

# Matthew

<sup>1</sup> This book is the record of Jesus the Messiah,\* the son of David, the son of Abraham, beginning with the family line:

<sup>2</sup> Abraham was the father† of Isaac; and Isaac the father of Jacob; and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers;

<sup>3</sup> and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah (their mother was Tamar); and Perez the father of Hezron; and Hezron the father of Ram;

<sup>4</sup> and Ram the father of Amminadab; and Amminadab the father of Nahshon; and Nahshon the father of Salmon;

<sup>5</sup> 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;

<sup>6</sup> and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon (his mother had been Uriah's wife);

<sup>7</sup> and Solomon the father of Rehoboam; and Rehoboam the father of Abijah; and Abijah the father of Asa;

<sup>8</sup> and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat; and Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram; and Jehoram the father of Uzziah;

<sup>9</sup> and Uzziah the father of Jotham; and Jotham the father of Ahaz; and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah;

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\* **1:1** Or "Christ." Christ is the Greek word for Messiah in Hebrew. † **1:2** "Was the father of": or "fathered."

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.

<sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son and you shall call him Jesus, for he will save people from their sins.”

<sup>22</sup> (Now this all happened to fulfill what the Lord said through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> “A virgin will become pregnant, and will give birth to a son. They will call him Immanuel,” which means “God with us.”)‡

<sup>24</sup> Joseph woke up and did what the angel of the Lord told him to do.

<sup>25</sup> Joseph married Mary, but did not sleep with her until after she had given birth to a son, whom he named Jesus.

## 2

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

<sup>2</sup> “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.”

<sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard about it, he was very disturbed, and the whole of Jerusalem with him.

<sup>4</sup> Herod summoned all the chief priests and religious teachers of the people, and asked them where the Messiah was supposed to be born.

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‡ 1:23 See Isaiah 7:14. \* 2:1 Or “Magi.” These are believed to be religious priest-rulers, probably from Persia, who studied the stars.

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,

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† 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.

“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.”

<sup>14</sup> So Joseph got up and took the boy and his mother, and left during the night for Egypt.

<sup>15</sup> They stayed there until Herod's death. This fulfilled what the Lord said through the prophet, “I called my son out of Egypt.”\*

<sup>16</sup> 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.†

<sup>17</sup> In this way Jeremiah's prophecy was fulfilled:

<sup>18</sup> “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.”‡

<sup>19</sup> After Herod died the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and told him,

<sup>20</sup> “Get up! Take the child and his mother, and return to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead.”

<sup>21</sup> So Joseph got up and took the boy and his mother, and returned to the land of Israel.

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\* **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.

<sup>22</sup> 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

<sup>23</sup> and settled down in Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said, “He will be called a Nazarene.”§

### 3

<sup>1</sup> Some time later John the Baptist appeared on the scene, proclaiming in the Judean desert,

<sup>2</sup> “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has arrived!”

<sup>3</sup> 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.’ ”\*

<sup>4</sup> John had clothes made of camel hair, with a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts† and wild honey.

<sup>5</sup> People came to him from Jerusalem, all of Judea, and the entire Jordan region,

<sup>6</sup> and were baptized in the Jordan River, publicly admitting their sins.

<sup>7</sup> 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?‡

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§ **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.”

<sup>8</sup> Show by what you do that you have truly repented,§

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> 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."

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John.

<sup>14</sup> 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?"

<sup>15</sup> "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.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

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§ 3:8 Literally, "Produce fruit worthy of repentance." \* 3:12  
Used after harvest to separate the grain from the chaff.

17 A voice from heaven said, “This is my son whom I love,<sup>†</sup> who pleases me.”

## 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<sup>†</sup> 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.’ ”<sup>‡</sup>

7 Jesus answered, “As Scripture also says, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’ ”<sup>§</sup>

8 Then the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in all their glory.

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<sup>†</sup> 3:17 Or “This is my son, the beloved one.”      \* 4:4 Quoting Deuteronomy 8:3.    <sup>†</sup> 4:5 Referring to Jerusalem.    <sup>‡</sup> 4:6 Quoting Psalms 91:11-12.    <sup>§</sup> 4:7 Quoting Deuteronomy 6:16.



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.

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\* **4:10** Quoting Deuteronomy 6:13. † **4:16** Quoting Isaiah 9:1-2.

<sup>21</sup> 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.‡

<sup>22</sup> They left the boat and their father immediately, and followed him.

<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> 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.

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

## 5

<sup>1</sup> When Jesus saw the crowds following him he went up a mountain. There he sat down together with his disciples.

<sup>2</sup> He began teaching them, saying:

<sup>3</sup> “Blessed are those who recognize they are spiritually poor, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

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‡ 4:21 “To follow him,” implied. § 4:24 The area to the north of Galilee.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed are those who are kind\* for they will own the whole world.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed are those whose greatest desire† is to do what is right, for they will be satisfied.

<sup>7</sup> Blessed are those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

<sup>8</sup> Blessed are those who have pure minds, for they will see God.

<sup>9</sup> Blessed are those who work to bring peace, for they will be called children of God.

<sup>10</sup> Blessed are those persecuted for what is right, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

<sup>11</sup> Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and accuse you of all kinds of evil things because of me.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill can't be hidden.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

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\* **5:5** Meaning meek, mild tempered. † **5:6** Literally, “those who are hungry and thirsty.” ‡ **5:13** Or “useless.”

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 answer to the

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§ 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.

council,<sup>§</sup> but whoever verbally abuses others is liable to the fire of judgment.\*

<sup>23</sup> If you're at the altar making an offering, and remember that your brother has something against you,

<sup>24</sup> leave your offering on the altar and go and make peace with him first, and afterwards come back and make your offering.

<sup>25</sup> 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.

<sup>26</sup> I tell you the truth: you won't get out of there until you've paid every last penny.

<sup>27</sup> You've heard that the law said, 'Do not commit adultery.'<sup>†</sup>

<sup>28</sup> But I tell you that everyone who looks lustfully at a woman has already committed adultery with her in his mind.

<sup>29</sup> 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.

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<sup>§</sup> **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.

<sup>30</sup> 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.

<sup>31</sup> The law also said, 'If a man divorces his wife, he should give her a certificate of divorce.'<sup>‡</sup>

<sup>32</sup> 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.

<sup>33</sup> 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.'<sup>§</sup>

<sup>34</sup> But I tell you, don't swear at all. Don't swear by heaven, because it's the throne of God.

<sup>35</sup> 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.

<sup>36</sup> Don't even swear by your head, because you're not able to make a single hair white or black.

<sup>37</sup> Simply say yes or no—more than this comes from the evil one.

<sup>38</sup> You've heard that the law said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.'<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>39</sup> 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.

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<sup>‡</sup> **5:31** Quoting Deuteronomy 24:1.    <sup>§</sup> **5:33** Quoting Numbers 30:2.    <sup>\*</sup> **5:38** Quoting Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21.

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 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.

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† 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.

\* 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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> When you give to the poor, don't let your left hand know what your right hand's doing.

<sup>4</sup> That way what you give will be in secret, and your Father who sees what happens in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> Don't be like them, for your Father knows what you need even before you ask him.

<sup>9</sup> So pray like this:

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\* **6:2** A word taken from the Greek which literally means "play-acting."



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,<sup>†</sup> 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.

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<sup>†</sup> 6:13 Or "Please help us not to give in to temptation."

