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Mark

Version 77

[en]

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Date: 2023-10-27

Version: 77

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Hebrew Bible

Date: 2022-10-11

Version: 2.1.30

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Greek New Testament

Date: 2023-09-26

Version: 0.34

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

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Mark

Chapter 1

¹This is the beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, who is the Son of God. ²This good news began just as the prophet Isaiah said that it would when he wrote long ago, "Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you. He will make people ready for when you come. ³He will be a voice calling out in the desolate place to anyone who hears him, saying,

'Make yourselves ready to welcome the Lord. Get everything organized for his coming.'"

⁴The messenger that Isaiah wrote about was John. People called him "The Baptizer." John was in a desolate area near the Jordan River. He was baptizing people and proclaiming to them that if they repent, then he will baptize them, and God will forgive their sins. ⁵A great number of people from the region of Judea and the city of Jerusalem went out to the wilderness to hear John speak. Many of those who heard him agreed that they had sinned. Then John baptized them in the Jordan River. ⁶John wore clothes made of camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist. He ate grasshoppers and honey that he found in that desolate area. ⁷He was preaching, "Very shortly one will come who is very great. I am nothing compared to him. I am not even worthy to stoop down and untie his sandals. ⁸I baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

⁹During the time when John was preaching, Jesus came from Nazareth, a town in the Galilee region. He went to where John was preaching, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. ¹⁰Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven tearing open and the Spirit of God descending on him. The Spirit of God came down from heaven like a dove. ¹¹Then God spoke from heaven and said, "You are my Son, the one whom I love dearly. I am very pleased with you." ¹²Then the Spirit of God sent Jesus out into the desolate area. ¹³Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days. During that time, Satan was tempting him. There were wild animals in that place, and angels were taking care of him.

¹⁴Later, after the governor, Herod Antipas, put John the Baptizer in prison, Jesus went to the Galilee region. In Galilee, he was preaching God's good news. ¹⁵He was saying, "The time has come at last. God will soon show that he is king. Repent and believe the good news."

¹⁶One day while Jesus was walking along the coast of the sea of Galilee, he saw two men, Simon and Simon's brother, Andrew. They were casting their fishing net into the sea to catch fish. They earned money by catching and selling fish. ¹⁷Then Jesus said to them, "Just like you have been gathering fish, come with me, and I will teach you how to gather people to be my disciples." ¹⁸Immediately after Jesus said this, they stopped working, and they went with him. ¹⁹After they had gone on a little further, Jesus saw two other men, James and James' brother, John. They were the sons of a man named Zebedee. They were all in a boat fixing their fishing nets. ²⁰As soon as Jesus saw them, he told them to come with him. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat with his servants, and they went away with Jesus.

²¹Jesus, along with Peter, Andrew, James, and John, went into the nearby town of Capernaum. There, Jesus began teaching in the Jewish meeting place on the Sabbath. ²²Those who were listening were amazed at the way he taught. He taught like a teacher who relies on what he himself knows. He did not teach like those who taught the Jewish laws, who repeated the different things that other men had taught. ²³In the Jewish preaching place where Jesus taught, there was a man who was controlled by an evil spirit. The man with the evil spirit began shouting, ²⁴"Hey! Jesus, from Nazareth! We evil spirits have nothing to do with you! Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are. You are the Holy One from God!" ²⁵Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, saying, "Be quiet and come out of that man!" ²⁶The evil spirit shook the man violently. It screamed loudly, and then it came out of the man and left. ²⁷All

the people who were in the synagogue were amazed. As a result, they discussed this among themselves, saying, "This is something we have never seen before! Not only does he teach in a new and authoritative way, but he also commands the evil spirits, and they obey him!" ²⁸The people very soon told many others throughout the entire Galilee region what Jesus had done.

²⁹After they left the Jewish preaching place, Jesus, Simon, and Andrew, along with James and John, went directly to the house of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰Simon's mother-in-law was lying in bed because she was feeling sick; she had a fever. Right away someone told Jesus about her being sick. ³¹Jesus went to her, took her by the hand, and helped her up. She immediately recovered from the fever and began serving them.

