eat and vinegar to drink.
- 22 May the table set before them become a trap for them, a net that catches them, bringing punishment.†
- 23 May their eyes become blind so they cannot see, and may their backs always be bent low in dejection.
- 24 Pour out your judgment‡ on them; chase them down in your fierce anger.
- 25 Let the places where they live be deserted. Let their homes be abandoned.
- 26 For they persecute those you have punished, and make it even more painful for those you have disciplined.
- 27 Punish them for the evil they have done. Don't acquit them.§
- 28 Blot out their names from the Book of Life. Don't let them be listed with those who do right.
- 29 But I am suffering and in physical pain. God, please save me and keep me safe.

* 69:21 Or "poisonous." † 69:22 Following the Septuagint text. ‡ 69:24 Literally, "indignation." § 69:27 Literally, this verse reads, "Give guilt to their guilt. Do not let them come to your righteousness."

- 30 I will praise God's character* in song; I will say how incredible he is and how thankful I am.
- 31 The Lord is happier with this than with offering animals as sacrifices: cattle, or bulls with horns and hooves.
- 32 The humble will see this and be happy. May God encourage everyone who comes to him.
- 33 God hears the poor, and he does not ignore his people who are in prison.
- 34 Praise him heaven and earth, the seas and everything that lives in them!
- 35 For God will save Zion, and rebuild the cities of Judah. They† will live there and own the land.
- 36 The descendants of those who follow him will inherit the land, and those who love him will live there.

70

For the music director. A psalm of David. For a memorial.*

- 1 God, save me! Hurry, Lord, help me!
- 2 Please defeat and humiliate the people who are trying to kill me; turn back in disgrace those who want to hurt me.
- 3 May they be shocked at their defeat, those who taunted me.
- 4 But may everyone who comes to you be happy and glad; may those who love your salvation always say, "God is great!"
- 5 As for me, I am poor and needy. Hurry, God, help me! Save me! Lord, don't wait!

71

- 1 Lord, you are the one who keeps me safe; please don't disappoint me.
- 2 Save me, rescue me, because you always do what is right.
- 3 Please listen to me, and save me. Be my rock of protection where I can always go and hide. You gave the command to save me; for you are my rock and fortress.
- 4 My God, rescue me from the power of the wicked, from the clutches of those who are evil and brutal.
- 5 For you, Lord God, are my hope. You are the one I have trusted since I was young.
- 6 I have depended on you since birth; you have taken care of me* from my mother's womb. That's why I'm always praising you!
- 7 My life has been like a miracle to many people, for you have been my powerful protector.
- 8 All day long I am full of praise for you, telling how wonderful you are!
- 9 Don't reject me now I'm getting old. When my strength is gone, please don't abandon me.
- 10 For my enemies are talking about me; those who want to kill me are plotting together.

* 69:30 Literally, "name." † 69:35 God's people. * 70: This psalm is taken from Psalms 40 with a few minor changes. * 71:6 "Taken care of me": the meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain.

- 11 They say, "God has given up on him. Let's go after him because there's no one to save him."
 12 God, please don't stay away from me. My God, hurry to help me!
 13 Defeat my accusers, get rid of them! May those who want to cause me trouble be covered with shame and disgrace!
 14 As for me, I will go on hoping in you,[†] and I will praise you more and more.
 15 I will talk about your goodness and your salvation every day, even though it's more than I can understand.
 16 I will come and explain what the Lord has done. I will remind people that you alone do what is right.
 17 God, you have taught me since I was young, and I still tell others about all the wonderful things you do.
 18 Even though I'm old and gray, please don't abandon me, God. Let me tell the new generation about your power. Let me explain to all who are to come the great things you do.
 19 God, your trustworthy and true nature[‡] is higher than the highest heaven! You have done incredible things! God, who is like you?
 20 You had me face many troubles and plenty of misery, but you will bring me back to life; you will rise me up from the depths of the earth.
 21 You will give me even greater prestige, and you will make me happy again.
 22 Then I will praise you on the harp for your trustworthiness, my God. I will sing praises to you on the lyre, Holy One of Israel.
 23 I will shout for joy as I sing praises to you, for you have redeemed me.
 24 All day long I will tell about all the good things you have done, for those who tried to cause me misery have been disgraced and humiliated.

72

A psalm of Solomon.

- 1 God, please give the king fairness, and give the king's son the ability to do what's right.
 2 May he rightly judge your people, and may he be fair to the poor.
 3 May the mountains bring peace* to the people, and the hills bring goodness.
 4 May he defend the poor and save their children, may he crush those who oppress them.
 5 May they respect him[†] as long as the sun and the moon shine above, for all generations.
 6 May his reign be like rain falling on new grass,[‡] like showers that water the earth.
 7 May those who live right prosper under his rule; may there be great prosperity until the moon is no more.

[†] 71:14 "In you": implied. [‡] 71:19 "Trustworthy and true nature": often translated "righteousness." The root word comes from the idea of being "straight." Simply put, God is always straight. * 72:3 Or "prosperity." [†] 72:5 Or "you." [‡] 72:6 Literally, "mown grass." A period of rain was needed after the first crop was cut in order for the second crop to grow.

- 8 May he rule from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth. §
 9 Desert tribes will kneel before him; and his enemies will bite the dust.
 10 The kings of Tarshish and the islands will bring him tribute; the
 kings of Sheba and Seba will present him with gifts.
 11 Every king will bow down to him; every nation will serve him.
 12 He will help the poor when they cry out to him, and help those who
 are suffering that have no one to support them.
 13 He has pity on the poor and needy—he saves their lives!
 14 He rescues them from violence and oppression, for their lives mean
 so much to him.
 15 May he live long! May the gold from Sheba be given to him. May
 people always pray for him and bless him all day long.
 16 May there be plenty of grain in the land, even growing on mountain-
 tops. May the fruit on the trees sway like the trees of Lebanon.
 May the people in the city flourish like grass in a field.
 17 May his fame live forever; may it last as long as the sun. May all
 nations be blessed through him, and may they praise him.
 18 Praise the Lord God, the God of Israel, who is the only one who can
 do such fantastic things! 19 Praise his wonderful nature forever!
 May the whole world be full of his glory! Amen and amen!
 20 (This is the end of the psalms of David, son of Jesse.)*

73

A psalm of Asaph.

- 1 Truly God is good to Israel, to those whose minds* are pure.
 2 But I was stumbling, my feet were starting to slide,†
 3 because I was jealous of self-important people—I saw how well the
 wicked were doing.
 4 They don't ever seem to get sick; they are strong and healthy.
 5 They don't have problems like other people; they don't get hit by
 disasters like everybody else.
 6 They wear their pride like a necklace; they clothe themselves with
 violence.
 7 Their eyes bulge out because they're so fat; their minds are full of
 selfish vanity.‡
 8 They mock people, and speak maliciously; they arrogantly threaten
 cruelty.
 9 They talk irreverently against heaven above, and defame people here
 on earth.
 10 As a result people turn to them and drink in everything they say. §
 11 "God won't find out," they say. "The Most High doesn't even know
 what's going on!"

§ 72:8 From sea to sea probably refers to the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea (or Red Sea); the river to the Euphrates. * 72:20 It is thought that this is an editorial comment that concludes the second book of Psalms (42-72). * 73:1 Literally, "hearts." In Hebrew understanding the heart was where thinking was done. † 73:2 The psalmist is indicating he was losing faith. ‡ 73:7 Or "from their evil hearts pours out iniquity." § 73:10 The Hebrew text is hard to understand: "Therefore he brings back his people here and abundant waters are drained by them."

- 12 Look at these wicked people! They don't have a care in the world,
and they're always making money!
- 13 It's been pointless to keep my mind pure and my hands clean.
- 14 I'm cursed with suffering all day long; every morning I'm punished.
- 15 If I'd talked like this to others,* I would have betrayed your people.
- 16 So I thought about it and tried to understand,† but it looked like a
lot of hard work to me—
- 17 until I went into God's Temple. Then I understood what happens to
the wicked in the end.
- 18 For you send them on a slippery path; you throw them down to
destruction.
- 19 How quickly they're destroyed! They come to a terrifying end.
- 20 Like waking up from a dream, Lord—when you get up you will forget
all about them!
- 21 At that time my thoughts were bitter. I felt like I had been stabbed.
- 22 I was stupid and ignorant. I was like a brute beast to you.
- 23 Yet I'm always with you; you hold me by the hand.
- 24 You tell me what to do; and ultimately you will welcome me in glory.
- 25 Who is there in heaven for me except you? And I want nothing on
earth except you.
- 26 My body and my mind may fail, but God is the foundation of my life.
He is mine forever!
- 27 Those people who are far from God will die. You destroy all those
unfaithful to you.
- 28 But I love to stay close to God! I have chosen the Lord God to protect
me. I will share all that you have done.

74

A psalm (maskil) of Asaph.

- 1 God, why have you rejected us? Is it forever? Why does your anger
burn so hot against the sheep of your own field?
- 2 Remember the people you made your own long ago, the tribe you
redeemed and made your own. Remember too Mount Zion, the
place where you live.
- 3 Come and walk through the complete devastation.* The enemy has
totally destroyed your Temple.
- 4 The enemy shouted in triumph right where you met with us.† There
they set up their war banners as signs of their victory.
- 5 They acted like men chopping down a forest with axes.
- 6 With axes and hammers they smashed in the carved wooden panels.
- 7 Then they set fire to your Temple, burning it to the ground. They
defiled the place where you live, the place that bears your name.
- 8 They said to themselves, "Let's destroy it all!" So they burned down
every place where God was worshiped throughout the land.
- 9 We no longer see any signs.‡ There are no prophets left. And no one
among us knows how long this will last.

* **73:15** Referring back to what the wicked said in verse 11. † **73:16** The psalmist is trying to understand why the wicked prosper. * **74:3** Of Jerusalem. † **74:4** Referring to the Temple. ‡ **74:9** Generally taken to mean miraculous signs from God.

- 10 How long will the enemy ridicule you, God? Will they insult your character[§] forever?
- 11 Why do you hold back from doing something? Take action and destroy them!*
- 12 But you, God, are our[†] king from long ago. You have saved us many times in the land.
- 13 You were the one[‡] who split apart the sea by your strength; you broke the heads of the sea monsters.
- 14 You were the one who crushed the heads of Leviathan,[§] and you gave its body to the desert animals to eat.
- 15 You were the one who made springs and rivers flow with water. You made permanent rivers dry up.
- 16 You created the day, and also the night; you made the moon* and the sun.
- 17 You set the boundaries of the earth;[†] you made summer and winter.
- 18 So keep in mind how the enemy ridiculed you, Lord, and how irreverent people insulted your reputation.
- 19 Don't let wild animals kill your turtledoves![‡] Don't abandon your people forever!
- 20 Remember your promises in the agreement,[§] because the land is full of dark places and violence.
- 21 Don't let those who suffer be mistreated again. Let the poor and needy praise you for you who are.
- 22 Stand up, God, and plead your case. Don't forget how these foolish people insulted you all the time.
- 23 Don't ignore what your enemies have said, for their loud accusations against you are getting worse and worse!

75

For the music director. A psalm of Asaph. According to "Do Not Destroy." A song.

- 1 We thank you, God, we thank you because you are close beside us.*
People tell about the wonderful things you have done.
- 2 God says, "When the time I have decided comes, I will judge fairly.
- 3 When the earth quakes, and all its inhabitants tremble, I am the one who holds it steady.[†] Selah.
- 4 To those who boast I say, 'Don't boast!' I tell the wicked, 'Don't be proud!'[‡]

[§] 74:10 Literally, "name." * 74:11 The Hebrew imagery here needs some interpretation. Literally, "Why do you hold back your hand? And your right hand from your bosom consume."
[†] 74:12 Hebrew has "my." [‡] 74:13 The personal pronoun is emphasized here and in subsequent verses. It may be to identify that it was the true God of Creation who did these things, in contrast to similar stories that gave credit to pagan gods. [§] 74:14 A sea monster also mentioned in Job. * 74:16 Literally, "luminary," this may also include light from the stars. [†] 74:17 See Genesis 1:9-10. [‡] 74:19 The people of Israel are compared to doves in their meekness and inability to defend themselves. [§] 74:20 Literally, "covenant." * 75:1 "Close beside us," literally, "your name is near." [†] 75:3 Literally, "hold firm its pillars."
[‡] 75:4 "Don't be proud": literally, "Don't lift up the horn."

- ⁵ No, don't be proud and arrogant, insulting heaven."§
⁶ For no one, from the east to the west, or from the wilderness, should think so highly of themselves.
⁷ God is the one who decides—who he will bring down and who he will lift up.
⁸ For the Lord has a cup in his hand, full of bubbling wine mixed with spices. He pours it out,* and all the wicked drink it deeply, down to the last drop.
⁹ But I will speak about you forever. I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.
¹⁰ For God says, "I will break the power of the wicked; but I will give my support to those who do what is good."

76

For the music director. To be accompanied by stringed instruments. A psalm of Asaph. A song.

- ¹ God is famous in Judah; his reputation is great throughout Israel.
² He lives in Jerusalem; his home is in Zion.
³ There he broke the flaming arrows, the shields, the swords, and the weapons of war. Selah.
⁴ You shine with light; you are more majestic than the everlasting* mountains.
⁵ Our most courageous enemies have been plundered. They sleep the sleep of death. Even the strongest of them could not raise a hand against us.
⁶ At your command, God of Jacob, both horse and rider fell down dead.
⁷ You are terrifying—who can stand before you when you are angry?
⁸ From heaven you announced judgment. Everyone on earth was afraid and stood still,
⁹ when you stood up to judge, to save the oppressed people of the earth. Selah.
¹⁰ Even human anger against you makes you look glorious, for you wear it alike a crown.†
¹¹ Make your promises to God and be sure to keep them. Everyone bring gifts to the awe-inspiring one.
¹² For he humbles proud leaders; he terrifies the kings of the earth.

77

For Jeduthun, the music director. A psalm of Asaph.

- ¹ I cry out to God for help—I even shout. If only he would listen to me!
² When I was in trouble I prayed to the Lord. All night long I stretched out my hands to him in prayer but nothing brought me any comfort.

§ 75:5 The Hebrew expressions need to be recast. Literally, the text says "You must not lift up on high your horn; you must not speak with an arrogant neck." * 75:8 In judgment.

* 76:4 Septuagint reading. Hebrew has "mountains of prey." † 76:10 The Hebrew text is unclear. The interpretation followed here is that human hostility to God ends up showing what he is truly like in the way that he deals with it.

- 3 I thought about God, groaning loudly; I meditated on him, but I was discouraged. Selah.
- 4 You stop me going to sleep;* I'm so upset I can't even talk.
- 5 I think of the old days, years ago.
- 6 I remember the songs I sung in the night. I meditate and ask myself:
- 7 Has the Lord given up on me† forever? Won't he ever be pleased with me again?
- 8 Has his trustworthy love disappeared forever? Have his promises permanently ended?
- 9 Has God forgotten to be kind? Has he angrily slammed the door shut on his compassion? Selah.
- 10 Then I said, "This is what hurts me the most: the Most High doesn't treat me the way he used to."‡
- 11 I remember what you have done, Lord; I remember all the wonderful things you did long ago.
- 12 I will think about all you have accomplished; I will think deeply about how you have acted.
- 13 God, your ways are holy; is any god as great as you?
- 14 You are the God who does wonderful things! You have revealed your power to the nations.
- 15 Through your strength you saved your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.
- 16 When the waters saw you, God, when they looked they trembled! Yes, they shook down to the very depths!§
- 17 The clouds poured rain down; the skies crashed with thunder; your lightning flew like arrows.
- 18 Your thunder rumbled from the whirlwind; lightning flashes lit up the world; the earth quaked and shook.
- 19 Your way led through the sea; your path passed through the deep sea; yet your footprints were invisible.
- 20 You led your people like a flock, shepherded by Moses and Aaron.

78

A psalm (maskil) of Asaph.

- 1 Listen to what I have to teach you, my people; hear what I have to say.
- 2 I will tell you wise sayings;* I will explain mysteries from the past
- 3 that we have heard before and reflected on; stories our forefathers passed down to us.
- 4 We will not keep them from our children; we will tell the next generation about God's marvelous actions—about his power and the amazing things he has done.

* 77:4 Literally, "you seize my eyelids." † 77:7 "On me." No object is given in these verses—it could also be "us" or "the people." ‡ 77:10 Literally, "And I said, 'This is my wound: the right hand of the Most High has changed.'" § 77:16 The word used here relates to the deep mentioned in Genesis 1:2. The image also recalls the parting of the Red Sea during the Exodus, an allusion confirmed in verse 20. * 78:2 Or "proverbs."