<sup>22</sup> The eye is like a lamp that lights the body. So if your eye is healthy,<sup>‡</sup> then your whole body will have light.

<sup>23</sup> 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!

<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>§</sup>

<sup>25</sup> 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?

<sup>26</sup> 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?

<sup>27</sup> Who of you by worrying can add a minute to your life?

<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory was dressed like one of these flowers.

<sup>30</sup> So if God decorates the fields like this, grass which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into

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<sup>‡</sup> **6:22** Or “good, innocent.” <sup>§</sup> **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.

the fire, won't he do much more for you, you people who trust so little?

<sup>31</sup> So don't worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

<sup>32</sup> These are all the things that the heathen chase after, but your heavenly Father knows everything you need.

<sup>33</sup> Seek his kingdom first, and his way of living right, and everything will be given to you.

<sup>34</sup> So don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow can worry about itself. There's already enough evil in every day.

## 7

<sup>1</sup> Don't judge others, so that you won't be judged.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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?

<sup>4</sup> 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?

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.\*

<sup>8</sup> Everyone who asks, receives; everyone who seeks, finds; and everyone who knocks has the door opened for them.

<sup>9</sup> Would any of you give your son a stone if he asked for bread?

<sup>10</sup> Or if he asked for fish, would you give him a snake?

<sup>11</sup> So if even you who are evil know to give good things to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him.

<sup>12</sup> Treat others the way you want them to treat you. This sums up the law and the prophets.

<sup>13</sup> Enter by the narrow entrance. For the entrance is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many travel that way.

<sup>14</sup> But the entrance is narrow, and the way is difficult that leads to life, and only a few find it.

<sup>15</sup> Watch out for false prophets who come wearing sheep's clothing, but who on the inside are vicious wolves.

<sup>16</sup> You can recognize them by their fruits.† Do people harvest grapes from thorn bushes, or figs

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\* **7:7** In the original these are present imperatives, and could be translated "Keep on asking" etc. † **7:16** In other words, you can recognize them by the results of what they do.

from thistles?

<sup>17</sup> So every good tree produces good fruit, while a bad tree produces bad fruit.

<sup>18</sup> A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit.

<sup>19</sup> Every tree that doesn't produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>20</sup> So you'll recognize them by their fruits.

<sup>21</sup> Not everyone who calls me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven—only those who do the will of my Father in heaven.

<sup>22</sup> 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?'

<sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them, 'I never knew you. Leave me, you people who practice wickedness!'<sup>‡</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Everyone that hears the words I say, and follows them, is like a wise man who built his house on solid rock.

<sup>25</sup> 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.

<sup>26</sup> Everyone that hears the words I say, and doesn't follow them, is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

<sup>27</sup> The rain poured down, and the floods rose, and the winds blew hard against the house, and it fell down—it totally collapsed."

<sup>28</sup> When Jesus finished explaining these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching,

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<sup>‡</sup> **7:23** See Psalms 6:8.

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, worshipping 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.

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."

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\* **8:4** Proof that he had been healed and was ceremonially clean. See Leviticus 14.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> But the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown out into utter darkness where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth."

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> When Jesus arrived at Peter's house, he saw that Peter's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever.

<sup>15</sup> He touched her hand and the fever left her. She got up and began making him a meal.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> This fulfilled what the prophet Isaiah said: "He healed our diseases, and freed us from our illnesses."<sup>†</sup>

<sup>18</sup> When Jesus saw the crowds around him, he gave instructions that they<sup>‡</sup> should go to the other side of the lake.

<sup>19</sup> One of the religious teachers approached him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go!"

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<sup>†</sup> **8:17** Quoting Isaiah 53:4.    <sup>‡</sup> **8:18** "They" meaning Jesus and the disciples.

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.

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§ 8:20 Literally, “lay down his head.”



<sup>31</sup> The demons pleaded with him, "If you're going to drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs."

<sup>32</sup> "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.

<sup>33</sup> 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.

<sup>34</sup> The whole town came out to meet Jesus. When they found him, they begged him to leave their district.

## 9

<sup>1</sup> So Jesus took a boat back across the lake to the town where he lived.

<sup>2</sup> 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."

<sup>3</sup> In response some of the religious teachers said to themselves, "He's speaking blasphemy!"

<sup>4</sup> But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He asked them, "Why are you thinking evil thoughts in your minds?"

<sup>5</sup> What is easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Get up and walk'?

<sup>6</sup> But to convince you that the Son of man does have the authority to forgive sins..." he said to

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\* **9:2** Literally, "child."

the paralyzed man, “Get up, pick up your mat, and go home!”

<sup>7</sup> The man got up and went home.

<sup>8</sup> When the crowds saw what had happened, they were scared. Then they praised God that he had given human beings such power.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> When the Pharisees saw this they asked Jesus' disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax-collectors and sinners?”

<sup>12</sup> When Jesus heard the question, he replied, “Those who are well don't need a doctor, but sick people do.

<sup>13</sup> 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.’”<sup>†</sup>

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

<sup>15</sup> “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.

<sup>16</sup> No one puts a new patch on old clothes, otherwise it will shrink and make the tear worse.

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<sup>†</sup> 9:13 Quoting Hosea 6:6.

<sup>17</sup> 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.”

<sup>18</sup> 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.”

<sup>19</sup> Jesus and his disciples got up and followed him.

<sup>20</sup> At that moment a woman who had been sick with bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the hem of his cloak.

<sup>21</sup> She had told herself, “If I can just touch his cloak, I’ll be healed.”

<sup>22</sup> Jesus turned and saw her. “Be happy, for your trust in me has healed you,” he told her.‡ The woman was immediately healed.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus arrived at the official's house. He saw the flute-players and the crowd that was weeping loudly.

<sup>24</sup> “Please leave,” he told them, “For the girl isn't dead, she's just asleep.” But they laughed and made fun of him.

<sup>25</sup> But once the crowd had been sent out, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up.

<sup>26</sup> News of what happened spread throughout that region.

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‡ **9:22** Jesus calls her “daughter,” but such a form of address is not usual in modern English.

<sup>27</sup> As Jesus continued on from there, two blind men followed him, shouting, “Son of David, please have mercy on us!”

<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> Then Jesus touched their eyes, and said, “Because of your trust in me it will happen!”

<sup>30</sup> And they could see. Then Jesus warned them, “Make sure nobody knows about this.”

<sup>31</sup> But they went and spread the word about Jesus everywhere.

<sup>32</sup> As Jesus and his disciples were leaving, a man was brought to him who was dumb and demon-possessed.

<sup>33</sup> 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.

<sup>34</sup> But the Pharisees remarked, “He throws out demons using the power of the chief of demons.”

<sup>35</sup> 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.

<sup>36</sup> When he saw the crowds, Jesus was deeply moved with compassion for them, because they were troubled and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

<sup>37</sup> He told his disciples, “The harvest is large, but there are only a few workers.

<sup>38</sup> Pray to the Lord of the harvest, and ask him to send more workers for his harvest.”

## 10

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

<sup>2</sup> These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, (also called Peter), Andrew his brother, James the son of Zebedee, John his brother,

<sup>3</sup> Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew the tax-collector, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus,

<sup>4</sup> Simon the revolutionary, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus.

<sup>5</sup> These Twelve Jesus sent out, telling them, “Don't go to the foreigners, or to any Samaritan city.