³²That evening, after the sun had gone down, people from the surrounding area brought to Jesus many others who were sick and those whom evil spirits controlled. ³³It seemed as though everyone who lived in the town had gathered at the doorway of Simon's house. ³⁴Jesus healed many people who were sick with various diseases. He also forced many evil spirits to come out from people. He did not allow the evil spirits to tell people about him, because they knew that he was the Holy One from God.

³⁵Jesus got up very early the next morning while it was still dark. He left the house and went away from the town to a place where there were no people. Then he prayed. ³⁶Simon and his companions searched for him. ³⁷When they found him they said, "Everyone in town is looking for you." ³⁸Jesus said to them, "We need to go to the other towns in this region so that I can preach there as well. This is the reason I came here." ³⁹So they went throughout Galilee region. As they went, Jesus would preach in the Jewish preaching places and force evil spirits to come out from people.

⁴⁰One day a man who had a bad skin disease called leprosy came to Jesus. He knelt down in front of Jesus and pleaded with him, saying, "Please make me clean, because you are able to make me clean if it is your will!" ⁴¹Jesus felt compassion for him. He reached out his hand and touched the man. Then he said to him, "It is my will to heal you, so be healed!" ⁴²Immediately the man was healed! He was no longer a leper! ⁴³Jesus gave the man a warning as he was sending him away, ⁴⁴saying, "Do not tell anyone what just happened. Instead, go to a priest, and show yourself to him so that he may examine you and see that you no longer have leprosy. Then make the offering that Moses commanded for people whom God has healed from leprosy. This will be the testimony to the community that you no longer have leprosy." ⁴⁵The man did not follow Jesus' instruction. He began telling many people about how Jesus had healed him. As a result, Jesus was no longer able to enter towns publicly, because the crowds of people would surround him. Instead, he remained outside the towns in places where no one lived. But people kept coming to him from all over that region.

Chapter 2

¹After some days had passed, Jesus returned to the town of Capernaum. People spread the news quickly to others that Jesus had returned and was in a certain house. ²Soon a great number of people gathered where Jesus was staying. The number was so great that the house was full. There was no longer space to stand, not even around the doorway. Jesus spoke God's message to them. ³Some people came to the house bringing to Jesus a man who was paralyzed. Four men carried him on a sleeping pad. ⁴They were not able to bring the man close to Jesus because of the crowd that had gathered. So, they went up on the roof of the house and made a big hole in the roof above Jesus. They lowered the paralyzed man on his sleeping pad through the hole in front of Jesus. ⁵After Jesus perceived that the men believed that he could heal this man, he said to the paralyzed man, "My child, I have forgiven your sins!" ⁶Some men who taught the Jewish laws were sitting there. They started thinking to themselves, ⁷"Who does this man think he is, talking like that? He insults God by saying that! No person can forgive sins—only God can!" ⁸Right away, Jesus knew within himself what they were thinking. He said to them, "Why are you thinking that I don't have the right to forgive sins? ⁹Which would be easier for me to say to the paralyzed man, 'I have forgiven your sins' or 'Stand up! Take your sleeping pad and walk'? ¹⁰I will demonstrate to you that God has given the Son of Man authority on earth to forgive sins." Then he said to the paralyzed man, ¹¹"Stand up! Pick up your

sleeping pad and go home!" ¹²The man stood up immediately. He picked up the sleeping pad, and he walked out of the house while all the people there were watching. They were all amazed, and they praised God and said, "We have never before seen anything like what happened just now!"

¹³Jesus left the town of Capernaum and walked again along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. A large crowd came to him, and he taught them. ¹⁴As he was walking, he saw a man named Levi, whose father's name was Alpheus. He was sitting at his workplace, where he collected taxes. Jesus said to him, "Come with me and be my disciple." He got up and went with Jesus. ¹⁵Later, Jesus was eating a meal in Levi's house. Many men who collected taxes—and others whom the religious leaders considered to be sinners—were eating with Jesus and his disciples. There were many people like this who were going everywhere with Jesus. ¹⁶Men who taught the Jewish laws and who were members of the Pharisee sect saw that Jesus was eating with sinners and men who collected taxes. They asked Jesus' disciples, "Why does he eat and drink with sinners and men who collect taxes?" ¹⁷After Jesus heard what they were asking, he said to the men who taught the Jewish laws, "Healthy people do not need a doctor. On the contrary, it is those who are sick who need a doctor. I did not come to invite those who think they are righteous to come to me, but those who know that they have sinned."