- 5 He gave his laws to the descendants of Jacob; his instructions to the people of Israel. He commanded our forefathers to teach them to their children,
- 6 so that the next generation—children yet to be born—would understand and grow up to teach their children.
- 7 In this way they should place their trust in God and not forget what God has done, and keep his commandments.
- 8 Then they would not be like their forefathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation that was untrustworthy and unfaithful.
- 9 The soldiers of Ephraim,[†] though armed with bows, ran away on the day of battle.
- 10 They did not keep God's agreement, and refused to follow his laws.
- 11 They ignored[‡] what he had done, and the amazing things he had shown them—
- 12 the miracles he had performed for their forefathers near Zoan[§] in Egypt.
- 13 He split the sea in two and led them through, making the water stand like walls on either side.*
- 14 He led them with a cloud by day, and by night with a light of fire.
- 15 He split open rocks in the desert to give his people plenty to drink, water as deep as the ocean.
- 16 He made streams flow from the stone; water rushing down like rivers!
- 17 But they repeatedly sinned against him, rebelling against the Most High in the desert.
- 18 They deliberately provoked God by demanding the foods they longed for.
- 19 They insulted God by saying, "Can God provide food[†] here in the desert?"
- 20 Yes, he can strike a rock so that water gushes out like flowing rivers, but can he give us bread? Can he supply his people with meat?"
- 21 When he heard this, the Lord became very angry, burning like fire against the descendants of Jacob, furious with the people of Israel,
- 22 for they didn't believe in God and didn't trust him to take care of them.
- 23 Even so he commanded the skies above and the doors of heaven to open,
- 24 and he made manna rain down on them to eat, giving them bread from heaven.
- 25 Human beings ate the bread of angels; he sent them more than enough food.
- 26 He sent the east wind blowing across the sky; by his power he drove the south wind.[‡]
- 27 He rained down meat on them as plentiful as dust; birds as numerous as sand on a beach.
- 28 He made them fall right in the middle of their camp, all around where they were living.

[†] **78:9** Ephraim is often used as a term for the whole northern kingdom. [‡] **78:11** Literally, "forgot," but here it means more than simply poor memory. [§] **78:12** Identified as the city of Rameses (see Exodus 1:11). * **78:13** "On either side": implied. [†] **78:19** Literally, "set a table." [‡] **78:26** A reference to the miraculous arrival of quail (Numbers 11:31).

- 29 They ate until they were full. He gave them the food they longed for.
 30 But before they satisfied their appetite, while the meat was still in their mouths,
 31 God became angry with them and he killed their strongest men, striking them down in the prime of life.
 32 Despite all this they went right on sinning. Despite the miracles, they refused to trust him.
 33 So he snuffed out their futile lives, bringing them to an end in terror.
 34 When he began killing them, the rest came back to God in repentance, praying to him.
 35 They remembered that God was their rock, that God Most High was their Savior.
 36 They flattered him by what they told him, but they were only lying.
 37 Deep down they were not sincere, and did not keep the agreement[§] they had with him.
 38 But being compassionate he pardoned their guilt and did not destroy all of them. He often held back his anger—he did not pour out all his fury.
 39 He remembered their mortality—that they were like a puff of wind that would not return.
 40 How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness, giving him grief in the desert!
 41 Again and again they provoked God, causing pain to the Holy One of Israel.
 42 They did not remember his strength when he rescued them from their oppressors,
 43 performing miracles in Egypt, doing wonderful things on the plain of Zoan.
 44 There he turned their* rivers and their streams into blood so that no one could drink from them.
 45 He sent flies among them to destroy[†] them, and frogs to ruin everything.
 46 He gave their crops to locusts; everything they worked had for was taken by locusts.[‡]
 47 He destroyed their vines with hail, and their fig trees with freezing rain.
 48 He handed over their cattle to hail and their flocks to lightning bolts.
 49 He poured out on them his fierce anger—rage and hostility and anguish—sending a band of destroying angels against them.
 50 He sent his unrestrained anger against them; he did not spare them from death, handing them over to the plague.
 51 He struck down all the firstborn of Egypt, the first to be conceived in the tents of Ham.[§]
 52 But he led out his people like sheep, and guided them like a flock in the wilderness.
 53 He led them to safety, and they were not afraid. He drowned their enemies in the sea.

§ 78:37 Or “covenant.” * 78:44 “Their”—referring to the Egyptians. † 78:45 Literally, “consume” but it is unlikely that flies could be seen as eating human beings. ‡ 78:46 Two different words are used for “locusts.” § 78:51 Ham—referring to Egypt.

- 54 He brought them to the border of his holy land, to this mountainous land that he had conquered for them.
- 55 He drove out the heathen nations before them. He divided up the land for them to own. He settled the tribes of Israel in their tents.
- 56 But they provoked God Most High, rebelling against him. They did not follow what he had told them.
- 57 Just like their forefathers they turned away from God and were unfaithful to him, as twisted as a defective bow.*
- 58 They made him angry with their pagan high places of worship; they made him jealous with their idols.
- 59 When God heard their worship he became furious and he totally rejected Israel.
- 60 He abandoned his place at Shiloh, the Tabernacle where he lived among the people.
- 61 He surrendered the Ark of his power, allowing it to be captured; handing it over into enemy hands.
- 62 He handed over his people to be slaughtered by the sword; he was furious with his chosen people.
- 63 Their young men were destroyed by fire; their young women had no wedding songs.†
- 64 Their priests were killed by the sword; their widows were unable to mourn.
- 65 Then the Lord woke up as if from sleep, as a warrior sobering up from drinking wine.
- 66 He defeated his enemies, striking them on the back, causing them everlasting shame.
- 67 He rejected the descendants of Joseph, and did not choose the tribe of Ephraim.‡
- 68 Instead he chose the tribe of Judah, and Mount Zion which he loves.
- 69 There he built his sanctuary, high like the heavens, on earth that he made to last forever.
- 70 He chose his servant David, taking him from the sheep pens,
- 71 taking him from caring for the sheep and lambs to be a shepherd to the descendants of Jacob—God's special people, Israel.
- 72 Like a shepherd, he took care of them with sincere devotion, leading them with skillful hands.

79

A psalm of Asaph.

- 1 God, heathen nations have invaded your land. They have defiled your holy Temple. They have turned Jerusalem into heaps of rubble.
- 2 They have given the dead bodies of your servants as food to the birds of the air, the flesh of your faithful people to the beasts of the earth.
- 3 They have poured out the blood of Jerusalem's people like water all through the city; no one remains to bury the dead.

* **78:57** "Defective bow"—a bow that could not shoot arrows straight. † **78:63** Literally, "were not praised." Either that the men were dead so they could not marry, or they were killed themselves. ‡ **78:67** This is a reference to the Ark once it had been returned. 1 Samuel 6; 2 Samuel 6.

- 4 We have been made a mockery before our neighbors, ridiculed and laughed at by those around us.
- 5 How long, Lord? Will you be angry with us forever? Will your jealousy always burn like fire?
- 6 Pour out your anger on the heathen nations that don't know you, and on those kingdoms that don't worship you!
- 7 For they have destroyed the descendants of Jacob, and turned our country into a wasteland.
- 8 Don't hold the sins of our forefathers against us! Come to us quickly for we desperately need your compassion.
- 9 Help us, God of our salvation, because of your wonderful character! Save us and forgive us our sins because that's the kind of person you are!*
- 10 Why should the heathen nations be able to say, "Where is their God?" May they experience your punishment for shedding the blood of your servants, and may we see it.
- 11 Listen to the groans of the prisoners; with your great power save those condemned to die.
- 12 Pay each of these neighbors back seven times for the scorn and ridicule they directed against you, Lord.
- 13 Then we your people, the flock of your pasture, will praise you forever. We will thank you for all generations to come.

80

For the music director. A psalm of Asaph. To the tune "Lilies of the Covenant."

- 1 Please hear us, Shepherd of Israel, you who lead the descendants of Joseph like a flock. You who sit on your throne above the cherubim, shine out
- 2 in the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh. Gather together your power and come to save us!
- 3 God, please restore us! Let your face shine on us so we can be saved.
- 4 Lord God Almighty, how long will you be angry with the prayers of your people?
- 5 You fed them with the bread of tears, and gave them a full bowl* of tears to drink.
- 6 You turn us into victims our neighbors fight over; our enemies mock us.
- 7 God Almighty, please restore us! Let your face shine on us so we can be saved!
- 8 You carried us out of Egypt like a vine. You drove out the heathen nations, and then you planted the vine.
- 9 You prepared the ground for the vine. It took root and filled the land.
- 10 The mountains were covered by its shade; its branches covered the great cedars.
- 11 It sent its branches as far west as the Mediterranean Sea, and its shoots as far east as the Euphrates River.

* 79:9 Literally, "for your name's sake." * 80:5 Literally, "full measure."

- 12 So why have you broken down the walls that protect it[†] so that everyone who passes by can steal its fruit?
- 13 Wild pigs from the forest eat it, wild animals feed on it.
- 14 God Almighty, please return to us! Look down from heaven and see what's happening to us! Come and care for this vine
- 15 that you planted yourself, this son that you brought up yourself.
- 16 We, your vine, have been chopped down and burned. May those who did this[‡] die when you glare at them.
- 17 Protect the man who stands beside you; strengthen the son you have chosen.
- 18 Then we will not turn away from you. Revive us so we can pray to you.[§]
- 19 Lord God Almighty, please restore us! Let your face shine on us so we can be saved.

81

For the music director. On the gittith. A psalm of Asaph.

- 1 Sing aloud to God our strength; shout for joy to the God of Jacob.
- 2 Start the song! Play the tambourine, sweet-sounding lyre, and harp.
- 3 Blow the trumpet at the new moon, and at full moon, to begin our festivals,
- 4 for this is a rule for Israel, a regulation of the God of Jacob.
- 5 God made this statute for Joseph when he opposed the land of Egypt. I heard a voice I didn't know, saying:^{*}
- 6 "I took the load from your shoulders; I freed your hands from carrying heavy baskets.
- 7 In your suffering you cried out to me, and I saved you. I answered you from the thundercloud. I tested you at the waters of Meribah.[†] Selah.
- 8 My people, listen to my warnings! Israel, please listen to me!
- 9 There must not be a strange god among you; you must never bow down to foreign gods and worship them.
- 10 I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.[‡]
- 11 But my people didn't listen to me. Israel didn't want anything to do with me.
- 12 So I sent them away to follow their stubborn thinking, living as they chose.
- 13 If only my people would listen to me; if only Israel would follow my ways!
- 14 It wouldn't take me long to conquer their enemies, to strike down their foes.
- 15 Those who hate the Lord would cringe before him, forever doomed.
- 16 But I would feed you the best wheat and satisfy you with honey from the rock."

[†] **80:12** "That protect it": implied. [‡] **80:16** Implied. **§ 80:18** Literally, "call on your name." ^{*} **81:5** Meaning unclear. Literally, "I hear lips I do not know." [†] **81:7** See Exodus 17. [‡] **81:10** In other words God will supply all their needs.

82

A psalm of Asaph.

- 1 God stands in the midst of his great assembly to judge among the gods.*
- 2 How long will you make unfair judgments and show favoritism to the wicked? Selah.
- 3 Defend the poor and orphans; support the rights of those who are oppressed and suffering.
- 4 Rescue the poor and those unable to help themselves; save them from the clutches of evil people.
- 5 They don't have any wisdom; they live in the dark; the foundations of the earth are shaken.
- 6 I say, "You are gods; all of you are children of the Most High.
- 7 But you will die like any human being, you will fall like any other leader."
- 8 Stand up, Lord, and judge the earth, for all the nations belong to you.

83

A song. A psalm of Asaph.

- 1 God, please do not stay silent! You can't remain unmoved! God, you must not keep quiet!
- 2 Can't you hear the roars of your enemies? Can't you see how those who hate you are defiantly lifting up their heads?
- 3 They invent cunning plans to conspire against your people; they plot against those you treasure.
- 4 They say, "Come on! Let's destroy them as a nation so the name 'Israel' will be completely forgotten."
- 5 They all agree in their conspiracy; they've made a treaty together to attack you—
- 6 the people of Edom, the Ishmaelites, Moab, and the Hagirites;
- 7 the people of Gebal and Ammon and Amalek, Philistia, and the inhabitants of Tyre.
- 8 Assyria too has joined them, allied with the descendants of Lot. Selah.
- 9 Do to them what you did to Midian, what you did to Sisera and Jabin* at the Kishon River.
- 10 They were destroyed at Endor and became like manure to fertilize the ground.
- 11 Make their leaders like Oreb and Zeeb; all their rulers like Zebah and Zalmunna,†
- 12 for they said, "Let's take the pastures of God for ourselves!"
- 13 My God, make them like whirling tumbleweeds, chaff blown away by the wind.
- 14 Just like fire that burns the forest, a flame that sets fire to the mountains,
- 15 in the same way chase them down with your storm, terrify them with your whirlwind.

* **82:1** The word used here can mean "gods," "heavenly beings," or perhaps more likely here in the context, the "judges of Israel" (used in this sense in Exodus 21:6 and Exodus 22:8-9).

* **83:9** Sisera and Jabin: see Judges 4. † **83:11** Oreb and Zeeb; Zebah and Zalmunna: see Judges 6 and Judges 7.

- 16 Shame them in defeat[‡] so that they come to you, Lord!
 17 Make them ashamed, terrify them forever so that they die in disgrace.
 18 Let them understand that you alone, called the Lord, are the Most High who rules over all the earth.

84

For the music director. A psalm of the descendants of Korah. On the gittith.

- 1 How wonderful is the place where you live, Lord Almighty!
 2 I long, I ache, to be in the courts* of the Lord. My mind and my body sing for joy to the living God.
 3 Even a sparrow finds a home there, and a swallow builds a nest for herself where she can raise her chicks near to your altars, Lord Almighty, my king and my God.
 4 How happy are those who live in your house—they are always praising you! Selah.
 5 How happy are those whose strength is in you, those who are determined to make a pilgrimage.
 6 As they walk through the Valley of Tears[‡] it becomes a spring of water; autumn rains cover it with pools.
 7 They go from strength to strength, and each one will appear before God in Jerusalem.
 8 Lord God Almighty, please hear my prayer; please listen, God of Jacob. Selah.
 9 Please God, look at our defender, look at the face of your anointed one.
 10 One day in your courts is better than a thousand anywhere else. I'd rather stand as a doorkeeper in the house of my God than live comfortably in the homes of the wicked.
 11 For the Lord God is our sun and shield, and he gives us grace and honor. The Lord doesn't hold back anything good from those who do right.
 12 Lord Almighty, how happy are those who trust in you.

85

For the music director. A psalm of the descendants of Korah

- 1 Lord, you have shown your kindness to your land; you have restored Jacob's prosperity.*
 2 You took away your people's guilt; you forgave all their sins. Selah.
 3 You took back your fury; you turned away from your fierce anger.
 4 Bring us back to you, God of our salvation! Take away your anger towards us.
 5 Are you going to be furious with us forever? Will you stay angry with us for all future generations?
 6 Won't you restore our lives so your people can find happiness in you?

[‡] 83:16 Literally, "fill their faces with shame." * 84:2 Meaning the Temple. † 84:6 Septuagint reading. * 85:1 From the context it appears this psalm was written after the Babylonian captivity.

- 7 Show us your trustworthy love, Lord! Give us your salvation!
- 8 Let me hear what God has to say. God speaks peace to his people, to those who trust in him. But they must not return to their foolish ways.
- 9 Truly God's salvation is with those who do as he says. His glorious presence will live with us in our land.
- 10 Trustworthiness and faithful love join together; goodness and peace have kissed each other.
- 11 What is true grows up from the earth; what is right looks down from heaven.
- 12 The Lord will certainly give us all that is good, and our land will produce fine crops.
- 13 Truth and right go ahead of him to prepare a path for him to walk on.

86

A prayer of David.