<sup>6</sup> You are to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

<sup>7</sup> Wherever you go, tell the people, ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’

<sup>8</sup> Heal those who are sick. Resurrect the dead. Cure the lepers. Drive out demons. You received freely, so give freely!

<sup>9</sup> Don't carry any gold, silver, or copper coins in your pockets,

<sup>10</sup> or a bag for your journey, or two cloaks, or sandals, or a walking stick, for a worker deserves to be supported.\*

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\* **10:10** Or “fed.”

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<sup>†</sup> 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<sup>‡</sup> 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.

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<sup>†</sup> **10:13** "Peace," meaning blessing.    <sup>‡</sup> **10:17** Literally, "sanhedrins," local religious courts.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> Everyone will hate you because you follow me, but those who endure until the end will be saved.

<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> Disciples are not more important than their teacher; servants are not more important than their master.

<sup>25</sup> 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 Beelzebub,<sup>§</sup> then the members of his household will be demonized even more!

<sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> 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.

<sup>28</sup> 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.\*

<sup>29</sup> Aren't two sparrows sold for just one penny? But not a single one of them falls to the ground

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<sup>§</sup> **10:25** Beelzebub, referring to Satan.   \* **10:28** Literally, "the fires of Gehenna." See note under 5:22.

without your Father knowing about it.

<sup>30</sup> Even the hairs on your head have all been counted.

<sup>31</sup> So don't worry—you're worth more than many sparrows!

<sup>32</sup> Anyone who publicly declares their commitment<sup>†</sup> to me, I will also declare my commitment to them before my Father in heaven.

<sup>33</sup> But anyone who publicly denies me, I will also deny before my Father in heaven.

<sup>34</sup> Don't think I've come to bring peace on earth. I haven't come to bring peace, but a sword.

<sup>35</sup> I've come 'to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

<sup>36</sup> Your enemies will be those of your own family!<sup>‡</sup>

<sup>37</sup> 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.

<sup>38</sup> If you don't pick up your cross and follow me you don't deserve to be mine.

<sup>39</sup> If you try to save your life, you will lose it,<sup>§</sup> but if you lose your life because of me you will save it.

<sup>40</sup> Those who welcome you welcome me, and those who welcome me welcome the one that sent me.

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<sup>†</sup> **10:32** Literally, “confess.”    <sup>‡</sup> **10:36** Referencing Micah 7:6.

<sup>§</sup> **10:39** In other words, if you try to hold on to your life by your own human effort, you will not succeed.



<sup>41</sup> 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.

<sup>42</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> When Jesus had finished giving instructions to his twelve disciples, he left to go and teach and speak publicly in the nearby towns.

<sup>2</sup> While John was in prison he heard what the Messiah was doing, so he sent his disciples

<sup>3</sup> to ask on his behalf, "Are you the one we were expecting to come, or should we continue to look for someone else?"

<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered them, "Go back and tell John what you hear and what you see.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who don't reject me!"

<sup>7</sup> 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?

<sup>8</sup> So what did you go to see? A man dressed in fancy clothes? People dressed like that live in kings' palaces.

<sup>9</sup> So what did you go to see then? A prophet? Yes, and I tell you he is much more than a prophet!

<sup>10</sup> 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.'\*

<sup>11</sup> I tell you the truth, that among humanity<sup>†</sup> there's no one greater than John the Baptist, but even the least important in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> For all the prophets and the law<sup>‡</sup> spoke for God until John came.

<sup>14</sup> If you're prepared to believe it, he is Elijah, the one who was expected to come.§

<sup>15</sup> Anybody with ears should be listening!

<sup>16</sup> What shall I compare this generation to? It's like children sitting in the market places shouting to each other,

<sup>17</sup> 'We played the flute for you and you didn't dance; we sang sad songs and you didn't cry.'

<sup>18</sup> John didn't come feasting and drinking, so people say, 'He's devil-possessed!'

<sup>19</sup> 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; he's a friend of tax

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\* **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.

collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is shown to be right by what it does..."

<sup>20</sup> Then he began to reprimand the towns where he'd done most of his miracles because they had not repented.

<sup>21</sup> "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.

<sup>22</sup> But I tell you that on the Day of Judgment it will be better for Tyre and Sidon than it will for you!

<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> But I tell you that on the Day of Judgment it will be better for Sodom than it will for you!"

<sup>25</sup> 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.\*

<sup>26</sup> Yes, Father, you were pleased to do this!

<sup>27</sup> 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.

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\* **11:25** Literally, "infants."

<sup>28</sup> Come to me, all of you who struggle and who are burdened down. I will give you rest.

<sup>29</sup> 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.

<sup>30</sup> For my yoke is gentle, and my burden is light.”

## 12

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> When the Pharisees saw this they said to Jesus, “Look at your disciples—they're doing what isn't allowed on the Sabbath!”

<sup>3</sup> But Jesus told them, “Haven't you read what David did when he and his men were hungry?”

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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?

<sup>6</sup> However, I tell you that someone is here who is greater than the Temple!

<sup>7</sup> If you'd known the meaning of this Scripture, ‘I want mercy, and not sacrifice,’\* you wouldn't have condemned an innocent man.

<sup>8</sup> For the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

<sup>9</sup> Then Jesus left and went into their synagogue.

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\* **12:7** Quoting Hosea 6:6.

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 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.”‡

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† 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.

<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> All the crowds were amazed, and asked, “Could this really be the son of David?”<sup>§</sup>

<sup>24</sup> But when the Pharisees heard this, they replied, “This man can only throw out demons through the power of Beelzebub, the chief of demons!”

<sup>25</sup> 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.

<sup>26</sup> If Satan drives out Satan, then he's divided against himself—so how could his kingdom stand?

<sup>27</sup> If I'm throwing out demons in the name of Beelzebub, in whose name are your people throwing out demons? Your own people prove you're wrong!

<sup>28</sup> But if I'm throwing out demons through the power of the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you!

<sup>29</sup> 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.

<sup>30</sup> Those who are not with me are against me, and those who do not gather together with me do the opposite: they are scattering.

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<sup>§</sup> **12:23** Meaning the Messiah who was expected to come.

<sup>31</sup> 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.

<sup>32</sup> 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.

<sup>33</sup> 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.

<sup>34</sup> 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.

<sup>35</sup> 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.

<sup>36</sup> I tell you, people will have to account for every careless thing they say on the Day of Judgment.

<sup>37</sup> For what you say will either vindicate you or condemn you."

<sup>38</sup> Then some of the religious teachers and Pharisees came to him and said, "Teacher, we want you to show us a miraculous sign."

<sup>39</sup> "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.

<sup>40</sup> "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.

<sup>41</sup> 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!

<sup>42</sup> 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!

<sup>43</sup> When an evil spirit leaves someone, it wanders through deserted places looking for rest, and finds nowhere to stay.

<sup>44</sup> 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.

<sup>45</sup> 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."

<sup>46</sup> While he was speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers arrived and stood outside, wanting to talk to him.

<sup>47</sup> Someone came and told him, "Look, your mother and brothers are outside, wanting to talk to you."

<sup>48</sup> "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" Jesus asked.

<sup>49</sup> 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?”

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\* 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<sup>‡</sup> 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.

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‡ **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.

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> The seeds sown on stony ground are people who hear the message and happily accept it straight away.