¹⁸Now at this time, the followers of John the Baptizer and some men who belonged to the Pharisee sect were abstaining from food, as they often did. Some men came to Jesus and asked him, "The disciples of John and of the Pharisees often abstain from food. Why do your students not abstain from food?" ¹⁹Jesus said to them, "When a man is marrying a woman, his friends will certainly not abstain from food while he is still with them. The wedding is a time of feasting and celebrating with the groom. It is not a time for abstaining from food, especially while the groom is with them. ²⁰But someday, the groom will be taken away from his friends. Then in those days, they will abstain from food."

²¹Jesus went on to say to them, "People do not sew a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment in order to mend a hole. If they did, when they washed the garment, the patch would shrink, and the new piece of cloth would tear off more of the old cloth. As a result, the hole would become even bigger! ²²Similarly, people do not put new wine into old animal-skin bags to store it. If they did, the new wine would burst the skin bags because they would not stretch when the wine ferments and expands. As a result, both the wine and the skin bags would be ruined! On the contrary, people must put new wine into new skin bags!"

²³On one Jewish day of rest, Jesus was walking through some grain fields with his students. As they were walking along through the grain fields, Jesus' disciples were plucking some of the heads of grain. ²⁴Some of the Pharisees saw what they were doing and said to Jesus, "Look at this! They are breaking the Jewish law concerning the day of rest. Why are they doing that?" ²⁵Jesus said to them, "Have you never read the scriptures concerning King David and the men who were with him, when they were hungry? ²⁶During the time Abiathar was high priest, King David entered the house of God and asked for some bread. The high priest gave him some of the bread that had been on display before God. According to our laws, only the priests could eat that bread! But David ate some of it. Then he also gave some of it to the men who were with him." ²⁷Jesus said to them further, "God made the day of rest for the sake of mankind. He did not make the day of rest to be a burden on mankind. ²⁸So, to be clear, the Son of Man is Lord, even of the day of rest!"

Chapter 3

¹On another Jewish day of rest, Jesus again went into a Jewish meeting place. There was a man there whose hand was shriveled. ²Some men of the Pharisee sect watched him carefully to see whether he would heal the man on the day of rest, for they wanted to be able to accuse him of doing something wrong. ³Jesus said to the man whose hand was shriveled, "Stand up here in front of everyone!" {So the man stood up.} ⁴Then Jesus said to the people, "Do the laws that God gave Moses permit people to do good on the day of rest, or to do evil? Do the laws permit us to save a person's life on the day of rest, or permit us to refuse to help a person and let them die?" But they did not reply. ⁵He looked around at them angrily. He was very disappointed that they were stubborn {and not willing to help the man}. So he said to the man, "Extend your hand!" When the man extended his shriveled hand, it became

healthy again! ⁶The Pharisees left the meeting place. They immediately met with some of the Jews who supported Herod Antipas, who ruled the region of Galilee. Together they planned how they could kill Jesus.

⁷Jesus and his disciples left that town and went to an area further along the Sea of Galilee. A great crowd of people followed him. The people that followed him came from the regions of Galilee and Judea, ⁸from the city of Jerusalem, from the region of Idumea, from the region on the east side of the Jordan River, and from the region around the cities of Tyre and Sidon. They all came to Jesus because they had heard about what he was doing.

⁹⁻¹⁰Because he had healed many people, many other people who had various illnesses pushed forward in order to touch him. They believed that if they only touched him, that touch would make them well. So he told his disciples that they should get a small boat ready for him in order that the crowd would not crush him when they pushed forward to touch him. ¹¹Whenever the evil spirits saw Jesus, they caused the people whom they controlled to fall down in front of Jesus and call out to him, "You are the Son of God!" ¹²Jesus commanded the evil spirits strongly that they must not tell anyone who he was.

¹³Jesus went up into the hills. There, he summoned those that he wanted to go with him, and they followed him.

¹⁴He appointed twelve men to travel with him, whom also he would send out to preach. He called them his special representatives. ¹⁵He also gave them power to be able to force evil spirits to come out from people. ¹⁶And Jesus appointed 12 men. He appointed Simon and gave him a new name, Peter. ¹⁷And along with Peter, Jesus also appointed James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James. He gave both of them the new name, 'Men Who Are Like Thunder' because of their fiery zeal; ¹⁸and he appointed Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, and James who was the son of Alphaeus; and he appointed Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, ¹⁹and Judas Iscariot (who later caused him to get arrested).