- 1 Please listen to me, Lord! Please answer me, for I am weak and really need your help!
- 2 Don't let me die, for I am faithful to you. Save me, for I am your servant and I trust in you. You are my God.
- 3 Be kind to me, Lord, for I call out to you all day long.
- 4 Make me happy, Lord, for I've dedicated my life to you.
- 5 For you, Lord, are good; you are forgiving and full of trustworthy love for all who come to you.
- 6 Lord, please listen to my prayer. Hear my call for help.
- 7 When I'm in trouble I cry out to you because I know you will answer me.
- 8 There's no one like you among the "gods," Lord. No one can do the things you do.
- 9 You created all the nations, and they will come and bow down before you, Lord. They will declare how wonderful you are.
- 10 For you are great, and do wonderful things! Only you are God.
- 11 Lord, please teach me your way, so I can depend on your trustworthiness. Make me single-minded, so I can consistently honor the kind of person you are.
- 12 Lord my God, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I will praise your character forever.
- 13 For your trustworthy love for me is so great; you have saved me from death.*
- 14 God, arrogant people are attacking me, vicious people are trying to kill me. To them you count for nothing.
- 15 But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to become angry, full of trustworthy love and faithfulness.
- 16 Turn to me, have mercy on me. Give me your strength, your servant; save the son of your servant-girl.
- 17 Show me a sign that you approve of me! Those who hate me will see it, and they will be ashamed because you, Lord, have helped me.

* **86:13** "From death": literally, "from the depths of Sheol."

87

A song. A psalm of the descendants of Korah.

¹ The Lord founded the city on his holy mountain.

² Jerusalem is the city that the Lord loves more than any other city in Israel.*

³ Many wonderful things are said of you, city of God! Selah.

⁴ I mention Egypt† and Babylon as those who know me, and in addition Philistia, Tyre, and Ethiopia—"this man was born there."‡

⁵ It will be said concerning Jerusalem, "Everyone was born there,"§ and the Most High will make it secure.

⁶ When the Lord registers the nations, he will write, "They were born there."* Selah.

⁷ Singers and dancers alike say, "Living here I am at home."†

88

A song. A psalm of the descendants of Korah. For the music director. To the tune "Mahalath Leannoth." A maskil by Heman the Ezrahite

¹ Lord, God of my salvation, I cry out to you day and night.

² Please listen to my prayer; hear my words as I plead with you.

³ My life is full of troubles, and my death is approaching.*

⁴ I'm counted among the dying; a man with no strength.

⁵ I am abandoned among the dead, lying like a corpse in the grave, forgotten and beyond your care.

⁶ You have placed me in a deep pit, in the depths of darkness.

⁷ Your hostility crushes me; you are drowning me under your crashing waves. Selah.

⁸ You have made my friends avoid me by making me look repulsive to them. I'm trapped, I can't go out.†

⁹ I've cried my eyes out begging you every day for your help, Lord, holding out my hands to you.

¹⁰ Do you do miracles among the dead? Do the dead stand up to praise you? Selah.

¹¹ Your faithful love—is it mentioned in the grave? Your trustworthiness—is it discussed in the place of destruction?‡

¹² Are the wonderful things you do known in the darkness? Is your goodness known in the land of forgetfulness?

¹³ But I cry out to you for help; every morning I pray to you.

¹⁴ Lord, why do you reject me? Why do you turn away from me?

¹⁵ I have been sick since I was young, often at death's door. I have had to bear the terrible things you've done to me. I'm in despair!

¹⁶ Your anger has overcome me; the terrible things you do have destroyed me.

¹⁷ They surround me all the time like floodwaters, swallowing me up.

* **87:2** "Israel": literally, Jacob. † **87:4** Literally, "Rahab." ‡ **87:4** The meaning of this verse is debated. What it seems to be saying is that despite the patriotism for each country/city mentioned, the best is to be born in Jerusalem. (See following verse.) § **87:5** In other words, everyone will have the right to citizenship in Jerusalem. * **87:6** In Jerusalem. † **87:7** Literally, "All of my springs are in you." * **88:3** Literally, "my life reaches out to Sheol." † **88:8** Perhaps because he is regarded as unclean. ‡ **88:11** "Place of destruction": literally, "Abaddon."

18 You have made my family and friends avoid me. Darkness is my only friend.

89

A psalm (maskil) of Ethan the Ezraite

- 1 I will sing of the Lord's trustworthy love forever; I will tell all generations of your faithfulness.
- 2 For I have said, "Your unfailing love lasts forever; your faithfulness endures as long as the heavens."
- 3 You* said, "I have made an agreement† with my chosen one, I gave a binding promise to my servant David:
- 4 I will make sure your lineage lasts forever; I will keep your throne secure for all generations." Selah.
- 5 All the heavenly beings will sing of the wonderful things you have done, Lord; angels will gather to sing of your faithfulness.
- 6 For who in heaven can compare to the Lord? Who is like the Lord even among the angels?
- 7 The heavenly council are in awe of God; all who surround him are overwhelmed by him.
- 8 Lord God Almighty, who is as powerful as you? In all this,‡ Lord, you are completely trustworthy.
- 9 You rule the restless seas; you calm their stormy waves.
- 10 You crushed Rahab the sea-monster to death; by your power you scattered your enemies.
- 11 The heavens belong to you, and the earth too; you made the world and everything in it.
- 12 You created north and south; Mount Tabor and Mount Hermon celebrate you.
- 13 Your arm is powerful. Your hand is strong. Your right hand is held up high in command.§
- 14 Your character of goodness and fairness is the basis for the way you rule; dependable love and trustworthiness are always with you.
- 15 How happy are those who know how to shout your praises, Lord.* They live in the light of your presence.
- 16 They celebrate the person you are all day long, so glad that you do what's right.
- 17 They rely on you, their glory and strength; by your grace you lift us up.
- 18 Yes, the Lord is the one who shields us, and our king belongs to the Holy One of Israel.
- 19 Once you spoke in a vision to your faithful servant and said,† "I have given strength to the warrior I have chosen from the people to become king.
- 20 I have selected David my servant, and I have anointed him with the oil of my holiness.

* 89:3 Referring to God. † 89:3 Or covenant. ‡ 89:8 "In all this": implied. § 89:13 "In command": implied. * 89:15 This may have involved the shouts that accompanied the start of religious festivals. † 89:19 See 2 Samuel 7:4-17.

- 21 I have placed my hand on him to steady him; and I have made him strong by my powerful arm.
- 22 His enemies will not deceive him; the wicked will not bring him down.
- 23 I will wipe out his enemies before him; I will strike down those who hate him.
- 24 My trustworthiness and unfailing love will be with him, and through me he will be victorious.‡
- 25 I will extend his rule from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River.§
- 26 He will call out to me, ‘You are my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.’
- 27 I will also make him my first-born son, the highest of the kings of the earth.
- 28 I will love him faithfully forever; my agreement* with him shall never come to an end.
- 29 I will make sure his royal line lasts forever; his dynasty† will continue as long as the heavens endure.
- 30 But if his descendants abandon my laws, if they do not follow my rules,
- 31 if they break my decrees, and do not keep my commandments,
- 32 I will punish their rebellion by beating them with a rod, and their sin by lashing them with a whip.
- 33 However, I will not take away my love from him; I will not break my promise to him.
- 34 I will not annul the agreement I have with him; I will not alter a single word I’ve said.
- 35 By my holy character I have made a vow to David that I will not lie to him.
- 36 His royal line will last forever, and his dynasty will continue before me as long as the sun endures.
- 37 It will continue forever like the moon, an enduring witness in the heavens.” Selah.
- 38 But you‡ have rejected and abandoned him! You are angry with your chosen king!§
- 39 You have broken the agreement you had with him; you have thrown his crown to the ground!
- 40 You have torn down his defensive walls; you have ruined his fortresses.*
- 41 Everyone who passes by has robbed him; he has become an object of mockery to the nations nearby.
- 42 You have made his enemies strong; you have made them celebrate their victory.†
- 43 You have repelled his sharp sword; you have not helped him in battle.
- 44 You took away his glory; you threw his throne to the ground.

‡ 89:24 Literally, “In my name his horn will be exalted.” § 89:25 Literally, “I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers.” * 89:28 Or “covenant.” † 89:29 Literally, “throne.” ‡ 89:38 The psalmist is now addressing God. § 89:38 Literally, “anointed one.”

* 89:40 The king is used as a symbol for Jerusalem which has been attacked and destroyed.

† 89:42 “Their victory”—implied.

- 45 You have made him grow old before his time; you have totally humiliated him. Selah.
- 46 How long, Lord? Will you hide yourself from us forever, your anger burning like fire?
- 47 Remember me—my life is so short! Why did you bother creating futile humanity?
- 48 There's no one who doesn't die—no one can save themselves from the power of the grave. Selah.
- 49 Where is the trustworthy love you used to have, Lord, that you faithfully promised to David?
- 50 Don't forget, Lord, how your servants are being humiliated! I'm burdened down[‡] with the insults of so many nations!
- 51 Your enemies taunt me, Lord, mocking your king[§] wherever he goes.
- 52 May the Lord be blessed for ever. Amen and amen.

90

A prayer of Moses, the man of God.

- 1 Lord, through every generation, you have been “home” for us!
- 2 Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the universe, from eternity past to eternity future, you are God.
- 3 You turn people back into dust, saying, “Return to dust, human beings.”
- 4 In your eyes, a thousand years are like a day that's already gone; like a few passing hours of the night.
- 5 You bring people's lives to a sudden end, like dreams that vanish. They are like grass that grows up in the morning—
- 6 it sprouts in the morning, fresh and new, but by the evening it is withered and dead.
- 7 We are burned up by your anger, terrified by your fury.
- 8 You have set out our sins before you—our secret sins are visible in the light of your presence.
- 9 Our lives fade away under your anger, coming to an end as quickly as a sigh.
- 10 We live for seventy years—eighty if we have the strength. But even in the prime of life all that we have is hardship and suffering. Soon our lives are over and we're gone.
- 11 Who can know the power of your anger? Who understands your fury so you can be shown reverence?
- 12 Teach us to value every one of our days so we can live wisely!
- 13 Lord, how long will it be before you come back to us and have pity on us your servants?
- 14 Show us every morning your trustworthy love so we may be happy, full of joy throughout our lives.
- 15 Make us glad for as many days as you made us sad, for all the years we suffered!
- 16 May we, your servants, see you at work for us* again; may our children see your glory.

‡ 89:50 “I am burdened down”: literally, “I carry in my lap.” § 89:51 Literally, “anointed one.” * 90:16 “For us”—implied.

17 May our Lord God be pleased with us, blessing what we do, blessing what we do.

91

- 1 Those who live under the protection of the Most High are kept safe by the Almighty.
 2 This is what I say about the Lord: "He is the one who defends and protects me. He is my God, and I trust in him."
 3 For he will save you from hidden traps and deadly diseases.*
 4 He will hide you under his feathers, and shelter you with his wings. His trustworthiness shields and protects you.
 5 You will not be afraid of terror at night or an arrow that flies in the day,
 6 or disease that attacks at night, or catastrophe that falls at noon.
 7 A thousand may fall beside you, ten thousand die at your right hand, but you won't be harmed.
 8 You only have to open your eyes and you will see how the wicked are repaid.
 9 Because you have made the Lord your protection, and the Most High your home,
 10 nothing evil will happen to you; no plague will come near where you live.
 11 For he will command his angels to take care of you in everything you do.
 12 They will hold you up with their hands so you won't trip and fall down.
 13 You will trample lions and snakes; you will tread young lions and serpents underfoot.
 14 I† will save anyone who loves me; I will protect anyone who accepts me.
 15 When they call out to me for help, I will answer; when they are in trouble, I will be with them. I will save and honor them.
 16 I will grant them long lives, and show them my salvation.

92

A psalm. A song for the Sabbath day.

- 1 How good it is to thank the Lord, to sing praises to you, Most High,
 2 to tell of your trustworthy love in the morning, and your faithfulness in the night,
 3 to the music of a ten-stringed harp and the melody of a lyre.
 4 You've made me so happy, Lord, because of all you've done for me! I sing for joy at what you've done!
 5 Lord, what you do is amazing; your thoughts are very profound!
 6 Only senseless people and fools don't know and understand this:
 7 even though the wicked grow up quickly like grass, and even though people who do evil flourish, they will be destroyed forever!
 8 But you, Lord, rule on high forever.

* **91:3** "Hidden traps and deadly diseases": literally, "the fowler's snare and plague of destruction." † **91:14** The Lord is speaking.

- 9 Your enemies, Lord, your enemies will die; everyone who does evil will be destroyed!
- 10 But you have made me as powerful as a wild bull; you have anointed me with the best olive oil.
- 11 My eyes look with pleasure to see my enemies defeated; my ears have heard the downfall of those who tried to attack me.*
- 12 Those who live right flourish like a palm tree; they grow tall like a cedar tree in Lebanon.
- 13 They are planted in the house of the Lord; they thrive in the courts of our God.
- 14 Even when they are old they will still produce fruit, staying fresh and green.
- 15 They will declare, "The Lord does what is right! He is my rock! There is no wrong in him!"

93

- 1 The Lord reigns, clothed in majesty! He wears his royal robes, with his power worn like a belt. The world is held together firmly—it cannot be broken apart.
- 2 Your throne has existed from ages past; you are from eternity.
- 3 The floods have raised up, Lord; the floods have raised their voices; the floods have raised up their crashing waves.
- 4 But greater than the most violent ocean, greater than the largest waves of the sea, the greatest is the Lord above.
- 5 Your laws are totally trustworthy. Your house,* Lord, is holy forever.

94

- 1 The Lord is a God of vengeance! God of vengeance, shine out!*
- 2 Stand up, judge of the earth, and pay back those who are proud what they deserve.
- 3 How long, Lord? How long will the wicked celebrate in triumph?
- 4 How long will you let them pour out their arrogant words? How long will these evil people go on boasting?
- 5 Lord, they crush your people; they oppress those you call your own.
- 6 They kill widows and foreigners; they murder orphans.
- 7 They say, "The Lord can't see what we're doing. Israel's God doesn't pay any attention to us."
- 8 Take another look, you stupid people! Fools—when will you ever get the point?
- 9 Do you think the creator of the ear can't hear? Do you think the maker of the eye can't see?

* **92:11** This appears to be the meaning of the text, but the words "defeated" and "downfall" are supplied, otherwise there would be no reason to celebrate. * **93:5** "Your house": this could refer to the Temple, or to the Lord's enduring reign. * **94:1** The shining out of God's vengeance is a call for the display of justice and right. Vengeance when it is applied to God should not be taken as a vindictive action of retaliation as human beings do when they exact revenge. It is an establishing of what is right, correcting wrongs, and making sure there is resolution to the problem of evil.

- 10 Do you think that the one who punishes nations won't punish you too? Do you think that the one who teaches human beings knowledge doesn't know anything?†
- 11 The Lord knows the thoughts of human beings—he knows they are pointless.
- 12 Those you discipline are happy, Lord; those you teach from your Law.
- 13 You give them peace in days of trouble, until a pit is dug to trap the wicked.
- 14 For the Lord will not give up on his people; he will not abandon his own.
- 15 Justice will once again be based on what is right; those who are sincere will support it.
- 16 Who came to my defense against the wicked; who stood up for me against those who do evil?
- 17 If the Lord hadn't helped me, I would have soon gone down into the silence of the grave.
- 18 I shouted out, "My foot's slipping!" and your trustworthy love, Lord, kept me from falling.
- 19 When my mind was full of worries, you comforted me and encouraged me.
- 20 Can unjust judges really be on your side, Lord, when their corrupt use of the law causes misery?
- 21 They work together to destroy good people; they condemn those who are innocent to death.
- 22 But the Lord protects me like a fortress; my God is the rock that keeps me safe.
- 23 He will turn the wickedness of evil people back upon them; he will destroy them because of their sins; the Lord our God will destroy them.

95

- 1 Come, let's sing for joy to the Lord! Let's shout in triumph to the rock of our salvation!
- 2 Let's go before him with thanksgiving! Let's sing loudly to him in celebration!
- 3 For the Lord is a great God, a great king above all gods.
- 4 He rules over the depths of the earth and the heights of the mountains.
- 5 The sea is his, because he made it; the dry land, because he formed it.
- 6 Come, let's enter in* and worship, let's kneel before the Lord our Creator.
- 7 For he is our God, and we are the people he looks after like a shepherd, the flock he cares for. If you hear his voice calling you today,
- 8 don't have a hard-hearted attitude,† "as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert,

† 94:10 "Doesn't know anything"—implied. * 95:6 Speaking of entering into the Temple to worship. † 95:8 "Have a hard-hearted attitude": literally, "do not harden your hearts."