<sup>21</sup> They last for a while, but because they don't have roots, when problems and troubles come, they quickly fall away.

<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> 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.”

<sup>24</sup> Then he told them another illustrated story: “The kingdom of heaven is like a farmer who sowed good seeds in his field.

<sup>25</sup> But while his workers were sleeping, an enemy came and sowed weed seeds† on top of the wheat. Then they left.

<sup>26</sup> So when the wheat grew and produced ears of grain, the weeds also grew up.

<sup>27</sup> The farmer's workers came and asked him, ‘Sir, didn't you sow good seeds in your field? Where did the weeds come from?’

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† **13:25** Actually “darnel,” or “false wheat,” a weed that looked similar to wheat.

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."

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."

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‡ 13:33 Approximately 50 pounds, or 23 kilos. § 13:35 Quoting Psalms 78:2.

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

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\* **13:43** See Daniel 12:3.

ones were thrown away.

<sup>49</sup> 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,

<sup>50</sup> and throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

<sup>51</sup> Now do you understand everything?"

"Yes," they replied.

<sup>52</sup> "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.

<sup>53</sup> After Jesus finished telling these stories, he left.

<sup>54</sup> He went back to his home town<sup>†</sup> and taught in the synagogue there. People were amazed, and asked, "Where does he get his wisdom and miracles from?"

<sup>55</sup> Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and his brothers James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas?

<sup>56</sup> Don't his sisters live here among us? So where does he get all this from?"

<sup>57</sup> And so they refused to believe in him.

"A prophet is honored everywhere except in his homeland and in his family," Jesus told them.

<sup>58</sup> Since they failed to trust in him, he did not do many miracles there.

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<sup>†</sup> **13:54** Nazareth.

# 14

<sup>1</sup> At that time Herod the tetrarch\* heard what Jesus was doing

<sup>2</sup> and he told his servants, “He must be John the Baptist resurrected from the dead, and that’s why he has such powers!”

<sup>3</sup> Herod had detained John, and had him put in chains and imprisoned on account of Herodias, the wife of Philip, his brother.

<sup>4</sup> For John had told him, “It’s not legal for you to marry her.”

<sup>5</sup> Herod wanted to kill John but he was afraid of the people’s reaction for they considered John a prophet.

<sup>6</sup> However, on Herod’s birthday the daughter† of Herodias danced for the party, and Herod was delighted with her.

<sup>7</sup> So he promised with an oath to give her whatever she wanted.

<sup>8</sup> Prompted by her mother, she said, “Give me here on a plate the head of John the Baptist.”

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> The order was passed on and John was beheaded in prison.

<sup>11</sup> John’s head was brought on a plate and given to the girl, who took it to her mother.

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\* **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.

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.



<sup>23</sup> After he'd sent the crowds away, he went up into the mountains to pray. Evening came and he was there all alone.

<sup>24</sup> By now the boat was a long way out from land, being pounded by the waves because the wind was blowing against it.

<sup>25</sup> About 3 a.m.<sup>‡</sup> Jesus caught up with them, walking on the sea.

<sup>26</sup> When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified. They screamed out in fear, "It's a ghost!"

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

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

<sup>29</sup> "Come on then," said Jesus. Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water towards Jesus.

<sup>30</sup> But when he saw how strong the wind was, he became scared, and started to sink. "Lord! Save me!" he cried out.

<sup>31</sup> Immediately Jesus reached out and grabbed hold of him, and said, "You have such little trust in me. Why did you doubt?"

<sup>32</sup> When they got into the boat, the wind died down,

<sup>33</sup> and those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "You really are the Son of God!"

<sup>34</sup> After crossing the lake they arrived at Gennesaret.

<sup>35</sup> When the people there realized Jesus was there, they let everyone in the whole area know. They brought all who were sick to him,

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<sup>‡</sup> **14:25** Literally, "the fourth watch of the night."

<sup>36</sup> and pleaded with him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak. Everyone that touched him was healed.

## 15

<sup>1</sup> Then some Pharisees and religious teachers from Jerusalem came to Jesus and asked him,

<sup>2</sup> “Why do your disciples break the tradition of our forefathers by not washing their hands before they eat a meal?”

<sup>3</sup> “Why do you break God's commandment because of your tradition?” Jesus replied.

<sup>4</sup> “For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’\* and ‘Those who curse their father or mother should be put to death.’†

<sup>5</sup> 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

<sup>6</sup> they don't have to honor their father. In this way you've annulled God's word for the sake of your tradition.

<sup>7</sup> You hypocrites! How well Isaiah described you when he prophesied:

<sup>8</sup> “These people say they honor me but in their minds they don't care about me.‡

<sup>9</sup> Their worship of me is pointless. What they teach are just man-made requirements.’ ”§

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\* **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.

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.”

21 Jesus left and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

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\* **15:14** Referring to the Pharisees. † **15:17** Literally, “discharged into the sewer.”

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.

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‡ 15:26 The word used for dogs indicates pet dogs, or puppies.

<sup>32</sup> 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.”

<sup>33</sup> “Where could we find enough bread here in this desert to feed such a huge crowd?” the disciples responded.

<sup>34</sup> “How many loaves of bread do you have?” Jesus asked.

“Seven, and a few small fish,” they replied.

<sup>35</sup> Jesus told the crowd to sit down on the ground.

<sup>36</sup> 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.

<sup>37</sup> Everybody ate until they were full, and then they collected the leftovers, filling seven baskets.

<sup>38</sup> Four thousand men ate the food, not counting women and children.

<sup>39</sup> Then he sent the crowds away, got into a boat, and went to the Magadan region.

## 16

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

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\* **16:1** Since the test was in an attempt to discredit Jesus, this could also be translated “came to trap Jesus.”

<sup>2</sup> Jesus replied, “In the evening you say, ‘It’ll be a fine day tomorrow, because the sky is red,’

<sup>3</sup> 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!

<sup>4</sup> Evil people who don’t trust in God are the 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.

<sup>5</sup> Going to the other side of the lake, the disciples forgot to bring bread with them.

<sup>6</sup> “Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees,” Jesus told them.

<sup>7</sup> The disciples started arguing among themselves. “He’s saying that<sup>†</sup> because we didn’t bring any bread,” they concluded.

<sup>8</sup> 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?”

<sup>9</sup> 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?

<sup>10</sup> And what about the seven loaves that fed the four thousand? How many baskets of leftovers did you collect?

<sup>11</sup> 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!”

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<sup>†</sup> **16:7** Implied.

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,<sup>‡</sup> and on this rock I will build my church and the powers of death<sup>§</sup> 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;

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<sup>‡</sup> **16:18** Peter means "a stone," in contrast to the word for solid rock also used in this verse. <sup>§</sup> **16:18** Literally, "gates of Hades."

and that he would be killed, but he would rise again on the third day.

<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> 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!"

<sup>24</sup> 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.

<sup>25</sup> 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.

<sup>26</sup> What benefit is it for you to gain the whole world, yet lose your life? What would you give in exchange for your life?

<sup>27</sup> For the Son of man is going to come in his Father's glory, together with his angels. Then he will give everyone what they deserve according to what they've done.

<sup>28</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Six days later Jesus took Peter, James and his brother John, with him and they went up a high mountain to be by themselves.

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\* **16:23** Literally, a "stumbling block" or a "snare." † **16:28** Literally, "taste death."