²⁰Jesus and his apprentices went to a house. Again a crowd gathered where he was staying. Many people crowded around him. He and his apprentices did not even have time to eat. ²¹When his relatives heard about this, they went to take him home with them, because some people were saying that he was insane.

²²Some men who taught the Jewish laws came downhill from the city of Jerusalem. They heard that Jesus was forcing evil spirits to come out of people. So they were telling people, "Beelzebul, who rules the evil spirits, controls Jesus. He is the one who gives Jesus the power to force evil spirits out from people!" ²³So Jesus summoned those men over to himself. Jesus spoke to them in parables and said, "How can Satan expel Satan? ²⁴If people who live in the same country are fighting against one another, their country will cease to be a united country. ²⁵And if people who live in the same house fight each other, they will certainly not remain united as one family. ²⁶Similarly, if Satan and his evil spirits were fighting one another, instead of remaining strong, he would become powerless. ²⁷No one can go into the house of a strong man and take his possessions away from him unless he first ties up the strong man. Only then will he be able to steal the things in that man's house." ²⁸Jesus also said, "Consider this carefully! People may sin in many ways, and they may speak evil about God, yet God can still forgive them. ²⁹But if anyone speaks evil words about the Holy Spirit, God will never forgive them. That person is eternally guilty of sin."

³⁰Jesus told them this because they were saying, "An evil spirit is controlling him!"

³¹Jesus' mother and younger siblings came to where Jesus was teaching. While they stood outside, they sent someone inside to tell Jesus to come to them. ³²A crowd was sitting around Jesus. Some of them said to him, "Listen! Your mother and younger siblings are outside. They want to see you." ³³Jesus asked them, "Who is my mother? Who are my siblings?" ³⁴After he looked around at those who sat with him, he said, "Look here! You are my mother and my siblings. ³⁵For those who do what God wants are my brother, my sister, or my mother!"

Chapter 4

¹Another time Jesus began to teach people alongside the Sea of Galilee. As he was teaching, a very large crowd gathered around him. Because {the crowd was so big}, he got into a boat and pushed out onto the water. The

crowd listened to his teaching from the shore of the sea. ²He taught them by using simple stories with a lesson in them. He told them this: ³"Here I am now. A man went out to his field to plant some seeds. ⁴As he was scattering them over the soil, some of the seeds fell on the path. Then some birds came and ate those seeds. ⁵Other seed fell on ground where there was little soil but lots of rocks. Very soon the seedling appeared through the soil because the soil was not very deep. ⁶Later that day, after the sun shone on the young plant, it got dried out and withered because the shallow roots could not find water among the rocks in the ground. ⁷As he sowed, another seed fell on ground that contained roots of thorny plants. The seedling grew, but the thorny plants also grew up and crowded out the good plant. So the plant produced no grain. ⁸But as he sowed, another seed fell on good soil. As a result, it sprouted, grew large, and then produced plenty of grain. Some of these plants bore 30 times as much as the seed that the man had planted. Some bore 60 times as much. Some bore 100 times as much." ⁹Then Jesus said, "Whoever is willing to listen, listen to what I say."

¹⁰Later, when only the 12 apprentices and other close followers were with him, they asked him about the parables.

¹¹He said to them, "To you I have explained the message about how God reveals himself as king, but to the others I have spoken in parables.

¹²When they see what I am doing, they will not learn {why I do it}.

When they hear what I say, they will not understand what it means.

This is so that they may not repent,

and God may not forgive them."

¹³Jesus also said to his apprentices, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand when I teach you other parables? ¹⁴In the parable that I told you, the man who sows seeds represents someone who teaches God's message to others. ¹⁵Some people are like the instance when the seeds fell along the path. When they hear God's message, Satan comes at once and causes them to forget what they have heard. ¹⁶Some people are like the seed which the farmer sows upon the rocky soil. When they hear God's message, they immediately accept it with joy. ¹⁷But, they did not have their own strong roots, and they lack the ability to endure. Because of this, when people cause them to suffer because of the message of God, they quickly stop believing. ¹⁸Some people are like the soil that has thorny weeds in it. Those people hear God's message ¹⁹but only care about earthly things and becoming rich, and they forget God's message. These things, filling the person's life, choke the message which they received, and the person becomes unable to bear fruit. ²⁰But some people are like the seed that was sown on the good soil. They hear God's message, and they accept it, and they believe it, and they do the things that God wants them to do. They are like the good plants that produced 30, 60, or 100 grains."