- 9 when your forefathers provoked me, testing my patience, even though they had seen everything I'd done.
- 10 For forty years I was disgusted with that generation, and I said, 'They are people who are unfaithful to me in their minds, and they refuse to accept my ways.'
- 11 So in my frustration I vowed, 'They will certainly not enter my rest.'"[‡]

96

- 1 Sing to the Lord a new song! All the earth, sing to the Lord!
- 2 Sing to the Lord, and of his wonderful reputation!*" Each day let everyone know of his salvation!
- 3 Declare his glorious acts among the nations, the amazing things he does among all peoples.
- 4 For the Lord is great, and deserves the best praise! He is to be respected with awe above all gods.
- 5 For all the gods of other nations are idols; but the Lord made the heavens!
- 6 Splendor and majesty are his; power and glory are in his sanctuary.
- 7 Give the Lord acclamation, nations of the world, acclaim him with glory and strength.
- 8 Give the Lord the glory he deserves; bring an offering and come into his courts.
- 9 Worship the Lord in his magnificent holiness; let all the earth tremble in his presence.
- 10 Tell the nations, "The Lord is in charge!" The world is held together firmly—it cannot be broken apart. He will judge everyone fairly.
- 11 Let the heavens sing for joy, let the earth be happy, let the sea and everything in it shout with praise!
- 12 Let the fields and everything there celebrate; let all the trees in the forest sing for joy.
- 13 In fact, let everything that stands before the Lord sing praises,[†] for he is coming, coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with fairness, and the nations with his truth.

97

- 1 The Lord reigns! Let the earth be glad, and distant lands be full of joy!
- 2 He is surrounded by clouds and thick darkness; his throne is founded on justice and right.
- 3 Flames proceed him, burning up his enemies on every side.
- 4 His flashes of lightning light up the world; the earth watches and trembles.
- 5 The mountains melt like wax in the presence of the Lord, before the Lord of all the earth.
- 6 The heavens proclaim his goodness; everyone sees his glory.

[‡] 95:11 "My rest," referring to the Promised Land. * 96:2 "Reputation": literally, "name."

[†] 96:13 Expanded for clarity.

- 7 All those who worship idols are humiliated, those who are proud of their idols—for all “gods” bow down before him.
- 8 Jerusalem hears this and celebrates; all the towns of Judah are happy because of your judgments, Lord.
- 9 For you, Lord, are the highest of all, ruling over the whole earth; your position is far above any other god.
- 10 You who love the Lord, hate evil! He protects the lives of those who are faithful to him, and saves them from the power of wicked people.
- 11 Light shines* on those who do good, giving joy to those who live right.
- 12 Be happy in the Lord, you who do right, and thank him for his holy nature!

98

A psalm.

- 1 Sing the Lord a new song, for he has done wonderful things: by his powerful right hand and his strong arm he has won the victory.
- 2 The Lord has revealed his salvation to the nations, and shown them his goodness.
- 3 He has not forgotten to show his trustworthy love and faithfulness to the descendants of Israel. Our God has made his salvation clear to the ends of the earth.
- 4 Everyone on earth, shout in triumph to the Lord; break out in joyful songs of praise!
- 5 Sing praises to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and melodious voices;
- 6 with trumpets and the sound of the ram's horn sing in happiness before the Lord, the King.
- 7 Let the sea and everything in it shout with praise, together with the earth and everything living in it.
- 8 Let the rivers celebrate, let the hills join in the celebration*
- 9 before the Lord, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world justly, and the nations fairly.

99

- 1 The Lord reigns; let the nations tremble! He sits on his throne above the cherubim; let the earth shake!
- 2 The Lord rules supreme in Zion, he is sovereign over all the nations.
- 3 Let them praise his greatness, and respect him for who he is—for he is holy,
- 4 having kingly power. You love justice; you make impartial decisions. You have made sure everything is done in fairness and according to what's right.
- 5 Give respect to the Lord our God! Bow down at his feet, for he is holy!

* 97:11 Or “is sown.” * 98:8 Literally, “let the rivers clap their hands together; let the hills sing for joy.”

- 6 Moses and Aaron were among his priests; Samuel also prayed to him.
They called out to the Lord for help, and he answered them.
- 7 He spoke to the people from the pillar of cloud, and they kept the laws and decrees he gave them.
- 8 Lord our God, you answered them. You were a forgiving God to them, but you punished them when they did wrong.
- 9 Honor the Lord our God, and worship at his holy mountain. For the Lord our God is holy!

100

A psalm of thanksgiving.

- 1 Everyone on earth shout for joy to the Lord!
- 2 Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with joyful songs!
- 3 Know that the Lord is God! He made us, so we belong to him.* We are his people, the flock he cares for.
- 4 Go in through his gate with thanks; enter his courts with praise. Thank him; praise him for who he is.
- 5 For the Lord is good. His trustworthy love lasts forever; his faithfulness continues for all generations.

101

A psalm of David.

- 1 I will sing of your faithful love and good judgment. I will sing praises to you, Lord.
- 2 I will make sure my life is blameless. When will you come and help me? My life will be one of integrity even in private.*
- 3 I will not look at anything evil. I hate doing wrong—I won't have anything to do with it.
- 4 I won't think bad thoughts—I won't even consider anything evil.
- 5 I will silence anyone who secretly slanders their neighbor. I won't tolerate anyone who is proud and arrogant.
- 6 I look for faithful people to live with me; only those who are trustworthy will serve me.
- 7 No one who is dishonest will live in my house; no liars will be allowed in my presence.
- 8 I work every day to silence the wicked in the land, to rid the city of the Lord of all who do evil.

102

A prayer from someone who is suffering and is tired out, pouring out their troubles to the Lord.

- 1 Lord please hear my prayer, my cry for help!
- 2 Don't hide your face from me in my time of trouble! Turn and listen to me, and answer me quickly when I call.
- 3 My life is disappearing like smoke; my body feels like it's on fire!

* **100:3** "So we belong to him": alternatively, "we did not make ourselves." * **101:2** "Even in private": literally, "in my house."

- 4 I'm like grass that's dried up, withered away—I even forget to eat!
 5 All my groaning has worn me out; my bones show through my skin.
 6 I'm like a desert owl,* like a little owl among the ruins.
 7 I can't sleep. I'm like a lonely bird on a rooftop.
 8 My enemies taunt me all day long. They mock me and swear at me.
 9 Ashes are the food I eat; my tears drip into my drink,
 10 because of your anger and hostility, for you have picked me up and
 tossed me away.
 11 My life is fading away like a shadow that lengthens—I'm withering
 away like grass.
 12 But you, Lord, reign† forever; your fame will last for all generations.
 13 You will take action and have pity on Jerusalem, for it's time to be
 kind to the city, the time has come.
 14 For the people who follow you love its stones; they value even its
 dust!
 15 Then the nations will be in awe of who you are, Lord; all the kings
 of the earth will be in awe of your glory.
 16 For the Lord will rebuild Jerusalem; he will appear in glory.
 17 He will pay attention to the prayers of the homeless; he will not
 disregard their requests.
 18 Let this be recorded for generations to come, so that people yet to
 be born may praise the Lord:
 19 The Lord looked down from above, from the heights of his holy
 place; he looked down from heaven to the earth,
 20 to respond to the groans of prisoners, to set free the children of
 death.‡
 21 As a result§ the wonderful nature of the Lord will be celebrated with
 praise in Jerusalem,
 22 when the people of many kingdoms gather together to worship the
 Lord.
 23 But as for me,* he broke my health while I was still young, cutting
 my life short.
 24 I cried out, "My God, don't take my life while I'm young! You are the
 one who lives forever.
 25 Long ago you created the earth; you made the heavens.
 26 They will come to an end, but you will not. They will all wear out,
 like clothes—you will change them, and throw them away.
 27 But you are the one who always is;† your years never come to an
 end.
 28 Our children will live with you, and our children's children will grow
 in your presence."

103

A psalm of David.

- 1 Let every part of me praise the Lord; let my whole being praise his holy character.

* 102:6 "Owl": some identify this bird as a pelican or cormorant. † 102:12 Literally, "sit."

‡ 102:20 Meaning "those condemned to die." § 102:21 Implied. * 102:23 Added for clarity. † 102:27 "You are the one who always is": literally, "you are he."

- 2 Let every part of me praise the Lord; don't let me forget the wonderful things he's done for me.
- 3 He forgives my sins, and he heals all my diseases.
- 4 He saves me from death; he honors* me with trustworthy love and mercy.
- 5 He fills my life with all that's good; he makes me young again, strong as an eagle.
- 6 The Lord does what is right, and vindicates those who are exploited.
- 7 He explained his ways to Moses: he told the people of Israel what he was going to do.
- 8 The Lord is kind and gracious, not quick-tempered, and full of trustworthy love.
- 9 He doesn't keep on accusing us; he doesn't stay angry with us forever.
- 10 He does not punish us for our sins as he ought to; he does not pay us back for our wrongdoing as we deserve.
- 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth is the extent of his trustworthy love to those who honor him.
- 12 As far as the east is from the west is how far the Lord has taken our sins away from us.
- 13 Like a loving father, the Lord is kind and compassionate to those who follow him.
- 14 For he knows how we are made; he remembers we are only dust.
- 15 Human lifetimes are like grass: we blossom like flowers in a field,
- 16 but then the wind blows and we are gone, disappearing without a trace.
- 17 But the Lord's trustworthy love lasts for all eternity to those who accept him; his goodness to all generations,
- 18 to those who keep his agreement and who remember to follow his commandments.
- 19 The Lord has set up his throne in the heavens, and he rules over all.
- 20 Praise the Lord, you angels, you powerful ones who do what he says, listening to what he tells you!
- 21 Praise the Lord, you heavenly armies who serve him and carry out his will!
- 22 Praise the Lord, everything in his creation, everyone under his rule, and let every part of me praise the Lord!

104

- 1 Let every part of me praise the Lord! Lord my God, you are so great, clothed with majesty and splendor!
- 2 You wear light as your clothing; you stretch out the fabric* of the heavens.
- 3 You place the roof-beams of your house in the rainclouds. You make the clouds your chariots. You ride on the wings of the wind.
- 4 You make your angels winds, and your servants flames of fire.†
- 5 You set the earth on its foundations; it will never be shaken.
- 6 It was clothed with ocean depths—the waters even covered the mountains—

* **103:4** Literally, "crowns." * **104:2** Literally, "tent curtain." † **104:4** Septuagint reading; also quoted in Hebrews 1:7.

- 7 but at your command the waters fled; at the sound of your thunder they rushed away.
- 8 The mountains rose up and the valleys sank down to where you had determined.
- 9 You set a boundary for the oceans so they would not come back and cover the earth.
- 10 You make springs flow into the streams, running down between the hills.
- 11 They provide water for all the wild animals, and wild donkeys quench their thirst.
- 12 Birds build their nests in trees along the streams, singing from among the leaves.
- 13 You send down rain on the mountains from your home high above; you fill the earth with good things.
- 14 You make the grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to eat—crops produced by the earth for food,
- 15 and wine to make them happy, olive oil to make their faces shine, and bread to make them strong.
- 16 The Lord's trees are well-watered, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.
- 17 Sparrows make their nests there; herons make their homes in the tall trees.
- 18 Wild goats live high in the mountains; hyraxes hide among the rocks.
- 19 You made the moon to mark the months, and the sun knows when to set.
- 20 You make darkness fall and the night comes, the time when the forest animals come out to hunt.‡
- 21 The young lions roar as they seek their prey, looking for the food that God provides for them.
- 22 When the sun rises they return to their dens to rest.
- 23 Then people leave for work, working until the evening.
- 24 Lord, how many different things you have made—all of them wisely created! The earth is full of your creatures.
- 25 Consider the sea, deep and wide, full of all kinds of living things, large and small.
- 26 Ships sail there, and Leviathan,§ that you made to play in it.
- 27 All creatures look to you to give them food at the right time.
- 28 When you provide it, they gather it up. You hand out food to them, and they are well-fed.
- 29 When you turn away from them, they're terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to dust.
- 30 When you send your breath, they are created, and life covers the earth again.
- 31 May the Lord's glory last forever! The Lord is happy with all he has made.
- 32 He only has to look at the earth and it trembles; mountains pour out smoke at his touch.
- 33 I will sing to the Lord for as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God my whole life.
- 34 May he be pleased with my thoughts* because I am happy in the

‡ 104:20 "To hunt": implied. § 104:26 A sea monster. * 104:34 Or "meditation," "composition."

Lord.

³⁵ Let sinners be destroyed from the earth; let the wicked cease to exist.
Let every part of me praise the Lord!

105

- 1 Give the Lord thanks, worship his wonderful nature, let people know what he's done!
- 2 Sing to him, sing his praises; tell everyone the great things he's done!
- 3 Be proud of his holy character; be happy, all who come to the Lord!
- 4 Look for the Lord, and his strength; always look to be in his presence.
- 5 Remember all the wonderful things he's done, the miracles he's performed, and the judgments* he's carried out,
- 6 descendants of Abraham, children of Israel, his chosen people.
- 7 He is the Lord, our God, his judgments cover the whole earth.
- 8 He remembers his agreement forever, the promise he made lasts for a thousand generations;
- 9 the agreement he made with Abraham, the vow he gave to Isaac.
- 10 The Lord legally confirmed it with Jacob, he made this binding agreement with Israel:
- 11 saying to you, "I will give the land of Canaan for you to possess."
- 12 He said this when they were only a few, just a small group of foreigners in the land.
- 13 They wandered from country to country, from one kingdom to the next.
- 14 He didn't let anyone one treat them badly; warning kings to leave them alone:
- 15 "Don't touch my chosen people; don't harm my prophets!"
- 16 He caused† a famine in the Land of Canaan so that there was no food.
- 17 Before that he sent a man, Joseph, who was sold as a slave.‡
- 18 They hurt his feet by placing them in shackles, and they put an iron collar around his neck,
- 19 until the time predicted came when the Lord tested him.
- 20 The king§ sent for him and released him; the king of the people set him free.
- 21 He put Joseph in charge of the royal household, manager of everything he had,
- 22 to teach* the king's officials whatever he wanted, to make the king's advisors wise.
- 23 Then Israel entered Egypt—Jacob settled as a foreigner in the land of Ham.†
- 24 The Lord made his people more fertile and more powerful than their enemies.
- 25 He made the Egyptians‡ change their minds and hate his people and act deceptively towards them.

* **105:5** In the context, probably referring to the judgments on heathen nations. † **105:16** Literally, "called." ‡ **105:17** This refers to the story in Genesis of Joseph being sold as a slave and taken to Egypt. § **105:20** Referring to the Pharaoh. * **105:22** Septuagint reading. † **105:23** "Land of Ham": an old term for Egypt. ‡ **105:25** Literally, "them." In the context it is the people of Egypt, particularly the Pharaoh.

- 26 He sent his servant Moses, together with Aaron, whom he had chosen.
- 27 They[§] carried out his miraculous signs among the Egyptians, his wonders in the land of Ham.
- 28 He plunged the country into darkness—for hadn't they defied what the Lord had said?*
- 29 He turned their water into blood, killing all the fish.
- 30 Then he sent a plague of frogs across the land that even entered the bedrooms of their rulers.
- 31 He gave the command, and flies spread throughout their land; mosquitoes were everywhere.
- 32 He rained down hail on them, and lightning flashed across their land.
- 33 He struck down their grape vines, and tore down their trees.
- 34 He gave the command, and swarms of locusts came—countless locusts:
- 35 they ate up all the vegetation in their land; they consumed all the growing crops.
- 36 He killed all the firstborn in Egypt, the first to be produced in their vigor and strength.
- 37 Then he led his people out of Egypt, carrying silver and gold—not one among the tribes was stumbling along.
- 38 The Egyptians were delighted to see them go, for they were frightened of the Israelites.
- 39 He spread a cloud above them as a covering, and at night a fire to give them light.
- 40 He gave them quails to eat when they asked him; he fed them with the bread of heaven until they were full.
- 41 He split the rock open, and water gushed out—a river flowing through the desert.
- 42 For he remembered his holy promise to his servant Abraham.
- 43 So he led his people out, his chosen ones, as they sang for joy.
- 44 He gave them the lands of the heathen nations, and they inherited what other people had worked for.
- 45 The Lord did this so they could follow his instructions and keep his laws. Praise the Lord!

106

- 1 Praise the Lord! Thank the Lord, for he is good! His trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 2 Who can give an account of all the wonderful things the Lord has done?* Who can give him all the praise he is due?
- 3 Happy are those who treat people fairly, who always do what is right.
- 4 Please remember me when you are generous to your people; think of me when you come to save.

§ 105:27 Or "he." * 105:28 "For hadn't they defied what the Lord had said?" This applies to the Egyptians. Alternatively it could be translated, "for they had not defied what the Lord had said," referring to Moses and Aaron. * 106:2 In other words, no one knows the full extent of God's activities.