<sup>2</sup> He was transformed in front of them. His face shone like the sun. His clothes turned white as light.

<sup>3</sup> Then suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared before them, talking together with Jesus.

<sup>4</sup> 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.”

<sup>5</sup> 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.”

<sup>6</sup> When they heard this, the disciples fell down on their faces, absolutely terrified.

<sup>7</sup> Jesus went over to them and touched them. “Get up,” he told them. “Don’t be afraid.”

<sup>8</sup> When they looked up they didn’t see anybody there except Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> “So why do the religious teachers say that Elijah has to come first?” his disciples asked.

<sup>11</sup> “It’s true that Elijah comes to put everything in place,” Jesus replied,

<sup>12</sup> “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 ‡

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.

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\* **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.

§ **17:22** Literally, “betrayed into the hands of men.”

<sup>23</sup> They will kill him, but on the third day he will rise again.” The disciples were filled with sadness.

<sup>24</sup> 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?”

<sup>25</sup> “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?”

<sup>26</sup> “From others,” Peter replied. So Jesus told him, “In that case the sons are exempt.

<sup>27</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Around that time the disciples came to Jesus, and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

<sup>2</sup> Jesus called over a small child. He had the child stand in front of them.

<sup>3</sup> “I tell you the truth, unless you change the way you think and become like little children,

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\* **17:27** Worth one shekel. The Temple tax of the time was half a shekel per person.

you won't ever enter the kingdom of heaven," he told them.

<sup>4</sup> "But whoever humbles themselves and becomes like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>5</sup> Whoever accepts a little child like this in my name accepts me.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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!

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> ‡

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\* **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.

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 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<sup>§</sup> 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<sup>†</sup> 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?"

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§ 18:15 Or "fellow believer." \* 18:16 See Deuteronomy 19:15.

† 18:17 Literally, a "Gentile," a non-believer.

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

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‡ 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.

went and told their master everything that had happened.

<sup>32</sup> 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.

<sup>33</sup> Shouldn't you have been merciful to your fellow-servant as well, just as I was merciful to you?'

<sup>34</sup> His master became angry and handed him over to the jailors until he had repaid all the debt.

<sup>35</sup> This is what my heavenly Father will do to every one of you unless you sincerely\* forgive your brothers."

## 19

<sup>1</sup> When Jesus finished speaking he left Galilee and went to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan River.

<sup>2</sup> Large crowds followed him, and he healed those who were sick there.

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

<sup>4</sup> Jesus replied, "Haven't you read that God who created people in the beginning made them male and female?\*

<sup>5</sup> 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.'†

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\* **18:35** Literally, "from your heart." \* **19:4** See Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 5:2. † **19:5** Literally, "one flesh." Quoting Genesis 2:24.

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.

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‡ 19:7 See Deuteronomy 24:1. § 19:11 Literally, "word."



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.

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?"

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\* **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.

<sup>26</sup> Jesus looked at them and said, “From a human point of view it's impossible, but all things are possible with God.”

<sup>27</sup> Peter answered him, “Look, we've left everything and followed you. What reward will we have?”

<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> 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.

<sup>30</sup> For many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

## 20

<sup>1</sup> For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard.

<sup>2</sup> He agreed to pay the workers one denarius for the day, and sent them to work in his vineyard.

<sup>3</sup> Around 9 a.m. he went out and saw others without work standing in the marketplace.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Go and work in the vineyard too, and I'll pay you what's right,’ he told them. So they went to work.

<sup>5</sup> Around noon and 3 p.m. he went out and did the same thing.

<sup>6</sup> At 5 p.m. he went out and found others standing there. 'Why are you standing around all day doing nothing?' he asked them.

<sup>7</sup> 'Because nobody has hired us,' they replied. 'Go and work in the vineyard too,' he told them.

<sup>8</sup> 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.'

<sup>9</sup> When those who were hired at 5 p.m. came in, they each received one denarius.

<sup>10</sup> So when those who were hired first came in, they thought they would get more, but they also received one denarius.

<sup>11</sup> When they received their pay, they complained to the owner.

<sup>12</sup> '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.

<sup>13</sup> 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?'

<sup>14</sup> Take your pay and go. I want to pay those who were hired last the same as I paid you.

<sup>15</sup> 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?'

<sup>16</sup> In this way the last shall be first and the first shall be last."

<sup>17</sup> 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 kneeled 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.

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\* 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.”

<sup>26</sup> It shall not be like that for you. Whoever among you wants to be the most important will be your servant.

<sup>27</sup> Whoever among you wants to be first will be like a slave.

<sup>28</sup> 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."

<sup>29</sup> As they left Jericho, a huge crowd followed Jesus.

<sup>30</sup> 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!"

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

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

<sup>33</sup> "Lord, please make us able to see," they replied.

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

## 21

<sup>1</sup> 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,

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> If anyone asks you what you're doing, just tell them, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and they will send them right away.”

<sup>4</sup> This was to fulfill what the prophet said:

<sup>5</sup> “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.’ ”\*

<sup>6</sup> The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed.

<sup>7</sup> They brought back the donkey and the colt. They placed their cloaks on them, and he sat on them.

<sup>8</sup> Many people in the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and laid them on the road.

<sup>9</sup> The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed were all shouting, “Hosanna<sup>†</sup> to the son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

<sup>10</sup> When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, the whole city was in an uproar. “Who is this?” they were asking.

<sup>11</sup> “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee,” the crowds replied.

<sup>12</sup> Jesus went into the Temple, and threw out all the people buying and selling. He overturned

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\* **21:5** Referencing Isaiah 62:11 and Zechariah 9:9. † **21:9** An Aramaic word meaning “please save us,” used as an exclamation of praise.

the tables of the money-changers and the chairs of the dove-sellers.

<sup>13</sup> He told them, "Scripture says, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,'<sup>‡</sup> but you've turned it into a den of thieves."

<sup>14</sup> The blind and the lame came to Jesus in the Temple, and he healed them.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> "Yes," Jesus replied. "Haven't you ever read the Scripture that says, 'You arranged for children and infants to give you perfect praise?'"<sup>§</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Jesus left them and went out of the city to stay at Bethany.

<sup>18</sup> The next morning as he walked back into the city, he was hungry.

<sup>19</sup> 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.

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

<sup>21</sup> "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,

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<sup>‡</sup> **21:13** Quoting Isaiah 56:7.    <sup>§</sup> **21:16** Quoting Psalms 8:2.

but even more. If you said to this mountain, 'Get up and throw yourself into the sea,' it would happen!

<sup>22</sup> You will receive everything you ask for in prayer, as long as you trust in God."

<sup>23</sup> 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?"

<sup>24</sup> "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.

<sup>25</sup> 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.

<sup>26</sup> 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."

<sup>27</sup> So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."

"Then I won't tell you by what authority I'm doing these things," Jesus replied.

<sup>28</sup> "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.'

<sup>29</sup> The son answered, 'I won't,' but afterwards he was sorry for what he said and he did go.

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\* **21:26** Literally, "we fear the crowd."



<sup>30</sup> The man went to the second son, and told him the same thing. He replied, 'I'll go,' but he didn't.

<sup>31</sup> 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.

<sup>32</sup> "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.

<sup>33</sup> 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.

<sup>34</sup> At harvest time, he sent his servants to the farmers to collect the fruit that belonged to him.