²¹He told the apprentices another parable: "People certainly do not light an oil lamp and then bring it in the house in order to put something over it to cover its light. Instead, they put it on a lampstand so that the light will shine.

²²Similarly, things that were hidden—one day everyone will know them—and the things that have happened in secret—one day everyone will see them in full light. ²³If you want to understand this, you should consider carefully what you have just heard."

²⁴"Consider carefully what you hear me say to you, for God will let you understand to the same degree that you consider what I say. He will let you understand even more than that. ²⁵For if a person has some understanding, he will receive even more. But if a person does not have understanding, even what little he has, he will lose."

²⁶Jesus also said, "When God begins to show himself as king, it is like a man who has scattered seed on the ground.

²⁷Afterwards he slept each night and rose up each day without worrying about the seeds. During that time the seeds sprouted and grew in a way that he did not understand. ²⁸The ground produced the crop on its own. First the stalks appeared. Then the heads appeared. Then the full kernels in the heads appeared. ²⁹As soon as the grain was ripe, he sent people to harvest it, because it was time to harvest the grain."

³⁰Jesus told them another story with a lesson. He said, "When God begins to show himself as king, what is it like? What word picture can I use to describe it?" ³¹It is like mustard seeds, which are the smallest seeds that are planted in the ground, smaller than any other seed upon the earth. ³²After they are planted, they grow up and become larger than the other garden plants. They put out big branches so that birds are able to make nests in their shade."

³³Jesus used many parables when he talked to the people about God's message. He told them as much as they were able to understand. ³⁴He always used stories with lessons when he spoke to them. But he explained all the parables to his own apprentices when he was alone with them.

³⁵On that same day, when the sun was setting, Jesus said to his apprentices, "Let us cross over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee." ³⁶Jesus was already in the boat, so they left the crowd of people and sailed away. Other people also went along with them in their boats. ³⁷A strong wind came up and the waves started coming into the boat! The boat was in danger of being filled with water. ³⁸Jesus was in the back part of the boat. He was sleeping with his head on a cushion. So the apprentices woke him up and said to him, "Teacher! Are you not concerned that we are about to die?" ³⁹So Jesus got up and rebuked the wind, and he spoke to the lake, "Be quiet! Be still!" The wind stopped blowing, and then the Sea of Galilee became very calm. ⁴⁰He said to the apprentices, "Why are you afraid? Do you not yet believe that I can protect you?" ⁴¹They were terrified. They said to one another, "Who is this man? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Chapter 5

¹Jesus and his apprentices arrived on the other side of the Sea of Galilee. People called the Gerasenes lived near the place where they landed. ²When Jesus stepped out of the boat, a man came out from the tombs in a cemetery. Evil spirits controlled the man. ³The man was coming out of the cemetery because he lived among the tombs. The people at times tried to restrain him. They could not restrain him, not even with {metal} chains. ⁴Whenever they used chains and shackles, the man would break them apart. He was so strong that no one was able to control him. ⁵Day and night the man would spend his time among the places in the cemetery where people were buried. In the hill-country he would scream out loud and cut himself with sharp stones. ⁶When he saw Jesus in the distance getting out of the boat, he ran over to him and knelt before him. ⁷⁻⁸The demon cried out in a loud voice, "Leave me alone, Jesus, Son of the Most High God! Swear by the name of God that you will not torture me!" The demon said this because Jesus was saying to him, "Go out from that man, unclean spirit!" ⁹Jesus asked the unclean spirit, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion because there are many of us evil spirits in this man." ¹⁰Then the evil spirits kept asking Jesus fervently that he not send them out of the region. ¹¹At the same time, a large herd of pigs was grazing nearby on the hillside. ¹²So the evil spirits pleaded with Jesus saying, "Allow us to go to the pigs in order that we might enter them!" ¹³Jesus permitted them to do that. So the evil spirits left the man and entered the pigs. The herd, which numbered about 2,000, rushed down the steep hill into the Sea of Galilee, where they drowned.