- 5 Let me see your chosen people prosperous; let me be happy together with your nation; let me share in being proud of you with those who belong to you.
 6 We have sinned just like our forefathers. We have done wrong. We are guilty.
 7 They didn't pay attention to the wonderful things you did. They didn't keep in mind how much you loved them, but chose to rebel at the sea, the Red Sea.†
 8 Even so he saved them because of the kind of person he is, and to show his power
 9 He gave his order‡ to the Red Sea, and it dried up. He led his people across the seabed as if it were a desert.
 10 He rescued them from those who hated them; he saved them from their enemies' power.
 11 The water drowned their enemies—none of them survived,
 12 Then his people trusted in what he promised, and sang his praises.
 13 But they quickly forgot what he had done for them, and they didn't listen to his advice.
 14 They were filled with desperate cravings§ in the wilderness; they provoked God in the desert.
 15 He gave them what they wanted, but sent them a plague* as well.
 16 In the camp the people became jealous of Moses, and of Aaron, the Lord's holy priest.
 17 The earth split open and swallowed up Dathan; it buried Abiram and his followers.†
 18 Fire broke out among them—a flame that burned them up.
 19 At Mount Sinai‡ they made a calf, they bowed down before a metal idol.§
 20 They replaced their God of glory with a bull that eats grass!
 21 They forgot God, their Savior, who had done marvelous things in Egypt;
 22 performing miracles in the land of Ham,* doing amazing things at the Red Sea.
 23 So he said he was going to destroy them But Moses, his chosen leader, placed himself between the Lord and the people to persuade the Lord not to destroy them in his anger.
 24 Later the people refused to enter the Promised Land; they didn't trust him to do as he'd promised.
 25 They complained in their tents about the Lord, and refused to obey what he told them.
 26 So he raised his hand to give them a serious warning that he would bring them down in the wilderness,
 27 that he would disperse† their descendants among the heathen nations, scattering them among countries far away.
 28 They gave their allegiance to Baal Peor,‡ and ate food sacrificed to the dead.

† **106:7** "The Sea of Reeds." ‡ **106:9** Literally, "rebuked." § **106:14** For food, particularly meat. * **106:15** See Numbers 11:33-34. † **106:17** See Numbers 16. ‡ **106:19** Literally, Horeb: another name for Mount Sinai. § **106:19** See Exodus 32. * **106:22** "Land of Ham"—another name for Egypt. † **106:27** Following the parallel passage in Ezekiel 20:23. ‡ **106:28** A heathen god, see Numbers 25.

- 29 They provoked the Lord by what they did, making him angry, so a plague broke out among them.
- 30 But Phinehas took a stand for the Lord and intervened, and the plague was stopped in its tracks.
- 31 He has been considered as a man who lived right[§] from that time on and for all generations.
- 32 They also angered him at the waters of Meribah where things went badly for Moses because of them.
- 33 They upset him so much that he spoke without thinking in the heat of the moment.
- 34 They did not destroy the heathen peoples as the Lord had told them to do,
but instead they joined in with them and adopted their way of life.
- 36 They worshiped their pagan idols which became a trap for them.
- 37 The even sacrificed their sons and daughters to these demons.
- 38 They shed the blood of innocent children, their sons and daughters, sacrificing them to the idols of Canaan. By doing so they defiled the land with blood.
- 39 The also defiled themselves by what they did: their actions were spiritual adultery.
- 40 So the Lord was angry with his people—he loathed those who belonged to him.
- 41 He handed them over to the heathen nations. These people who hated them now became their rulers.
- 42 Their enemies dominated and subdued them with their power.
- 43 The Lord repeatedly rescued them, but they continued with their rebellious ideas, until they were finally destroyed by their own sins.
- 44 Despite all this, the Lord was moved by their suffering; he heard their sad cries.
- 45 He remembered the agreement he had made with them, and he held back because of his great kindness and love.
- 46 He made the people who captured them treat them with mercy.
- 47 Save us, Lord, our God! Bring us back together from among the nations, so we can thank you and declare how magnificent and holy you are.
- 48 How wonderful is the Lord, the God of Israel, who lives forever and ever! Let all the people say “Amen”! Praise the Lord!

107

- 1 Thank the Lord, for he is good! His trustworthy love continues forever!
- 2 Let those the Lord has saved say that they are saved; those he has rescued from the power of the enemy.
- 3 He has gathered them together from distant lands, from the east and the west, the north and the south.*
- 4 They wandered in the desert wilderness, unable to find a way to a city where they could live.

[§] **106:31** The same phrase is used about Abraham in Genesis 15:6. * **107:3** “South”: literally “the sea.”

- 5 Hungry and thirsty, they became very discouraged.
6 Then they cried out to the Lord to help them in their troubles, and he saved them from their suffering.
7 He led them along a straight way to a city where they could live.
8 Let them praise the Lord for his trustworthy love, and for all the wonderful things he does for people.
9 For he gives drink to those who are thirsty, and food to those who are hungry.
10 Some sat in complete darkness, prisoners of misery and bound with iron chains,
11 for they had rebelled against what God had said; they had rejected the guidance of the Most High.
12 So he humbled their pride with the troubles of life; they tripped over and no one was there to stop them falling.
13 Then they called out to the Lord for help in their troubles, and he saved them from their suffering.
14 He brought them out of complete darkness, he broke their chains to pieces.
15 Let them praise the Lord for his trustworthy love, and for all the wonderful things he does for people.
16 For he breaks down the bronze doors, and cuts through the iron bars.†
17 They were stupid because they rebelled; they suffered for their sins.
18 They didn't want to eat; they were at death's door.
19 Then they called out to the Lord for help in their troubles, and he saved them from their suffering.
20 He gave the command and he healed them; he saved them from the grave.
21 Let them praise the Lord for his trustworthy love, and for all the wonderful things he does for people.
22 Let them present thank offerings and sing with joy about what he has done.
23 Those who set sail in ships, crossing the seas to earn their living,
24 they have seen the Lord's incredible power at work—the wonderful things he did in the deepest oceans.
25 He only had to speak to cause a stormy wind that stirred up towering waves,
26 lifting the ships high in the air and then plunging them down. The sailors were so terrified that their courage melted away.
27 They staggered around, falling from side to side like drunks—all their seamanship skills were useless.
28 Then they cried out to the Lord to help them in their troubles, and he saved them from their suffering.
29 He calmed the storm, the waves were quiet.
30 The sailors were so happy when it all calmed down, and he brought them to the harbor they wanted.
31 Let them praise the Lord for his trustworthy love, and for all the wonderful things he does for people.

† 107:16 Of imprisonment.

- 32 Let them say how wonderful he is in front of the whole congregation and the elders.
- 33 He dries up rivers and turns the land into a desert; the water springs stop flowing and the earth turns dry and dusty.
- 34 Fruitful ground becomes a salty wasteland because of the wickedness of those living there.
- 35 But he also turns around and makes pools of water in the desert, and makes water springs flow in a dry and dusty land.
- 36 He brings hungry people to live there—a place they can build their cities.
- 37 They sow their fields and plant their vineyards, producing a good harvest.
- 38 He takes care of them, and their numbers increase dramatically—their cattle too!
- 39 When they become few, brought low by oppression, misery, and sorrow,
- 40 He pours out his contempt on their leaders, making them wander, lost in the wilderness.
- 41 But he lifts the poor out of their troubles, and makes their families as big as flocks.
- 42 Those who live right will observe what is happening and be glad, but the wicked will be silenced.
- 43 Those who are wise will pay attention to all this, and thoughtfully reflect on the Lord's trustworthy love.

108

A song. A psalm of David.

- 1 God, I have complete confidence in you! My whole being sings praises to you!
- 2 Wake up, harp and lyre! I will wake up the dawn!
- 3 I will thank you among the peoples, Lord, I will sing your praises among the nations.*
- 4 For your trustworthy love reaches higher than the heavens, your faithfulness is higher than the clouds.
- 5 God, your greatness is above the highest heavens; and your glory is over all the earth!†
- 6 Rescue those you love! Answer us, and save us by your power!
- 7 God has spoken from his Temple: “Triumphantly I divide up Shechem, and portion out the Valley of Succoth.
- 8 Both Gilead and Manasseh belong to me. Ephraim is my helmet, and Judah is my scepter.
- 9 I will treat Moab as my washbasin; I will place my sandal on Edom; I will shout in triumph over Philistia.”
- 10 Who will bring me into the fortified city? Who will lead me into Edom?
- 11 Have you rejected us, God? Won't you go out with our armies?
- 12 Please give us help against our enemies, for human help is worthless.
- 13 Our strength is in God, and he will crush our enemies.‡

* **108:3** These verses are almost the same as Psalms 57:8-9. † **108:5** This verse is the same as Psalms 57:11. ‡ **108:13** These verses (6-13) are substantially the same as Psalms 60:5-12. For footnotes see Psalms 60.

109

For the music director. A psalm of David.

- ¹ God, the one I praise, please don't remain silent,
² because wicked and deceitful people are attacking me, telling lies about me.
³ They surround me with words of hate, fighting against me for no reason.
⁴ I love them, but they respond with hostility towards me, even while I'm praying for them!
⁵ They pay me back with evil instead of good, with hatred instead of love.*
⁶ "Appoint someone wicked over him.† Have someone stand as an accuser against him.
⁷ When he is judged and sentenced, may he be found guilty. Let his prayers be counted as sins.
⁸ May his life be short; let someone else take over his position.
⁹ May his children be left fatherless, and his wife become a widow.
¹⁰ May his children be homeless, wandering beggars, driven from their ruined houses.
¹¹ May creditors seize all that he owns; may strangers take all that he worked for.
¹² May no one be kind to him; may no one take pity on his fatherless children.
¹³ May his descendants die; may his family name be wiped out in the next generation.
¹⁴ May the Lord be reminded of the sins of his fathers; may his mother's sins not be blotted out.
¹⁵ May their sins be constantly before the Lord; may his name be totally forgotten by people.
¹⁶ For he didn't think to be kind to others, instead he harassed and killed the poor, the needy, the brokenhearted.
¹⁷ He loved to put a curse on others—let it come back on him. He had no time for blessings—so may he never receive any.
¹⁸ He cursed as often as he got dressed. May his curses go into him like the water he drinks, like the olive oil he rubs on his skin that enters his bones.
¹⁹ May his curses stick to him like clothing, may they be pulled tight around him like a belt."
²⁰ May all this be the punishment of the Lord on my enemies, on those who speak evil of me.‡

* **109:5** There is a change between verse 5 and 6. The psalmist has been referring to his enemies as "they," but from verses 6 to 19, the person being addressed is "he." While there is no indication in the text that a different person is speaking, it seems very likely that the psalmist is quoting the words of his enemies against him. (Quotation marks were not a part of ancient punctuation.) This is the more compelling when the content of what is being said is examined. While writers of the psalms certainly do condemn their enemies and call on God to act against them, in no other psalm is there a request for inappropriate action such as the perversion of justice in rendering a guilty verdict, or counting prayers as sins. In addition the context provided by verses 1 to 5 reveals that the whole theme is one of lies and deceit practiced by the psalmist's enemies. For these reasons verses 6 to 19 are placed in quotation marks here, believing that these words originate with those who are accusing the psalmist.

† **109:6** This may refer to the appointment of an unjust judge to hear the case. ‡ **109:20** In this verse the psalmist returns to speaking of his enemies, and wishes all that has been said rebounds upon them.

- 21 But treat me well, Lord God, because of your own reputation. Save me because you are faithful and good.
- 22 For I am poor and needy, and my heart is breaking.
- 23 I am fading away like an evening shadow; I am like a locust that is shaken off.
- 24 I am so weak from lack of food that my legs give way; my body is just skin and bones.
- 25 People ridicule me—they look at me and shake their heads!
- 26 Help me, Lord my God; save me because of your trustworthy love.
- 27 May they recognize that this is what you are doing—that you are the one who saves me.
- 28 When they curse me, you will bless me. When they attack me, you will defeat them. And I, your servant, will be happy.
- 29 May those who accuse me be clothed with disgrace; may they cover themselves with a cloak of shame.
- 30 But I will keep on thanking the Lord, praising him to everyone around me.
- 31 For he takes a stand to defend the needy, to save them from those who condemn them.

110

A psalm of David.

- 1 The Lord said to my Lord,* “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for you.†”
- 2 The Lord will expand your royal power from Zion; you will rule over your enemies.
- 3 Your people willingly follow you on the day when your power is revealed on the holy mountains, renewed in strength every morning like dew at dawn.‡
- 4 The Lord has made a vow he will not break: “You are a priest forever, following the order of Melchizedek.”
- 5 The Lord stands right beside you to support you; he will strike down kings in his anger.
- 6 He will execute judgment on the nations, filling their lands with corpses. He will strike down those who rule all over the earth.
- 7 He§ will drink from streams beside the path.* Therefore† he will be victorious.

111

- 1 Praise the Lord! I will thank the Lord with all my heart in the congregation of the faithful.
- 2 All the wonderful things the Lord has done are studied by everyone who loves them.

* **110:1** “My Lord”: by the time of the New Testament this was applied to the Messiah, but it is not made explicit in the text here. (See for example Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44). † **110:1** “Footstool”: A symbol of submission. ‡ **110:3** This verse has many problems in translation, particularly at the end. Literally: “from the womb from the dawn to you the dew of our youth.” § **110:7** Referring to the king that is made explicit in verse 2, not the Lord God. * **110:7** In other words the king will be refreshed. † **110:7** “Therefore”: probably meaning for all the reasons cited in the psalm.

- 3 His majesty and honor are revealed by what he does; his goodness lasts forever.
- 4 He wants the wonderful things he has done to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and kind.
- 5 He feeds those who respect him; he always remembers the agreement he made.
- 6 He demonstrated to his people the powerful things he could do by giving them the lands of other nations.
- 7 Everything he does can be depended on, and is right; all his commandments are trustworthy.
- 8 They remain rock-solid forever. He was true and right in saying what should be done.
- 9 He delivered* his people. He commanded that his agreement would continue forever. How holy and awesome is his reputation!
- 10 The beginning of wisdom is honoring the Lord. Those who follow what he says do well. He is to be praised forever!

112

- 1 Praise the Lord! Happy are those who respect the Lord, who love to do what he says!
- 2 Their descendants will prosper in the land; the children of those who do good will be blessed.
- 3 Their families* will be wealthy; the good they do has eternal results.
- 4 Light shines in the darkness for those who live right, for those who are gracious, compassionate, and good.
- 5 Good things come to those who are generous in their lending and are honest in doing business.
- 6 They will never fall. Those who live right won't be forgotten.
- 7 They aren't afraid of bad news because they rely totally on the Lord.
- 8 They are confident and brave, and see their enemies defeated.
- 9 They share generously, giving to the poor; the good they do has eternal results. They are greatly respected.
- 10 The wicked observe all this and are mad; they gnash their teeth in anger. They waste away, and all that they hoped for comes to nothing.

113

- 1 Praise the Lord! Praise him, servants of the Lord! Praise the Lord's as he is!*
- 2 Let the Lord's nature be praised, now and forever.
- 3 Let everyone everywhere, from the east to the west,† praise the Lord as he is!
- 4 The Lord rules supreme over all nations; his glory extends higher than the heavens.

* **111:9** Referring to the Exodus. The same word is used in Exodus 8:23. * **112:3** Literally "house," but not in the sense of a building, but a family line. * **113:1** "As he is!" literally, "name," but this word in Hebrew means far more than simply an appellation, "name" is indicative of nature and character. Also in verses 2 and 3. † **113:3** Or "from sunrise to sunset."

- ⁵ Who is like the Lord our God? He is the one who lives on high, seated on his throne.
⁶ He has to stoop low to look down on the heavens and the earth.
⁷ He helps the poor up from the dust; he lifts the needy from the dump.
⁸ He gives them positions of honor[‡] together important leaders,[§] with leaders of his own people.
⁹ He makes the childless woman happy in her home by giving her children. Praise the Lord!