<sup>35</sup> But the farmers attacked his servants. They beat one, killed another, and stoned another.

<sup>36</sup> So he sent more servants, but the farmers did the same things to them.

<sup>37</sup> So then he sent his son. 'They will respect my son,' he told himself.

<sup>38</sup> 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!'

<sup>39</sup> They grabbed him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

<sup>40</sup> When the vineyard owner returns, what will he do to those farmers?"

<sup>41</sup> 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.”

<sup>42</sup> “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.’

<sup>43</sup> 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.

<sup>44</sup> Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken, but it will completely crush anyone it falls upon.”

<sup>45</sup> When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his illustrations, they realized he was speaking about them.

<sup>46</sup> They wanted him arrested, but they were afraid of what the people would do because the people believed he was a prophet.

## 22

<sup>1</sup> Jesus spoke to them using more illustrated stories.

<sup>2</sup> “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who organized a wedding celebration for his son,” Jesus explained.

<sup>3</sup> “He sent out his servants to everyone who was invited to the wedding to tell them to come, but they refused.

<sup>4</sup> 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!’

<sup>5</sup> But they ignored the invitation and left. One went to his fields; another to take care of his business.

<sup>6</sup> The rest grabbed the king’s servants, mistreated them, and killed them.

<sup>7</sup> The king became furious. He sent his soldiers to destroy those murderers and burn down their town.

<sup>8</sup> Then the king said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those who were invited didn’t deserve to attend.

<sup>9</sup> Go into the streets and invite everyone you find to come to the wedding.’

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> But when the king came in to meet the guests, he noticed a man who didn’t have a wedding robe on.

<sup>12</sup> He asked him, ‘My friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ The man had nothing to say.

<sup>13</sup> 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.’

<sup>14</sup> 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,

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\* **22:19** A silver Roman coin used for paying the tax imposed by the Romans. † **22:24** Implied.

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 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?"

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‡ 22:24 See Deuteronomy 25:5-6. § 22:32 Quoting Exodus 3:6.

<sup>37</sup> Jesus told them, “ ‘Love the Lord your God in all you think, in all you feel, and in all you do.’<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>38</sup> This is the greatest commandment, the first commandment.

<sup>39</sup> The second is just like it, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’<sup>†</sup>

<sup>40</sup> All biblical law and the writings of the prophets depend on these two commandments.”

<sup>41</sup> While the Pharisees were gathered there, Jesus asked them a question.

<sup>42</sup> “What do you think about the Messiah?” he asked. “Whose son is he?”

“The son of David,” they replied.

<sup>43</sup> “But how can David under inspiration call him ‘Lord’?” Jesus asked them. “He says,

<sup>44</sup> ‘The Lord said to my Lord, sit down at my right hand until I defeat all your enemies.’<sup>‡</sup>

<sup>45</sup> If David called him Lord, how can he be his son?”

<sup>46</sup> Nobody could answer him, and from then on nobody dared to ask him any more questions.

## 23

<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and his disciples:

<sup>2</sup> “The religious teachers and the Pharisees are responsible as interpreters of the law of Moses,<sup>\*</sup>

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<sup>\*</sup> **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. <sup>\*</sup> **23:2** Literally, “sit in Moses’ seat.”

<sup>3</sup> so obey them and do everything they tell you. But don't follow what they do, because they don't practice what they preach.

<sup>4</sup> They tie up heavy burdens, and place them on people's shoulders, but they themselves don't lift a finger to help them.

<sup>5</sup> Everything they do is to make sure they get noticed. They make themselves large prayer boxes<sup>†</sup> to wear and long tassels on their clothes.<sup>‡</sup>

<sup>6</sup> They love to have the places of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues.

<sup>7</sup> They love to be greeted with respect in the market places, and for people to call them, 'Rabbi.'<sup>§</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Don't let people call you 'Rabbi.' Only one is your Master Teacher, and you are all brothers.

<sup>9</sup> Don't call anyone by the title 'Father' here on earth. Only one is your Father, who is in heaven.

<sup>10</sup> Don't let people call you 'Teacher.' Only one is your Teacher, the Messiah.

<sup>11</sup> The greatest among you will be your servant.

<sup>12</sup> Those who make themselves great will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be made great.

<sup>13</sup> But what a disaster is coming on you, religious teachers and Pharisees, you hypocrites!

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<sup>†</sup> **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. <sup>‡</sup> **23:5** These tassels were to show their devotion to God. See Numbers 15:37-41.

<sup>§</sup> **23:7** This is a Hebrew word meaning "my great one," and was used as a term of respect for religious teachers.

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 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.

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\* **23:14** Verse 14 is not in the most reliable early manuscripts.

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



<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> You blind guides—you strain what you drink to keep out a fly but then you swallow a camel!

<sup>25</sup> 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.

<sup>26</sup> You blind Pharisees! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, so that the outside will also be clean.

<sup>27</sup> 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.‡

<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> 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,

<sup>30</sup> 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.'

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‡ **23:27** Literally, "uncleanness."

<sup>31</sup> But by saying this you testify against yourselves, proving that you belong to those who murdered the prophets!

<sup>32</sup> So get on with it—finish it all off using your forefathers' methods!

<sup>33</sup> You snakes, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the judgment of condemnation?§

<sup>34</sup> 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.

<sup>35</sup> 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.

<sup>36</sup> I'm telling you, the consequences of all this will fall on this generation.

<sup>37</sup> Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! So often I wanted to gather your children as a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings—but you wouldn't let me.

<sup>38</sup> Now look—your house\* is left abandoned, totally empty.

<sup>39</sup> I tell you this: you won't see me again until you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the

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§ **23:33** Literally, "Gehenna" (see under 5:22). Referring to the end-time judgment. \* **23:38** The word house may refer to the Temple.

name of the Lord.' "†

## 24

<sup>1</sup> As Jesus was leaving the Temple his disciples came to him, pointing proudly to the Temple buildings.

<sup>2</sup> 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!"

<sup>3</sup> 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?"

<sup>4</sup> "Make sure no one misleads you," Jesus replied.

<sup>5</sup> "Many will come claiming to be me, saying, 'I'm the Messiah,' and they will deceive many people.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> Nations will attack other nations, and kingdoms will fight against other kingdoms. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places,

<sup>8</sup> but all these things are just the beginnings of birth pains.

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† 23:39 Quoting Psalms 118:26.

<sup>9</sup> Then they will arrest you, they will persecute you, and they will kill you. All people will hate you because of me.

<sup>10</sup> At that time many believers will give up believing. They will betray one another and hate one another.

<sup>11</sup> Many false prophets will come and deceive many people.

<sup>12</sup> The increasing evil will lead the love of many to grow cold,

<sup>13</sup> but those who hold out to the end will be saved.

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> 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),

<sup>16</sup> then the people living in Judea should run away to the mountains.

<sup>17</sup> Anyone who is on the housetop must not go down and fetch what's in the house.

<sup>18</sup> Anyone who is out in the fields must not go back to get a coat.

<sup>19</sup> How awful it will be for those who are pregnant, and those who are nursing babies at that time!

<sup>20</sup> Pray that you don't have to run away in winter, or on the Sabbath day.

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\* **24:15** Or "desolating sacrilege," referring back to Daniel 9:27, Daniel 11:31, Daniel 12:11.

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,' 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.†

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† 24:30 See Daniel 7:13-14.

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.

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‡ 24:31 Literally, "from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other."