¹⁴The men who were tending the pigs ran and reported in the town and the countryside what had happened. Many people {from those places} went to see for themselves what had happened. ¹⁵All of the people came to the place where Jesus was. Then they saw the man whom evil spirits had previously controlled. He was sitting there with clothes on and no longer acting like evil spirits controlled him. They were afraid when they saw all this. ¹⁶The people who had seen what Jesus did told those who had come from the town and from the countryside. They told the people about what had happened to the man whom the evil spirits previously controlled. They also described what had happened to the pigs. ¹⁷Then the people pleaded with Jesus to leave their region.

¹⁸As Jesus got in the boat to leave, the man whom the evil spirits previously controlled begged Jesus, "Please let me go with you!" ¹⁹But Jesus did not let the man go with him. Instead, he said to him, "Go home to your family and tell them everything the Lord has done for you, and tell them how he has been so kind to you." ²⁰So the man went and traveled around the Ten Towns in that region. He told people everything Jesus had done for him. All the people who heard what the man said were amazed.

²¹After Jesus crossed again in a boat to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, a large crowd gathered around him on the shore. ²²One of the men who was in charge of a Jewish meeting place, whose name was Jairus, came there. When he saw Jesus, he knelt at his feet. ²³Then he pleaded with Jesus earnestly, "My daughter is sick and nearly dead! Please come to my house and place your hands on her. Heal her and keep her alive!" ²⁴So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed him, and many pushed in close to him. ²⁵There was a woman in the crowd who had a bleeding disorder. She had been bleeding every day for 12 years. ²⁶She suffered many times by the hand of many doctors. At the same time, she had spent all of her money and did not get better. Instead, she got worse. ²⁷⁻²⁸When she heard that Jesus healed people, she joined the crowd which was following him. As she got near him, she touched his garment. She was thinking, "If I only touch his clothes, it will heal me." ²⁹At once her bleeding stopped. At the same time, she felt within her body that Jesus cured her of her illness. ³⁰Jesus also immediately sensed within himself that his power had healed someone. So he turned around in the crowd and then he asked, "Who touched my clothes?" ³¹His apprentices replied, "You can see that many people are pushing close to you! Probably many people have touched you! So why do you ask, 'Who touched me?'" ³²But Jesus kept looking around in order to see the one who had touched him. ³³The woman was very afraid and trembling, because she knew that when she touched Jesus, he healed her. She knelt before him and told him what she had done. ³⁴He said to her, "Daughter, because you have believed that I could heal you, I have now healed you. Be at peace, knowing that I permanently healed you from your illness."

³⁵While Jesus was still speaking to that woman, some people arrived who had come from Jairus' house. They said to Jairus, "Your daughter has now died. So there is no need to bother the teacher any longer in bringing him to your house." ³⁶But when Jesus heard what these men said, he said to Jairus, "Do not be afraid that your daughter is dead! Just believe that she will live!" ³⁷Then he allowed only his three closest apprentices, Peter, James, and John, to go with him to the house. He did not allow any other people to go with him. ³⁸After they arrived near Jairus' house, Jesus saw that the people there were in turmoil. They were weeping and wailing loudly. ³⁹He entered the house, and then he said to the people there, "Why are you so upset and crying? The child is not dead, but only sleeping." ⁴⁰The people laughed at him because they knew that she was dead. He sent all the other people outside the house. Then he took the child's father and mother and the three apprentices who were with him, and they went into the room where the child was lying. ⁴¹He took hold of the child's hand and said to her in her own language, "Talitha koum!" That means, "Little girl, get up!" ⁴²At once the girl got up and walked around. (It was not surprising that she could walk, because she was 12 years old.) When this happened, all who were present were greatly amazed. ⁴³Jesus ordered them strictly, saying, "Do not tell anyone about what I have done!" Then he told them to give the girl something to eat.