114

- ¹ At the time of the exodus of Israel from Egypt, when the descendants of Jacob left that foreign country,^{*}
² the land of Judah became the Lord's sanctuary, Israel his kingdom.
³ The Red Sea saw them and ran away; the Jordan River retreated.
⁴ Mountains jumped in fright[†] like rams, hills startled[‡] like lambs.
⁵ Red Sea—why did you run away? Jordan River—why did you retreat?
⁶ Mountains—why did you jump in fright? Hills—why did you startle like lambs?
⁷ Earth, tremble in the presence of the Lord, tremble in the presence of the God of Jacob!
⁸ He is the one who turned the rock into a pool of water; making water flow from the hard rock.[§]

115

- ¹ Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to you all glory should be given, because of your trustworthy love and faithfulness.
² Why should the heathen nations ask, "Where is your God?"
³ Our God is in heaven, and he does whatever he wants.
⁴ Their idols are just things of silver and gold made by human hands.
⁵ They have mouths, but can't speak. They have eyes, but can't see.
⁶ They have ears, but can't hear. They have noses, but can't smell.
⁷ They have hands, but can't feel. They have feet, but can't walk. No sound comes from their throats.^{*}
⁸ Those who make idols become just like them, and so does everyone who trusts in them.
⁹ Israel, trust in the Lord! He is the one who helps you and protects you.
¹⁰ Descendants of Aaron, trust in the Lord! He is the one who helps you and protects you.
¹¹ Those who honor the Lord, trust in the Lord! He is the one who helps you and protects you.
¹² The Lord keeps us in mind and will be good to us. He will bless Israel, he will bless the descendants of Aaron.

[‡] **113:8** "Gives them positions of honor": literally, "makes them sit." **§ 113:8** "Important leaders": literally, "princes." ***** **114:1** "Foreign country": literally, "people of a foreign language." [†] **114:4** Literally "skipped," but this suggests a playful action when the context makes it clear that the jumping is due to fear, not joy. [‡] **114:4** "Startled": implied. The image is of mountains and hills shaking as in an earthquake. **§ 114:8** See Exodus 17:1-7; Numbers 20:1-13. ***** **115:7** In other words, there is no sound of breathing.

- 13 The Lord will bless all those who worship him, whoever they are.†
 14 May the Lord be good to you, you and your children.
 15 May you be blessed by the Lord who made heaven and earth.
 16 The heavens belong to the Lord, but he has given the earth to humankind.
 17 The dead do not praise the Lord, those who have gone down into the silence of the grave.
 18 But we the living will always praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!

116

- 1 I love the Lord because he listens to me, he hears my calls for help.
 2 Because he pays attention to what I say I will pray to him as long as I live.
 3 I was caught in the snares of death; I was trapped by terrors of the grave. All I experienced was suffering and grief.
 4 Then I cried out to the Lord, "Lord, please save me!"
 5 The Lord is so kind and good! Our God is so compassionate!
 6 The Lord takes care of those who are powerless;* when I was brought down he saved me.
 7 I can once again be at peace because the Lord has been good to me.
 8 For you have saved me from death, my eyes from crying, and my feet from stumbling.
 9 Now I can walk with the Lord in the land of the living.
 10 I trusted in you, so I told you, "I'm suffering terribly!"
 11 I was so upset that I said, "Everyone's a liar!"
 12 What can I give the Lord in return for all he's done for me?
 13 I will lift up the cup of salvation† and worship the Lord.
 14 I will keep my promises to the Lord so everyone can see.‡
 15 It hurts§ the Lord when those who trust in him die.*
 16 Lord, I really am your slave, serving you as my mother served you before me, yet you have set me free.
 17 I will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to you and I will worship you.
 18 I will keep my promises to the Lord so everyone can see,
 19 there in the house of the Lord, right in Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!

117

- 1 Praise the Lord, all nations; everyone everywhere, praise how wonderful he is!
 2 For his trustworthy love for us is above all; his faithfulness is eternal. Praise the Lord!

118

- 1 Thank the Lord, for he is good! His trustworthy love lasts forever.

† **115:13** "Whoever they are": literally, "the small with the great." * **116:6** Literally, "simple." † **116:13** Thought to refer to the wine offering. ‡ **116:14** Usually understood to mean promises to make offerings as part of the sacrificial system. § **116:15** "It hurts": the word used here is "costly," in other words the Lord suffers a loss when those who trust in him die. * **116:15** In other words, he cares deeply about those he loves and is saddened when they die.

- 2 Let all Israel say, "His trustworthy love lasts forever."
 3 Let Aaron's descendants say, "His trustworthy love lasts forever."
 4 Let those who honor the Lord say, "His trustworthy love lasts forever."
 5 I was suffering badly, so I cried out to the Lord for help. He answered me and set me free from my pain.
 6 The Lord is with me, so I have nothing to fear. No one can harm me.
 7 The Lord is with me, he will help me. I will see those who hate me defeated.
 8 It's better to rely on the Lord than to trust in people.
 9 It's better to rely on the Lord than to trust in the rich and powerful.*
 10 Even though all the heathen nations surrounded me,† I defeated them with the help of the Lord.‡
 11 They completely surrounded me, but even so I defeated them with the help of the Lord.
 12 Like a swarm of bees they attacked, but their attack died out as quickly as burning thorn twigs. I defeated them with the help of the Lord.
 13 They tried as hard as they could to kill me, but the Lord helped me.
 14 The Lord is my strength, and the one I sing about. He is the one who saves me.
 15 Songs of celebration and victory come from the tents of the faithful. The Lord's powerful hand has done amazing things!
 16 The Lord raises his powerful hand in victory! The Lord's powerful hand has done amazing things!
 17 I'm not going to die. In fact I'm going to live, and let people know what the Lord has done.
 18 Even though the Lord punished me severely, he did not let me die.
 19 Open the gates of the faithful§ for me so I can go in and thank the Lord.
 20 These are the gates of the Lord where God's faithful people enter.
 21 I want to thank you for answering me and for being the one who saves me.
 22 The stone rejected by the builders has turned out to be the chief cornerstone.
 23 The Lord has done this, and it looks wonderful to us!
 24 The Lord made this day happen! We will celebrate and be happy for it!
 25 Lord, please save us! Lord, please make us successful!
 26 May the one who comes in the power of the Lord be blessed! We bless you from the house of the Lord!
 27 The Lord is God, and his goodness shines on us.* Branches in hand, start the procession up towards the altar.
 28 You are my God, and I will thank you! You are my God, and I will praise you!
 29 Thank the Lord, for he is good! His trustworthy love lasts forever!

* **118:9** "Rich and powerful": literally, "princes." † **118:10** Probably referring to Israel's king. ‡ **118:10** "With the help of the Lord": literally, "in the name of the Lord." § **118:19** Referring to the gates of the Temple. * **118:27** "His goodness shines on us": literally, "he has given us light."

119

Aleph*

- 1 Happy are those who do what is right, who follow what the Lord says.
 2 Happy are those who keep his commandments, who sincerely want to follow him.
 3 They don't do what's wrong; they walk in his ways.
 4 You have ordered us to follow your instructions carefully.
 5 May I be reliable in the way I keep your rules!
 6 Then I won't be ashamed when I compare what I do to what you have said.
 7 I will praise you sincerely as I learn from you the right way to live.
 8 I will observe your laws. Please never give up on me!

Beth

- 9 How does a young person remain pure? By following what you say.
 10 I worship you sincerely; please don't let me stray from your commands.
 11 I keep what you say in mind so I won't sin against you.
 12 Thank you Lord! Teach me what to do!
 13 I repeat out loud your instructions.
 14 I enjoy your laws more than having plenty of money.
 15 I will think deeply about your teachings, and reflect on your ways.
 16 I will take pleasure in following your directions; I won't forget what you say.

Gimel

- 17 Be kind to your servant so I can live and follow what you teach.
 18 Open my eyes so I may discover wonderful things in your law.
 19 I'm only here for a short time—don't let me miss what you have to say.†
 20 I'm always so keen to know your instructions.
 21 You reprimand those who are arrogant; those who don't follow your commandments are cursed.
 22 Don't let me be scorned and insulted, for I have kept your laws.
 23 Even leaders‡ sit down together and slander me, but I, your servant, will think seriously about your instructions.
 24 Your laws make me happy—they are my wise advisors.
 25 I'm dying here, lying in the dust. Keep me alive as you promised.
 26 I explained my situation to you, and you answered me. Teach me to follow your directions.
 27 Help me understand what your laws mean, and I will meditate on the wonderful things you do.
 28 I'm weeping because I'm so sad; please encourage me as you promised.
 29 Stop me fooling myself; kindly teach me your law.
 30 I have chosen to trust in you. I always pay attention to what you say.
 31 I hold on to your teachings, Lord. Don't let me be ridiculed.

* **119:** This Psalm is an acrostic, that is each group of stanzas begin with one letter of the Hebrew alphabet, from Aleph to Taw. † **119:19** "I'm only here for a short time—don't let me miss what you have to say": literally, "I am an alien in the land; you must not hide your commandments from me." ‡ **119:23** Literally, "princes."

32 I run to follow your commands, for you have expanded my mind!§

He

33 Teach me the meaning of your laws, and I will always keep them.

34 Help me to understand so I can be totally committed to doing what you want.

35 Lead me to follow your commands, for this is what I love to do

36 Help me to concentrate on what you say* rather than on making a profit.

37 Don't let me focus on things that are worthless. Help me live in your ways.

38 Please keep your promise to me, your servant, that you made to those who worship you.

39 Take away the shame I dread, for your law is good.

40 I always want to do what you say. Please let me live, for you do what is right.

Waw

41 Lord, please love me with your trustworthy love; please give me the salvation you promised.

42 Then I can reply to those who mock me, for I trust what you say.

43 Don't ever prevent me from being able to speak your words of truth, for I place my complete confidence in your just judgments.

44 I will continue to follow your teachings, forever and ever.

45 I shall live in freedom, for I have committed myself to obeying you.

46 I will instruct kings about your laws—I won't be embarrassed.

47 I'm so happy for your instructions. I love them!

48 I lift up my hands in prayer, honoring your commandments. I will think deeply about all you say.

Zayin

49 Remember your promise to me, your servant. It's my only hope.

50 This is what brings me encouragement in my misery—your promise keeps me going!

51 Arrogant people mock me terribly, but I don't give up on your teachings.

52 I think about the instructions you gave long ago, Lord, and they reassure me.

53 I am angry with the wicked because they have rejected your law.

54 Your instructions have been music to my ears† wherever I have lived.

55 At night I think about the kind of person you are, Lord, and do what you say.

56 For this is how I live my life—by following your principles.

Heth

57 Lord, you are mine! I have promised to do as you say.

58 My whole being wants your blessing—please be kind to me, as you have promised!

§ 119:32 “Expanded my mind”: literally, “made wide my heart.” In Hebrew thinking of the time the heart was where thoughts occurred, not emotions. * 119:36 Literally, “your testimonies.” † 119:54 “Music to my ears”: literally, “songs.”

- 59 As I think about my life, I turn to follow what you have said.
 60 I hurry to keep your commandments without delay
 61 Even though wicked people try to tie me up, I won't forget your instructions.
 62 I get up in the middle of the night to thank you for your good laws.
 63 I identify with all those who follow you, those who do what you tell them.
 64 Lord, you love everyone on earth;‡ please teach me what to do.

Teth

- 65 Lord, you have been so good to me, your servant, as you have promised.
 66 Now teach me wise judgment and discernment because I believe in your instructions.
 67 Previously I was suffering, wandering away from you, but now I do what you say.
 68 Since you are good, everything you do is good. Teach me your ways.
 69 Arrogant people smear my reputation with lies; but I wholeheartedly follow your commands.
 70 They are cold and unfeeling,§ but I love your law.
 71 The suffering* I went through was good for me, so I could think about what you have stipulated.
 72 What you tell me to do is worth more to me than much gold and silver.

Yodh

- 73 You created me and made me what I am; help me to learn and better understand your commandments.
 74 May those who worship you be happy when they see me, for I place my confidence in your word.
 75 Lord, I know that what you decide is right; you brought me down in order to help me because you are trustworthy.
 76 May your trustworthy love comfort me as you promised me, your servant.
 77 Be compassionate to me so I may live, for I love your teachings.
 78 Bring down those proud people who wronged me with their lies. I will spend time thinking about your instructions.
 79 Let those who follow you turn to me, those who understand your laws.
 80 May I be innocent in the way I keep your rules so that I won't be ashamed.

Kaph

- 81 I'm exhausted waiting for you to save me, but my hope is in your word.
 82 I strain my eyes looking for you to keep your promises, asking "When will you comfort me?"
 83 I've become like a wineskin that's been shriveled up by smoke, but I have not forgotten to do as you say.

‡ 119:64 Literally, "your love, Lord, fills the earth." § 119:70 Literally, "their hearts are thick like fat." * 119:71 Referring back to verse 67.

- 84 How long do I have to wait before you punish my persecutors?
 85 These arrogant people have dug pits to trap me, these people who don't care anything about your law.
 86 All your commands are trustworthy. Help me against these people who persecute me with their lies!
 87 They have almost killed me, but I have not given up on what you say.
 88 Since you love me with your trustworthy love, don't let me die, so I can go on following the instructions you have given.

Lamedh

- 89 Your word, Lord, lasts forever. It stands firm in the heavens.
 90 Your faithfulness lasts for all generations, as permanent as the earth you created.
 91 Your judgments stand—they are as true today as ever—for everything serves your will.
 92 If I didn't love your teachings, my suffering[†] would have killed me.
 93 I will never forget your instructions, for through them you give me life.
 94 I belong to you, so please save me! I am committed to following your rules.
 95 Even though wicked people are waiting to ambush and kill me, I will focus my mind on what you say.
 96 I recognize that human perfection has its limits, but your law is limitless.

Mem

- 97 I really love your law! I meditate on it all day long.
 98 Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for I'm always thinking about your instructions.
 99 In fact I have a better insight than all of my teachers because I spend time concentrating on what you say.
 100 I even understand more than the elders because I follow your directions.
 101 I avoid any course of action that leads to evil, because I want to remain faithful to your word.
 102 I have not disregarded your instructions because you yourself taught me what to do.
 103 Your words taste so sweet to me! They are sweeter than honey to my mouth.
 104 I gain understanding from what you say, so I hate any way of life that's just a lie.

Nun

- 105 Your word is a lamp that shows me where to walk, it's a light for my path.
 106 I've made a promise, and I will keep it: I will keep your rules that are always right!
 107 Lord, I'm really suffering! Please let me live, as you have promised.
 108 Lord, please accept my offerings of praise that I freely give you. Teach me your rules.

[†] **119:92** Referring back to verses 71 and 67.

- 109 My life is always at risk,[‡] but I will not forget your law.
 110 Wicked people have set a trap for me, but I will not stray from your commandments.
 111 I will always hold on to what you say for your words make me really happy,
 112 I have made up my mind to follow your instructions to the very end.

Samekh

- 113 I hate people who are two-faced,[§] but I love your law.
 114 You keep me safe and you defend me, your word gives me reason to hope.
 115 Leave me alone, you evil people, and let me keep the commandments of my God.
 116 Support me, Lord, as you promised, so I can live. Don't let my hope turn into discouragement.
 117 Support me, so I can be saved and always pay attention to your instructions.
 118 You reject all those who don't follow your instructions—they're fooling themselves by living a lie.
 119 You treat the wicked people on earth as something worthless* to be discarded; therefore I love your laws.
 120 I have goose bumps thinking of you—I'm in awe! I'm scared of your judgments!

Ayin

- 121 I have done what's fair and right, so please don't abandon me to my enemies.
 122 Please promise you'll take care of me, your servant. Don't let these arrogant people mistreat me.
 123 I strain my eyes looking for your salvation, watching for you to fulfill your promise to make everything good.[†]
 124 Please treat me, your servant, according to your trustworthy love. Teach me what you want me to do.
 125 I am your servant. Please give me discernment so I can understand your instructions.
 126 Lord, it's time for you to act, for these people have broken your laws.
 127 This is why I love your commandments more than gold, more than the finest gold.
 128 All of your rules are right in every way, and so I hate any way of life that's just a lie.

Pe

- 129 Your laws are truly wonderful—that's why I keep them!
 130 Studying your words brings light so that even the uneducated[‡] can understand.

[‡] **119:109** Literally, "My life is continually in my hand." **§ 119:113** Or "duplicitous."

* **119:119** "Something worthless": literally, "dross." [†] **119:123** "Your promise to make everything good": literally, "the word of your righteousness." [‡] **119:130** Literally, "simple."

- 131 With keen desire[§] I long for what you have to say.
 132 Please pay attention to me and be kind to me, as you are with those who love you.
 133 Tell me by your word the way I should go, and don't let any kind of evil control me.
 134 Save me from cruel people so I can follow your instructions.
 135 Please look favorably on me, your servant, teach me what I should do.
 136 My tears stream down as I weep for those who don't keep your law.

Tsadhe

- 137 Lord, you are right, and what you decide is just!
 138 You have given your instructions which are fair and totally trustworthy.
 139 My devotion is burning me up inside because my enemies ignore your words.
 140 Your promises have been proved true, and that's why I, your servant, love them.
 141 I may be unimportant and looked down on, but I don't forget your commandments.
 142 Your goodness and justice last forever; and your law is the truth.
 143 When I have problems and sadness, your commands make me happy.
 144 Your laws are always right; help me to understand what they mean so I can live.