<sup>42</sup> So stay alert, because you don't know what day your Lord is coming.

<sup>43</sup> 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.

<sup>44</sup> You also need to be ready, because the Son of man is coming at a time when you're not expecting him.

<sup>45</sup> 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.

<sup>46</sup> How good it will be for that servant to be found doing that when his master returns!

<sup>47</sup> I tell you the truth: the master will put that servant in charge over everything he has.

<sup>48</sup> But if he was evil, the servant would say to himself, 'My master is taking a long time,'

<sup>49</sup> and would start beating the other servants, feasting and drinking with the drunks.

<sup>50</sup> Then that servant's master will return when the man doesn't expect him, at a time he doesn't know.

<sup>51</sup> He'll cut him to pieces, and treat him in the same way as the hypocrites,<sup>§</sup> sending him to a place where there's crying and gnashing of teeth.

## 25

<sup>1</sup> The kingdom of heaven is like ten girls, who took their lamps with them to go and meet the

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<sup>§</sup> **24:51** Those who claim to follow their Lord but in reality don't.

bridegroom.

<sup>2</sup> Five were foolish, and five were wise.

<sup>3</sup> The foolish girls took their lamps but didn't take any oil with them,

<sup>4</sup> while the wise took jars of oil with them as well as their lamps.

<sup>5</sup> The bridegroom took a long time and all the girls became drowsy and fell asleep.

<sup>6</sup> At midnight the shout came, 'Look, the bridegroom's here! Come out and meet him!'

<sup>7</sup> All the girls got up and trimmed the wicks of their lamps. The foolish girls said to the wise ones,

<sup>8</sup> 'Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.' But the wise girls replied,

<sup>9</sup> 'No, because otherwise there won't be enough for both you and for us. Go to the shopkeepers and buy some oil for yourselves.'

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> The other girls came later. 'Lord, Lord,' they called, 'Open the door for us!'

<sup>12</sup> But he answered, 'I tell you the truth: I don't know you.'

<sup>13</sup> So stay alert, for you don't know the day, or the hour.

<sup>14</sup> It's like a man who went away on a trip. He called in his servants and entrusted them with what he owned.

<sup>15</sup> To one of them he gave five talents,\* to an-

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



other he gave two, and to another one, according to their different abilities. Then he left.

<sup>16</sup> Immediately the one with five talents went and invested them in a business, and made another five talents.

<sup>17</sup> In the same way the one with two talents made another two.

<sup>18</sup> But the man who'd received the one talent went off and dug a hole and hid his master's money.

<sup>19</sup> A long time later the master of those servants returned, and settled accounts with them.

<sup>20</sup> 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.'

<sup>21</sup> 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!'

<sup>22</sup> The one with two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'You gave me two talents. Look, I've made a profit of two talents.'

<sup>23</sup> 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!'

<sup>24</sup> 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.'

<sup>25</sup> 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.'

<sup>26</sup> 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,

<sup>27</sup> then you should have deposited my silver in the bank so that when I returned I could have had my money with interest.

<sup>28</sup> Take the talent away from him, and give it to the one with ten talents.

<sup>29</sup> 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.

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

<sup>31</sup> But when the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his majestic throne.

<sup>32</sup> Everyone will be brought before him. He will separate them from one another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

<sup>33</sup> He'll place the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left.

<sup>34</sup> 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.

<sup>35</sup> 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.

<sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick

and you looked after me. I was in prison and you visited me.'

<sup>37</sup> Then those who are right will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and fed you, or thirsty and gave you a drink?

<sup>38</sup> When did we see you as a stranger and invite you in, or naked and clothe you?

<sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick, or in prison, and visit you?'

<sup>40</sup> The king will tell them, 'I tell you the truth: whatever you did for one of these of least importance you did for me.'

<sup>41</sup> He'll also say to those on his left, 'Go away from me, you who are doomed, into the eternal<sup>†</sup> fire prepared for the devil and his angels!

<sup>42</sup> For I was hungry and you didn't give me anything to eat. I was thirsty and you didn't give me a drink.

<sup>43</sup> 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.'

<sup>44</sup> 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?'

<sup>45</sup> 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.'

<sup>46</sup> They will go away into eternal condemnation, but those who are good will enter eternal life."

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<sup>†</sup> **25:41** Eternal in consequence, rather than in duration.

## 26

<sup>1</sup> After Jesus had said all this, he told his disciples,

<sup>2</sup> “You know that it's Passover in two days time, and the Son of man will be handed over to be crucified.”

<sup>3</sup> Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the courtyard of Caiaphas, the high priest.

<sup>4</sup> There they plotted to arrest Jesus on some deceitful pretext\* and kill him.

<sup>5</sup> But they said, “Let's not do this during the festival so that the people don't riot.”

<sup>6</sup> While Jesus was staying at Simon the leper's house in Bethany,

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> “What a terrible waste!” they objected.

<sup>9</sup> “This perfume could've been sold for a lot of money and given to the poor!”

<sup>10</sup> 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!

<sup>11</sup> You'll always have the poor with you,† but you won't always have me.

<sup>12</sup> By pouring this perfume on my body she's prepared me for burial.

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\* **26:4** Literally, “with guile.” † **26:11** See Deuteronomy 15:11.

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!"

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

"You said it," Jesus replied.

<sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> Then he picked up the cup, blessed it, and gave it to them. "Drink from it, all of you," he told them.

<sup>28</sup> "For this is my blood of the agreement,‡ poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

<sup>29</sup> 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."

<sup>30</sup> After they'd sung a song, they left for the Mount of Olives.

<sup>31</sup> "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.'§

<sup>32</sup> But after I have risen, I'll go ahead of you to Galilee."

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

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

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

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 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.

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\* **26:43** Literally, “their eyes were weighed down.”

<sup>45</sup> 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!

<sup>46</sup> Get up, let's go! See, the one who's betraying me has arrived.”

<sup>47</sup> 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.

<sup>48</sup> The betrayer had arranged to give them a signal: “The one that I kiss, that's him—arrest him,” he'd told them.

<sup>49</sup> Judas came up to Jesus immediately, and said, “Hello, Rabbi,” and kissed him.

<sup>50</sup> “My friend, do what you came to do,” Jesus said to Judas. So they came and grabbed hold of Jesus, and arrested him.

<sup>51</sup> 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.

<sup>52</sup> But Jesus told him, “Put your sword away. Everyone who fights with the sword will die by the sword.

<sup>53</sup> Don't you think I could ask my Father, and he'd immediately send more than twelve legions of angels?

<sup>54</sup> But then how could the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must be like this?”

<sup>55</sup> 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.

<sup>56</sup> But all this is happening to fulfill what the prophets wrote." Then all the disciples abandoned him and ran away.

<sup>57</sup> Those who'd arrested Jesus took him to the home of Caiaphas, the high priest, where the religious teachers and elders had gathered.

<sup>58</sup> 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.

<sup>59</sup> The chief priests and the whole council were trying to find some false evidence against Jesus so they could put him to death.

<sup>60</sup> But they couldn't find anything, even though many false witnesses came forward. Eventually two came forward

<sup>61</sup> and reported, "This man said, 'I can destroy God's Temple, and rebuild it in three days.' "

<sup>62</sup> The high priest stood up and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer? What do you have to say in your defense?"

<sup>63</sup> 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."