Chapter 6

¹Jesus left the city of Capernaum and went to the place of his birth, Nazareth. His apprentices went with him. ²On the Jewish day of rest, he entered the Jewish preaching place and taught the people. Many who were listening to him were amazed. They wondered where he gained all his wisdom and the power to perform miracles. ³They said, "He is just an ordinary carpenter! We know him and his family! We know Mary his mother! We know his younger brothers James, Joses, Judas, and Simon! And his younger sisters also live here with us!" So they were troubled by his teachings. ⁴Jesus said to them, "It is certainly true that people honor prophets in other places, but not in their hometowns! Even their relatives and the people who live in their own houses do not honor them!"

⁵Although he healed a few sick people there by the laying on of hands, he was not able to perform any other miracle. ⁶He was amazed that so few people believed in him, but he was going through their villages and teaching them.

⁷One day, Jesus called the 12 apprentices together. He then told them that he was going to send them out two by two to teach people in various towns. He also gave them power to force evil spirits out of the people whom they controlled. ⁸⁻⁹He also instructed them to wear simple sandals and to take along a walking stick when they were traveling. He told them not to take food or a bag in which to put supplies or any money for their journey. He also

did not allow them to take an extra tunic. ¹⁰He also instructed them, "If someone invites you to stay in his house, live in their house until you leave that town. ¹¹Wherever the people do not welcome you and wherever the people do not listen to you, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that place. By doing that, you will be testifying that they {did not welcome you or your message}." ¹²So after the apprentices went out to various towns, they were preaching in order that people might repent {of their sins}. ¹³They were also forcing many evil spirits out from people, and they were anointing many sick people with olive oil and healing them.

¹⁴Now King Herod Antipas heard about what Jesus was doing, because many people were talking about him. Some people were saying about Jesus, "He must be John the Baptizer! He has risen from the dead! That is why he has the power to perform these miracles!" ¹⁵Others were saying about Jesus, "He is the ancient prophet Elijah, whom God promised to send back again." Others were saying about Jesus, "No, he is a different prophet, like one of the other prophets who lived long ago." ¹⁶After hearing what the people were saying, King Herod Antipas himself said, "The man performing those miracles must be John the Baptizer! I commanded my soldiers to cut off his head, but he is alive again!" ¹⁷For previously, King Herod had arrested John and thrown him in prison. He did this because Herod married his brother Philip's wife, Herodias. ¹⁸Herod put John in prison because he was saying to Herod, "God's law does not allow you to marry the wife of your brother." ¹⁹But because Herodias wanted to get further revenge on John, she wanted someone to execute him. But she could not do that, because while John was in prison, Herod kept John safe from her. ²⁰Herod did this because he respected John, because he knew that he was a righteous man who devoted himself to God. Whenever Herod listened to John, Herod became very disturbed, but he liked to listen to John. ²¹The chance for Herodias to see John put to death came when they honored Herod on his birthday. He invited the most important government officials, the most important army leaders, and the most important men in the district of Galilee to eat and celebrate with him. ²²While they were eating, Herodias' daughter came into the room and danced for the king and his guests. She pleased King Herod and his guests so much that he said to her, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you!" ²³He also promised to her, "Whatever you ask, I will give it to you! I will give you up to half of what I own and rule, if you ask for it." ²⁴After this, the daughter went to her mother, Herodias, and told her what King Herod had said. She asked her mother, "What should I ask for?" Her mother replied, "Ask the king to give you the head of John the Baptizer!" ²⁵The girl hurried back to the room and went right to the king with her request. She said, "I want you to command someone to cut off the head of John the Baptizer and bring it to me right now on a serving plate!" ²⁶The king became very distressed when he heard what she asked for because he knew John was a very righteous man. But he could not refuse what she requested, because he had promised that he would give her anything she asked for, and his guests had heard him promise. ²⁷So the king at once ordered someone to go and cut off John's head and bring it to the girl. Then that man went to the prison and cut off John's head. ²⁸He put it on a serving plate, brought it back, and gave it to the girl. The girl took it to her mother. ²⁹After John's apprentices heard what happened, they went to the prison and took John's body; then they buried it.

³⁰Those whom Jesus had chosen to represent him returned from the places to which he had sent them. They reported to him what they had done and what they had taught to people. ³¹He said to them, "Come with me to a place where no people are living, in order that we can be alone and rest a little while!" He said this because many people were continually coming to them and going away again, with the result that Jesus and his apprentices did not have time to eat or do anything else. ³²So they went away by themselves in a boat to a place where no people were living. ³³But many people saw them leaving. They also recognized that they were Jesus and the apprentices, and they saw where they were going. So they ran ahead on land from all the nearby towns to the place where Jesus and his apprentices were going. They actually arrived there before Jesus and the apprentices. ³⁴As Jesus and his apprentices got out of the boat, Jesus saw this great crowd. He felt compassion for them because they were confused, like sheep that do not have a shepherd. So he taught them many things.