Qoph

- 145 My whole being is crying out! Lord, please answer me! I will follow your instructions.
 146 I pray to you, asking, "Please save me!" so I can do what you say.
 147 I get up before dawn, and call out to you for help and put my hope in your word.
 148 During the night I stay awake, meditating on your word.
 149 Listen to what I have to say, Lord, because of your trustworthy love. Keep me alive, Lord, because you always do what's right.
 150 Evil people come running to attack me—they totally disregard your law.
 151 But you, Lord, are close beside me; all your commandments are true.
 152 Long ago I realized that your laws will last forever.

Resh

- 153 Please look at my suffering and save me! I have not forgotten your teachings.
 154 Plead my case, and save me as you promised! Let me live!
 155 Wicked people can't be saved, because they don't care about what you say.
 156 Lord, your mercy is so great! Because you are always fair, please let me live!
 157 Despite the many people who persecute and mistreat me, I have not strayed from your laws.

[§] 119:131 Literally, "I open my mouth and pant."

- 158 Watching these unfaithful people disgusts me because they take no notice of your word.
- 159 See how much I love your commandments, Lord. Please let me live because of your trustworthy love.
- 160 Your word can be summed up in one word: truth! All of your just laws will last forever.

Shin

- 161 Leaders* persecute me for no reason, but I am in awe only of your word.
- 162 Your word makes me so happy—I'm like someone who discovers immense treasure.
- 163 I hate and detest lies, but I love your teachings.
- 164 I praise you seven times a day because your laws are good.
- 165 Those who love your teachings have wonderful peace and nothing trips them up.
- 166 Lord, I look forward to your salvation. I keep your commandments.
- 167 I obey your laws and love them very much.
- 168 I keep your commandments and laws because you see everything I do.

Taw

- 169 Lord, please listen to my sad cry; help me to understand, as you promised.
- 170 Please hear what I have to say to you, and save me, as you promised.
- 171 Let me pour out my words of praise, for you teach me what to do.
- 172 I will sing about your word, for all your commandments are right.
- 173 Please be ready to help me, for I have chosen to follow your instructions.
- 174 I long for your salvation, Lord; your teachings make me happy.
- 175 May I live my life in praise to you, and may your instructions help me.
- 176 I have wandered away like a lost sheep, so please come looking for me, for I have not forgotten your commandments.

120

A song for pilgrims going up to Jerusalem.

- 1 I called out to the Lord for help in all my troubles, and he answered me.
- 2 Lord, please save me from liars and cheats!
- 3 What will the Lord do to you, you liars? How will he punish you?
- 4 With the sharp arrows of a warrior and burning coals made from a broom tree.
- 5 I'm sorry for myself, because I live as a foreigner in Meshech, or among the tent-dwellers of Kedar.*
- 6 I have lived for far too long among people who hate peace.
- 7 I want peace, but when I talk of peace, they want war.

* 119:161 Literally, "princes." * 120:5 Far-off places, very distant from each other.

121

A song for pilgrims going up to Jerusalem.

- 1 I look to the hills*—but is that where my help comes from?
- 2 My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
- 3 He will not let you fall; he who watches over you won't fall asleep.
- 4 In fact he who watches over you doesn't take naps or fall asleep.
- 5 The Lord keeps watch over you; the Lord protects you; he stands right beside you.
- 6 The sun won't hurt you during the day, nor the moon at night.
- 7 The Lord will protect you from all kinds of evil; he will keep you safe and sound.
- 8 The Lord will look after you when you leave, and when you return, now and forever.

122

A song for pilgrims going up to Jerusalem. A psalm of David.

- 1 I was so happy when they said to me, "Let's go the house of the Lord."
- 2 Now we're standing inside your gates, Jerusalem!
- 3 Jerusalem is built as a city where people can be together.*
- 4 All the tribes—the tribes of the Lord—go up there, following the command given to Israel to give thanks to the Lord.
- 5 This is where the thrones are placed, where judgment is given, the thrones of the house of David.
- 6 Pray that Jerusalem may be at peace. May everyone who loves Jerusalem be kept safe.
- 7 May there be peace within your walls, and safety within your fortresses.
- 8 On behalf of my family and friends, I will now say, "May you be at peace."
- 9 On behalf of the house of the Lord our God, I pray that everything goes well for you.

123

A song for pilgrims going up to Jerusalem.

- 1 I look up to you, the one who rules from heaven.
- 2 Just as servants look to their master, or a maid looks to her mistress, so we keep our eyes on you, Lord our God, waiting for you to be merciful to us.
- 3 Please have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy. We've had enough of people's contempt.
- 4 We've had more than enough of the scorn of the proud, and the contempt of the arrogant.

124

A song for pilgrims going up to Jerusalem. A psalm of David.

* **121:1** It seems most likely that this reference is to pagan worship which occurred on the "high places" of the hills, and that this is contrasted with the true source of help in verse 2—the Lord. * **122:3** "Where people can be together," or, "that is closely joined together."

- 1 If the Lord hadn't been for us, what would have happened? Let everyone in Israel say:
- 2 If the Lord hadn't been for us, what would have happened when people came and attacked us?
- 3 They would have swallowed us alive when their anger raged against us.
- 4 Like a flood they would have swept over us; like a rushing torrent they would have submerged us.
- 5 They would have rushed over us like raging waters, drowning us.
- 6 Praise the Lord, who didn't hand us over to them as prey to be ripped apart by their teeth.
- 7 We escaped from them like a bird flying out of a hunter's trap. The trap was broken and we flew away!
- 8 Our help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

125

A song for pilgrims going up to Jerusalem.

- 1 Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, for it is unshakeable and endures forever.
- 2 In the same way that the mountains surround Jerusalem, the Lord surrounds his people, now and forever.
- 3 The wicked will not always rule* over the land of the faithful, otherwise the faithful might also end up doing wrong.
- 4 Lord, please do good to those who do good, those who sincerely do what is right.
- 5 But as for those who turn aside to follow their own crooked ways—those the Lord will lead them away together with those who do evil.† May Israel be at peace!

126

A song for pilgrims going up to Jerusalem.

- 1 When the Lord brought his people back from captivity to Zion, it was as if we were dreaming!
- 2 We laughed so much, we sang for joy. The other nations said, "The Lord has done wonderful things for these people."
- 3 The Lord certainly has done wonderful things for us. How happy we were!
- 4 Please return and help us again, Lord. Renew us like streams of water that renew the Negev desert.
- 5 Those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy!
- 6 Those who weep as they go out to sow their seed will be singing in celebration when they carry the harvest home.

127

A song for pilgrims going up to Jerusalem. A psalm of Solomon.

* **125:3** Literally, "the scepter of wickedness." † **125:5** It seems that two groups are in view here: unfaithful Israelites, and heathen people who do wrong.

- 1 If the Lord doesn't build the house, the work of the builders is futile.
If the Lord doesn't guard the city, the work of the guards is pointless.
- 2 It's useless to get up early in the morning and go to work, and stay late into the evening, worrying about earning enough to eat, when the Lord gives rest to those he loves.
- 3 Children certainly are a gift from the Lord, for a family is a blessing.*
- 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of a young man.
- 5 Happy is the father who fills his quiver[†] with them! Such fathers will not be embarrassed when they confront their enemies at the city gate.[‡]

128

A song for pilgrims going up to Jerusalem.

- 1 Happy are all those who worship the Lord, everyone who follows his ways!
- 2 You will eat what your own hands have produced. You will be happy and do well.
- 3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine growing in your home. Your children will be like the shoots of an olive tree around your table.
- 4 This will certainly be the Lord's blessing on those who worship him.
- 5 May the Lord go on blessing you from Zion; may you see Jerusalem prosper all the days of your life.
- 6 May you see your children's children. May Israel be at peace!

129

A song for pilgrims going up to Jerusalem.

- 1 Many enemies have attacked from the time I was young. Let everyone in Israel say:
- 2 Many enemies have attacked from the time I was young, but they never defeated me.
- 3 They beat me on my back, leaving long furrows as if it had been ploughed by a farmer.
- 4 But the Lord does what is right: he has cut me free from the ropes of the wicked.
- 5 May everyone who hates Zion be driven back in humiliating defeat.
- 6 May they be like grass that grows on a roof that withers before it can be harvested,
- 7 There's not enough even for a reaper to hold, not enough even for the binder to bind.*
- 8 May passers-by not say to them, "The blessing of the Lord be on you; we bless you in the name of the Lord."

130

A song for pilgrims going up to Jerusalem.

* **127:3** Literally, "the reward of the fruit of the womb." † **127:5** A container for arrows.
‡ **127:5** "City gate." The place where judgments were made, similar to a court. * **129:7**
The image is of something that's completely useless.

- 1 Lord, I cry out to you from the depths of my pain.*
 2 Please listen to my cry, and pay attention to what I'm asking.
 3 Lord, if you kept a list of sins, who could escape being condemned?
 4 But you are forgiving so that we might respect you.
 5 I'm waiting for the Lord, longingly waiting, for I trust in his word.
 6 I long for the Lord to come, more than watchmen longing for the dawn to come, more than watchmen longing for the dawn to come.
 7 Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for the Lord loves us with a trustworthy love and his salvation knows no limits.
 8 He will save Israel from every sin.

131

A song for pilgrims going up to Jerusalem. A psalm of David.

- 1 Lord, I'm not proud or arrogant. I don't worry about things that are beyond me, matters that are far beyond my experience.
 2 On the contrary, I have chosen to be calm and quiet, like a weaned child with its mother. I am like a weaned child with its mother.
 3 Israel, hope in the Lord, now and forever!

132

A song for pilgrims going up to Jerusalem.

- 1 Lord, remember David, and all that he went through.
 2 He made a promise to the Lord, a vow to the Mighty One of Jacob:
 3 "I will not go home, I will not go to bed,
 4 I will not go to sleep, I will not take a nap,
 5 until I find a place where the Lord can live, a home for the Mighty One of Jacob."
 6 In Ephrathah we received information about the Ark of Agreement, and we found it in fields near Jaar.*
 7 Let's go to the place where the Lord lives and bow down at his feet in worship.
 8 Come, Lord, and enter your home,† together with your Ark of your power.
 9 May your priests wear goodness like clothing; may your faithful people shout for joy.
 10 For the sake of your servant David, don't reject the king you have chosen.
 11 The Lord made a solemn promise to David, one he will never cancel—"I will put one of your descendants on your throne.
 12 If your sons keep to my agreement and my laws that I will teach them, then their sons will always occupy your throne."
 13 For the Lord has chosen Zion, wanting to make his home there, saying:
 14 "This will always be my home; this is where I want to live.

* 130:1 "Of my pain": implied. * 132:6 Kiriath Jearim. See 1 Samuel 7. † 132:8 Literally, "resting place," but with the sense that this is the usual place where someone resides, hence "home."

- 15 I will provide the people of the city with all they need; I will feed the poor.
- 16 I will clothe its priests with salvation; and its faithful people will shout for joy.
- 17 I will make the line of David even more powerful.‡ I have prepared a lamp for my chosen king.
- 18 I will humiliate his enemies, but the crown he wears will shine brightly.”

133

A song for pilgrims going up to Jerusalem. A psalm of David.

- 1 How good, how delightful it is when people live together in harmony!
- 2 This is as precious as the oil used to anoint Aaron, running down from his head onto his beard, onto the collar of his clothes.
- 3 It's like the dew of Mount Hermon that falls on Zion's mountains. That is where the Lord gave his blessing of life that lasts forever.

134

A song for pilgrims going up to Jerusalem.

- 1 Praise the Lord, all you servants of the Lord who worship at night in the house of the Lord.
- 2 Lift up your hands towards the holy place and praise the Lord.
- 3 May the Lord bless you from Zion, he who made the heavens and the earth.

135

- 1 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord's reputation!* Praise the Lord, all you servants of the Lord
- 2 who worship in the house of the Lord, in the courts of our God.
- 3 Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praises to his character because it is wonderful!
- 4 For the Lord has chosen Jacob for himself; Israel as his very own.
- 5 I know how great the Lord is—our Lord is greater than all gods.
- 6 The Lord does whatever he wants throughout heaven and earth, on the seas and in the ocean depths.
- 7 He causes the clouds to rise all over the earth, he makes lightning flash and give rain, he sends the winds from his storehouses.
- 8 He struck down the firstborn of Egypt, both human and animal.
- 9 He did wonderful miracles among you in Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants.
- 10 He struck down many nations, he killed powerful kings, such as†
- 11 Sihon, king of the Amorites, Og, king of Bashan, and all the kings who ruled in Canaan.
- 12 He handed over their lands to Israel, his special people, for them to possess.

‡ **132:17** Literally, “I will make a horn sprout for David.” * **135:1** Or “character”: literally, “name.” Also verse 3. † **135:10** “Such as”: implied.

- 13 Your reputation,[‡] Lord, stands forever; you, Lord, are remembered for all generations.
- 14 The Lord will vindicate his people; he will show compassion to those who follow him.
- 15 The idols of the foreign nations are only objects of silver and gold, made by human hands.
- 16 They have mouths, but can't speak; they have eyes, but can't see.
- 17 They have ears, but can't hear; they can't even breathe![§]
- 18 Those who make idols will become just like them, and so will everyone who trusts in them.
- 19 People of Israel, praise the Lord! Descendants of Aaron,^{*} praise the Lord!
- 20 Levites, praise the Lord! Everyone who worships the Lord, praise the Lord!
- 21 Praise the Lord from Zion, for he lives in Jerusalem! Praise the Lord!

136

- 1 Thank the Lord, because he is good! For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 2 Thank the Lord, the God of gods! For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 3 Thank the Lord of lords! For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 4 To him who alone does amazing things! For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 5 To him who knew how to make the heavens. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 6 To him who spread out the earth over the waters. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 7 To him who made the lights above. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 8 The sun to rule the day. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 9 The moon and stars to rule the night. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 10 To him who struck down the firstborn in Egypt. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 11 He led his people out of Egypt.^{*} For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 12 He did this with his strong hand and outstretched arm. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 13 To him who parted the Red Sea. For his trustworthy love lasts forever;
- 14 And led Israel through it. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 15 But threw Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 16 To him who led his people through the wilderness. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 17 To him who struck down powerful kings. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.

[‡] 135:13 "Reputation": literally, "name." § 135:17 Literally, "indeed there is no breath in their moiuth." * 135:19 That is, the priests. * 136:11 "Out of Egypt": literally, "from among them."

- 18 To him who killed powerful kings. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 19 Sihon, king of the Amorites. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 20 Og, king of Bashan. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 21 He gave Israel[†] their land to possess. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 22 He granted ownership to his servant Israel. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 23 He remembered us even in our humiliation. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 24 He rescued us from our enemies. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 25 To the one who provides food for every living creature. For his trustworthy love lasts forever.
- 26 Thank the God of heaven! For his trustworthy love lasts forever.

137

- 1 When we sat down by the rivers of Babylon we wept as we remembered Zion.
- 2 We hung up our harps on the willow trees.
- 3 For those who had taken us captive asked us for a song—our tormentors wanted us to sing a happy song from Jerusalem.
- 4 But how could we sing a song dedicated to the Lord in a pagan land?
- 5 If I forget Jerusalem, may my right hand forget how to play;*
- 6 May my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth if I don't remember you—if I don't consider Jerusalem my greatest joy.[†]
- 7 Lord, please remember what the people of Edom did on the day Jerusalem fell, the ones who said "Tear it down! Destroy it down to its foundations!"
- 8 Daughter of Babylon, you will be destroyed! Happy is the one who pays you back, who does to you what you did to us!
- 9 Happy is the one who grabs your children and smashes them against the rocks!

138

A psalm of David.

- 1 I thank you with my whole being; I sing your praises before the heavenly beings.*

[†] 136:21 Implied. * 137:5 Play music. [†] 137:6 The meaning is that it would be an expression of unfaithfulness to the Lord to sing holy songs meant for Temple worship in a pagan country, and that Jerusalem needed to be still considered as God's holy city. * 138:1 The word used here is "elohim" which would usually be translated as "gods," but this seems strange here since the gods worshiped by pagans do not exist. It could be translated "false gods," but why would the psalmist be singing God's praises before them? The Septuagint translates the words as "angels," the Syriac has "kings," and in the Targum it is "judges." Other versions have "divine beings," "the powers in heaven," "the mighty," etc. Note also the use of this word in Psalms 82:1.