<sup>64</sup> "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."<sup>†</sup>

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<sup>†</sup> **26:64** See Psalms 110:1 and Daniel 7:13.

<sup>65</sup> 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!"

<sup>66</sup> "What's your verdict?"

"Guilty! He deserves to die!" they answered.

<sup>67</sup> Then they spat in his face and beat him. Some of them slapped him with their hands,

<sup>68</sup> and said, "Prophecy to us, you 'Messiah'! Who just hit you?"

<sup>69</sup> Meanwhile Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant girl came up to him, and said, "You were with Jesus the Galilean too!"

<sup>70</sup> But he denied it in front of everyone. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

<sup>71</sup> 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."

<sup>72</sup> Once again he denied it, saying with an oath, "I don't know him."

<sup>73</sup> 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."

<sup>74</sup> Then he started to swear: "Curses on me if I'm a liar!‡ I don't know the man!" Immediately the cock crowed.

<sup>75</sup> 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.

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‡ **26:74** Or "he called down curses on himself."

## 27

<sup>1</sup> Early in the morning all the chief priests and elders of the people consulted together and decided to have Jesus put to death.

<sup>2</sup> They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> "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!"

<sup>5</sup> Judas threw the silver coins into the sanctuary and left. He went away and hanged himself.

<sup>6</sup> 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."

<sup>7</sup> So they agreed to buy the potter's field as a place to bury foreigners.

<sup>8</sup> That's why the field is still called today the "Field of Blood."

<sup>9</sup> 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—

<sup>10</sup> and used them to pay for the potter's field, just as the Lord instructed me to do."\*

<sup>11</sup> Jesus was brought before Pilate the governor who asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

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\* **27:10** See Zechariah 11:12-13, referencing Jeremiah 32:6-15.

“You said it,” Jesus replied.

<sup>12</sup> But when the chief priests and elders brought charges against him, Jesus did not answer.

<sup>13</sup> “Don't you hear how many charges they're bringing against you?” Pilate asked him.

<sup>14</sup> But Jesus didn't say anything, not a single word. This greatly surprised the governor.

<sup>15</sup> Now it was the custom of the governor to release to the crowd during the festival whichever prisoner they wanted.

<sup>16</sup> At that time a notorious prisoner was being held, a man named Barabbas.

<sup>17</sup> So Pilate asked the crowds that had gathered, “Who do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus, called the Messiah?”

<sup>18</sup> (He had realized it was because of jealousy that they had handed Jesus over to him to be tried.)

<sup>19</sup> 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.”

<sup>20</sup> But the chief priests and the elders convinced the crowds to ask for Barabbas, and to have Jesus put to death.

<sup>21</sup> When the governor asked them, “So which of the two do you want me to release to you?” they answered, “Barabbas.”

<sup>22</sup> “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 knelt 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,”

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† 27:24 Literally, “see to it yourselves.” ‡ 27:27 The military headquarters.

<sup>34</sup> they gave him wine mixed with gall. But having tasted it, he refused to drink it.

<sup>35</sup> After they had crucified him, they rolled dice to divide his clothes between them. §

<sup>36</sup> Then they sat down and kept watch over him there.

<sup>37</sup> They placed a sign over his head with the charge against him. It read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

<sup>38</sup> They crucified two criminals with him, one on the right, and one on the left.

<sup>39</sup> Those who passed by shouted insults at him, shaking their heads,

<sup>40</sup> 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."

<sup>41</sup> The chief priests mocked him in the same way, along with the religious teachers and elders.

<sup>42</sup> "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!

<sup>43</sup> He trusts God so confidently—well let God rescue him now if he wants him,\* because he claimed 'I am the Son of God.' "

<sup>44</sup> The criminals who were crucified with him also insulted him in the same way.

<sup>45</sup> From noon until three o'clock darkness covered the whole country.

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§ 27:35 See Psalms 22:18. \* 27:43 What makes this even worse is that they were quoting Scripture back at him: Psalms 22:8.

<sup>46</sup> At about three o'clock Jesus shouted out loud, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"<sup>†</sup>

<sup>47</sup> When some of those standing there heard it, they said, "He's calling for Elijah!"

<sup>48</sup> 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.<sup>‡</sup>

<sup>49</sup> But the others said, "Leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah will come and save him."

<sup>50</sup> Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and breathed his last.<sup>§</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Right then the veil of the Temple was torn apart from top to bottom. The ground shook, the rocks split apart,

<sup>52</sup> and the graves were opened. Many of those who had lived good lives and had fallen asleep in death were raised to life.

<sup>53</sup> After the resurrection of Jesus they went out from the graveyards into the holy city\* where many people saw them.

<sup>54</sup> 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!"

<sup>55</sup> Many women were also watching from a distance, those who had followed Jesus from Galilee and had supported him.

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<sup>†</sup> **27:46** Quoting Psalms 22:1.    <sup>‡</sup> **27:48** See Psalms 69:21.

<sup>§</sup> **27:50** The expression is a Hebrew one meaning that he died.

\* **27:53** Referring to Jerusalem.

<sup>56</sup> These included Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

<sup>57</sup> When evening came, a rich man named Joseph, from Arimathea, (who was also a disciple of Jesus),

<sup>58</sup> went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate ordered it to be handed over to him.

<sup>59</sup> Joseph took the body and wrapped it up in a fresh linen cloth,

<sup>60</sup> 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.

<sup>61</sup> Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

<sup>62</sup> The next day,<sup>†</sup> after the Preparation day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went together to see Pilate.

<sup>63</sup> They said to him, "Sir, we recall that the imposter said while he was still alive, 'After three days, I'll rise again.'

<sup>64</sup> Give orders to secure the tomb until the third day. That way his disciples can't come and steal his body and tell people that he was raised from the dead, and the deception in the end will become worse than it was at first."

<sup>65</sup> "I'll give you a guard of soldiers," Pilate told them. "Now go, and make it as secure as you possibly can."

<sup>66</sup> So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the entrance stone and posting soldiers as guards.

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<sup>†</sup> **27:62** Referring to the Sabbath.



## 28

<sup>1</sup> Early Sunday morning, at dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> His face blazed like lightning, and his clothes were as white as snow.

<sup>4</sup> The guards shook with fear, falling down as if they were dead.

<sup>5</sup> The angel told the women, "Don't be afraid! I know you're looking for Jesus, who was crucified.

<sup>6</sup> He's not here. He's risen from the dead, just as he said he would. Come and see where the Lord was lying.

<sup>7</sup> 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!"

<sup>8</sup> They left the tomb quickly, both afraid and very happy, running to tell his disciples.

<sup>9</sup> Suddenly Jesus came to meet them, and greeted them. They went over to him, held onto his feet and worshiped him.

<sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Don't be afraid! Go and tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there."

<sup>11</sup> As they left, some of the guards went into the city and explained to the chief priests everything that had happened.

<sup>12</sup> After the chief priests had met with the elders, and worked out a plan, they bribed the soldiers with a great deal of money.

<sup>13</sup> “Say that his disciples came during the night and stole him while we were sleeping,” they told the soldiers.

<sup>14</sup> “And if the governor hears about this, we’ll talk to him and you won’t have to worry.”

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> But the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

<sup>17</sup> When they saw him they worshiped him, though some doubted.

<sup>18</sup> Jesus came to them and told them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> Teach them to follow all the commands I have given you. Remember, I am always with you, to the very end of the world.”

**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.

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