- 2 I bow down before your holy Temple, and I am thankful because of who you are—for your trustworthy love and faithfulness—and for the fact that your promises are even greater than what people expect of you.†
- 3 On the day I cried out to you for help, you answered me. You encouraged me and made me strong.
- 4 All the kings of the earth will praise you, Lord, for they have heard what you have said.
- 5 They will sing about what the Lord has done and about the great glory of the Lord.
- 6 Though the Lord is high above, he pays attention to the lowly; but he recognizes the proud a long way off.
- 7 Even though I walk into a great deal of trouble, you protect me. You reach out to defend me from the anger of those who hate me—your strong hand saves me.
- 8 The Lord vindicates me! Lord, your trustworthy love lasts forever! Don't give up on what you have made!‡

139

For the music director. A psalm of David.

- 1 Lord, you have examined me from the inside out—you know everything about me!
- 2 You know when I sit down and when I get up. You know what I'm thinking even when I'm a long way away.
- 3 You observe where I go and when I rest. You're familiar with everything I do.
- 4 Lord, you even know what I'm going to say before I say it.
- 5 You're always there—behind me, in front of me, and all around me. You place your caring hand on me.
- 6 This amazing knowledge* you have is far beyond me, way beyond my understanding!
- 7 Where can I go that you're not already there? Where can I run to escape your presence?
- 8 If I go up to heaven, you are there. If I lie down in Sheol,† look—you are there too!
- 9 If I were to fly away on wings of the dawn to the east; if I were to live on the far western shore of the sea,
- 10 even there your hand would lead me, your right hand would support me.
- 11 If I asked the darkness to hide me, and light to become night around me,
- 12 Even darkness would not be dark for you, and the night would be bright as day, for darkness is like light to you.
- 13 You made me from the inside out,‡ shaping me in my mother's womb.
- 14 I praise you for making me in such an awesome and wonderful way. What you do is incredible—I realize this completely!

† 138:2 Following the thought that here the reference is to “name” as “reputation.” ‡ 138:8 This probably refers to the psalmist, but it could also mean the people of Israel, or God's creation generally. * 139:6 God's knowledge of the psalmist. † 139:8 The place of the dead. ‡ 139:13 Literally, “kidneys,” as representative of internal organs.

- 15 My growing body[§] was not hidden from you as I was formed in secret, as I was intricately put together “in the depths of the earth.”^{*}
- 16 You saw me as an embryo, and in your book all my days were written down—the days that were made for me before any of them existed.
- 17 God, your thoughts are so valuable[†] to me! Taken together, they can't be counted!
- 18 If I tried to count them, they would be more than every grain of sand. Yet when I awake[‡] I am still with you.
- 19 God, if you would only kill the wicked! Murderers,[§] get away from me!
- 20 When they speak of you they're being deceptively evil. Since they are your enemies, they call on you in vain.
- 21 Lord, don't I hate those who hate you? I despise those who rebel against you!
- 22 I hate them with absolute hatred—they have become my enemies!
- 23 Examine me carefully, God, so you can be sure of my true feelings. Check me out so you can know what I really think.
- 24 Please show me if I'm following any kind of idol, and lead me along the path of eternal life.

140

For the music director. A psalm of David.

- 1 Lord, please save me from those who do evil; protect me especially from those who are violent!
- 2 Their minds are busy plotting evil things, stirring up trouble all day long.
- 3 Their tongues are as sharp as those of snakes; viper's venom is on their lips. Selah.
- 4 Lord, please keep me from falling into the hands of the wicked; protect me especially from those who are violent, who are plotting my downfall.
- 5 Proud people have hidden a trap for me—they have strung out a net on the path, they have set snares to catch me. Selah.
- 6 I told the Lord, “You are my God! Lord, please listen to my cries for help!”
- 7 Lord God, my powerful Savior, you covered my head like a helmet^{*} on the day of battle.
- 8 God, don't allow the wicked to get what they want—don't let them be successful in what they plan so they don't become proud. Selah.
- 9 May the harm spoken against me by those who surround me fall back on them,[†]

§ 139:15 “My growing body,” literally, “my bones.” * 139:15 “In the depths of the earth”: this may relate to a belief that children were formed in the earth before entering the womb, or it may simply be a metaphor for the womb. In any case the point being made is that God observed the process that is hidden from human eyes. † 139:17 Or “challenging.” ‡ 139:18 “Awake”: or “come to an end of counting.” § 139:19 Literally, “men of blood.” * 140:7 “Like a helmet”: implied. † 140:9 The meaning of the Hebrew is unclear.

- 10 Let burning coals rain down on them! Let them be thrown into the fire, or into bottomless pits, never to rise again.
- 11 Don't let people who slander others live in our land. May disaster strike down violent people.
- 12 Yet I know the Lord defends the rights of those who are persecuted, and gives justice to the poor.
- 13 Truly those who live right are thankful for the kind of person you are,[‡] and those who are honest[§] will live in your presence.

141

A psalm of David.

- 1 Lord, I'm calling out to you! Please hurry up and help me! Please listen to me when I cry out to you!
- 2 May my prayer be like incense before you, my uplifted hands like an evening offering.
- 3 Lord, make sure I don't say anything I shouldn't—keep a watch over my conversations.
- 4 Don't let me think about evil things or take part in doing anything wrong with wicked people. I won't join in eating fancy food at their feasts.*
- 5 Let a good person punish me in love—let them correct me. It will be like an anointing—I won't refuse it. But I still pray against those who do evil.†
- 6 They shall be thrown down by the power of the rock that judges them, and then they will recognize what I said was true!
- 7 Just as the earth is broken up by the plough, so shall their bones be scattered at the mouth of Sheol.‡
- 8 But I'm looking to you, Lord God, for I find protection in you. Don't let me die!
- 9 Keep me safe from the traps they have set to catch me, from the snares of evil people.
- 10 Let them fall into their own traps while I pass by unharmed.

142

A maskil of David, when he was in the cave. A prayer.

- 1 I call out to the Lord for help; pleading with the Lord for mercy.
- 2 I pour out my complaints before him; I tell him what's troubling me.
- 3 When I'm totally discouraged, you know the direction I should take. But whichever way I go, people set traps for me.
- 4 I look to my right for someone to support me—but no one pays me any attention. There's no safe place for me—no one cares about me at all.
- 5 I cry out to you, Lord, for help, saying, "You are the one who keeps me safe; you are all I need in life.*"

‡ 140:13 "Kind of person you are": literally, "your name." § 140:13 "Those who are honest": literally "the upright." * 141:4 This may refer to pagan festivals. † 141:5 The Hebrew in this verse and the next is not clear. ‡ 141:7 The place of the dead. This may mean they do not receive a proper burial. * 142:5 Literally, "you are my portion in the land of the living."

- ⁶ Please listen to my sad cry, for I'm feeling very low. Please save me from those who are after me, for they're too strong for me.
- ⁷ Release me from my prison so I can praise you for the person you are! Those who live right will gather round me because you have treated me so well."

143

A psalm of David.

- ¹ Lord, please hear my prayer. Because you are faithful, please listen to my appeal for mercy. Answer me because you do what is right!
- ² Please don't place me, your servant, on trial, because nobody is innocent in your sight.
- ³ The enemy has chased me down. He crushes me to the ground. He makes me live in darkness like those who died a long time ago.
- ⁴ I sense myself fading away inside; I am overwhelmed by a sense of desolation.
- ⁵ I think of days long ago, and as I meditate I talk to myself about all you have done, I reflect on what you have accomplished.
- ⁶ I stretch out my hands to you, thirsting for you like dried-out land. Selah.
- ⁷ Please answer me quickly, Lord! I'm dying! Don't turn away otherwise I'll be just like those who are going down into the grave.
- ⁸ Tell me every morning about your trustworthy love, because I put my confidence in you. Show me the way I should go, because I dedicate myself to you.
- ⁹ Save me from those who hate me, Lord—I run to you for protection.
- ¹⁰ Teach me your will for you are my God. May your spirit of goodness lead me and make my way smooth.
- ¹¹ Because of the kind of person you are, let me go on living. Because you always do what's right, get me out of the trouble I'm in.
- ¹² In your trustworthy love, get rid of those who hate me, destroy all my enemies, for I am your servant.

144

A psalm of David.

- ¹ Praise the Lord—he is my rock. He trains me for battle, he gives me skill for war.
- ² He is the one who faithfully loves me, protects me, and defends me. He is the one who rescues me, shields me from danger, and keeps me safe. He defeats nations and places them under my rule.
- ³ Lord, what are human beings that you should care about them? What are people that you should concern yourself with them?
- ⁴ Humanity is like a breath; their lives are like a passing shadow.
- ⁵ Part your heavens and come down.* Touch the mountains so that they give off smoke.
- ⁶ Scatter your enemies[†] with flashes of lightning! Let your arrows fly and send them running in confusion!

* **144:5** See Psalms 18:9. † **144:6** "You enemies": implied.

- 7 Stretch down your hand from heaven and set me free. Rescue me from raging waters, from the oppression of foreign enemies.
- 8 They are such liars, even telling lies under oath.‡
- 9 God, I will sing a new song to you, accompanied by a ten-stringed harp,
- 10 to you, the one who gives victory to kings. You saved your servant David from death by the sword.
- 11 Set me free. Rescue me from the oppression of foreign enemies. They are such liars, even telling lies under oath.
- 12 Then our sons will grow up like plants in their youth and become mature, and our daughters will be like beautiful pillars carved to support a palace.
- 13 Our storehouses will be full of all kinds of crops; our flocks of sheep will grow by thousands, increasing by tens of thousands in the pastures.
- 14 Our cattle will grow fat. No one will break down our city walls, there will be no exile, no cries of mourning in our town squares.
- 15 The people who live like this will be happy. Happy are those whose God is the Lord.

145

A psalm of David. A song of praise.

- 1 I will glorify you, my God and King! I will praise who you are forever and ever!
- 2 I will praise you every day; I will praise your character forever and ever!
- 3 The Lord is great and deserves much praise! His greatness cannot be measured!
- 4 Let every generation tell the next all that you do, sharing the stories of your amazing miracles!
- 5 They will speak* of your majesty, your glorious splendor, and I will meditate on the wonderful things you have done.
- 6 They will speak of the power of your awesome actions, and I will say how wonderful you are.
- 7 They will explain to everyone how famous you are for your tremendous goodness, and joyfully celebrate how you always do what is right.
- 8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, not easily angered, and full of trustworthy love.
- 9 The Lord is good to everyone, and he shows mercy to all his created beings.
- 10 All the created beings will thank you, Lord, and all who faithfully follow you will praise you.
- 11 They will praise the glory of your kingdom, and talk about your power.
- 12 They will explain to people your wonderful miracles, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

‡ 144:8 Literally, “their right hand is a right hand of falsehood”—referring to the practice of raising the right hand when swearing an oath. * 145:5 “They will speak”: Qumran text.

- 13 Your kingdom never ends, and your rule continues for all generations. What the Lord promises can always be trusted; he is merciful in all he does.†
- 14 The Lord helps up all those who fall down; he lifts up all those who are bowed down.
- 15 All eyes are on you, waiting in hope, and you give food at just the right time.
- 16 You give generously and satisfy the needs of every living thing.
- 17 The Lord does right in everything—his actions are always trustworthy.
- 18 The Lord is close to all who ask for his help, to all who ask in sincerity.
- 19 He satisfies the needs of those who follow him. He hears their cries for help and he saves them.
- 20 The Lord takes care of all those who love him, but he will destroy all those who are wicked.
- 21 I will speak in praise of the Lord, and may everyone honor his holy character, forever and ever.

146

- 1 Praise the Lord! With my whole being I praise the Lord!
- 2 I will praise the Lord while I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have breath.
- 3 Don't put your confidence in human leaders—they cannot save you.
- 4 Once they breathe no more, they go back to dust. On that very day everything they planned dies with them.
- 5 Happy are those who have the God of Jacob to help them—their hope is in the Lord their God—
- 6 the one who made heaven and earth, and the sea along with everything it contains. He is trustworthy forever.
- 7 He makes sure the oppressed receive justice. He gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free.
- 8 The Lord makes the blind see. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down. The Lord loves those who do what is right.
- 9 The Lord takes care of strangers among us. He looks after widows and orphans. But he makes life difficult for the wicked.
- 10 The Lord will reign forever. Zion, he will be your God for all generations. Praise the Lord!

147

- 1 Praise the Lord, for it's good to sing praises to our God! Praise is wonderful and beautiful!
- 2 The Lord is rebuilding Jerusalem, gathering together the people of Israel who have been scattered.
- 3 He heals the broken-hearted, and bandages the wounded.
- 4 He knows how many stars he made, and commands all of them by name.

† 145:13 The second half of this verse is found in the Septuagint and the Syriac version, and also in the Qumran text. Since this poem is an acrostic, each verse beginning with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet, these lines provide the missing letter (nun).

- 5 Our Lord is great! His power is immense! There's no limit to what he understands!
- 6 The Lord helps those who are bowed down to get up; but he grinds the wicked into the ground.
- 7 Sing thanks to the Lord! Sing praises to our God with a harp!
- 8 He covers the sky with clouds to bring rain to the earth, and makes the grass grow on the hills.
- 9 He gives food to the animals, and to the baby ravens when they call.
- 10 The Lord doesn't appreciate the strength of war-horses or value human power.*
- 11 What the Lord values are those who follow him, those who put their confidence in his trustworthy love.
- 12 Jerusalem, praise the Lord! Zion, praise your God!
- 13 He makes the bars on your city gates strong, and blesses your children around you.
- 14 He keeps the borders of your land safe from attack; he provides you with plenty of the finest wheat.
- 15 He sends his commands around the world—they're quickly implemented.
- 16 He sends snow as white as wool, and scatters frost like ashes.
- 17 He throws hail like stones.† Who can stand the cold he sends?
- 18 Then he sends out his command and it melts; he blows‡ on it and the water flows.
- 19 He proclaims his word to Jacob; his rules and laws to Israel.
- 20 He has not done this for any other nation—they don't know his laws. Praise the Lord!

148

- 1 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from heaven; praise him in the heights above!
- 2 Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly armies!
- 3 Praise him, sun and moon! Praise him, all you shining stars!
- 4 Praise him, highest heavens, and the waters above the heavens!*
- 5 Let them all praise the Lord and his nature,† for he gave the order and they were created.
- 6 He placed them in their positions forever and ever; he established a law that will never end.
- 7 Praise the Lord from the earth, and creatures from all the depths of the seas,
- 8 lightning‡ and hail, snow and clouds, and stormy wind—everything that does as he commands.
- 9 Mountains and all the hills, fruit trees and all the trees of the forest,
- 10 wild animals and all livestock, crawling animals and wild birds,
- 11 earthly kings and all peoples, leaders and rulers of the world,
- 12 young men and women, old people and children—

* **147:10** The psalmist is contrasting reliance on human force such as a powerful army with God, the true source of strength, as shown by the following verse. † **147:17** "Stones": literally, "pieces of bread." ‡ **147:18** "Blows": or, "sends his winds." * **148:4** Understood as the heavenly dome above, where rain came from. † **148:5** Literally, "name." ‡ **148:8** Or "fire."

- 13 Let them all praise the Lord, for his reputation[§] is unequalled; his glory is above anything on earth or in heaven.
- 14 He has given his people a source of strength,* bringing praise to his faithful followers, the people of Israel who are dear to him. Praise the Lord!

149

- 1 Praise the Lord! Sing a new song to the Lord! Praise him wherever his faithful followers gather!
- 2 Let Israel celebrate their Creator; let the people of Zion be happy in their King.
- 3 Praise his nature with dancing; sing praises to him, accompanied by tambourine and harp.
- 4 For the Lord enjoys his people; he honors the oppressed with salvation.
- 5 Let the faithful celebrate how he honors them; let them sing happily even from their beds.
- 6 May their praises of God always be on their lips, a double-edged sword in their hands,
- 7 ready to take revenge on the nations, to punish the foreign peoples,
- 8 to imprison their kings in shackles and their leaders in iron chains,
- 9 to impose the judgment decreed against them. This is an honor for all his faithful followers. Praise the Lord!

150

- 1 Praise the Lord! Praise God in his holy place!* Praise him in the great expanse of heaven!
- 2 Praise him for the amazing things he does! Praise him for how wonderfully great he is!
- 3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet, praise him with harp and lyre!
- 4 Praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with strings and flutes!
- 5 Praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with really loud cymbals!
- 6 Let everything that breathes praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

[§] 148:13 Literally, "name." * 148:14 Literally, "he has raised up a horn for his people."

* 150:1 Or "sanctuary."