³⁵Late in the afternoon the apprentices came to him and said, "This is a place where no one lives, and it is very late. ³⁶So send the people away to the surrounding towns and villages so they can buy food for themselves!" ³⁷But he replied to them, "No, you yourselves give them something to eat!" They replied to him, "We could not buy enough bread to feed this crowd, even if we had as much money as a man earns by working 200 days!" ³⁸But he replied to them, "How many loaves of bread do you have? Go and find out!" They went and found out and then they told him,

"We have only five flat loaves and two cooked fish!" ³⁹He instructed the apprentices to tell all the people to sit down on the green grass. ⁴⁰So the people sat in groups. There were 100 people in some groups and 50 people in other groups. ⁴¹Jesus took the five flat loaves and the two fish. He looked up toward heaven and thanked God for them. Then he broke the loaves and fish into pieces and kept giving them to the apprentices in order that they would distribute them to the people. ⁴²Everyone ate this food until they all had enough to eat! ⁴³The apprentices then collected twelve baskets full of pieces of bread and of the fish that were left over. ⁴⁴There were about 5,000 men who ate the bread and fish. They did not even count the women and children.

⁴⁵Right away, Jesus told his apprentices to get into the boat and then go ahead of him to a town called Bethsaida, which was further around the Sea of Galilee. He stayed and dismissed the many people who were there. ⁴⁶After he said goodbye to the people, he went up into the hills in order to pray. ⁴⁷When it was evening, the apprentices' boat was in the middle of the lake, and Jesus was by himself on the land. ⁴⁸He saw that the wind was blowing against them as they rowed. As a result, they were having great difficulty. He approached them early in the morning, when it was still dark, by walking on the water. He intended to walk by them. ⁴⁹They saw him walking on the water, but they thought that he was a ghost. They screamed ⁵⁰because they all were terrified when they saw him. But he spoke to them. He said to them, "Be calm! Do not be afraid, because it is I!" ⁵¹He got into the boat and sat down with them, and the wind stopped blowing. They were completely amazed about what he had done. ⁵²Although they had seen Jesus multiply the bread and the fish, they did not grasp the meaning of it, as they should have.

⁵³After they went further around the Sea of Galilee in a boat, they came to shore at the town of Gennesaret. Then they fastened the boat there. ⁵⁴As soon as they got out of the boat, the people there recognized Jesus. ⁵⁵So they ran throughout the whole district in order to tell others that Jesus was there. Then the people placed those who were sick on stretchers and carried them to any place where they heard people say that Jesus was. ⁵⁶In whatever village, town, or place in the countryside where he went, they would bring to the marketplaces those who were sick. Then the sick people would beg Jesus to let them touch him or even the edge of his clothes in order that Jesus might heal them. All those who touched him or his robe were healed.

Chapter 7

¹One day some Pharisees and some men who teach the Jewish laws and who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus. ²The Pharisees saw that his apprentices often ate without first washing their hands in the way of their special tradition. ³The Pharisees and all of the other Jews strictly observe their traditions that their ancestors taught. For example, they refuse to eat until they first wash their hands with a special ritual,

⁴especially after they return from buying things in the marketplace. They think that God will be angry with them if they do not do that, because some person or thing unacceptable to God might have touched them or the things they bought. ⁵That day, those Pharisees and men who studied the Jewish laws saw that some of his apprentices were eating food with hands that they had not washed using the special ritual. So they questioned Jesus and said, "Your apprentices disobey the traditions of our elders! Why do they eat food if they have not washed their hands using our ritual!" ⁶Jesus said to them, "Isaiah rebuked your ancestors, and his words describe very well you people who only pretend to be good! He wrote these words that God said:

'These people speak as if they honor me,

but they really do not think about honoring me at all.

⁷It is useless for them to worship me,

because they teach only what people say

as if I myself had commanded them.'

⁸You, like your ancestors, refuse to do what God has commanded. Instead, you follow only the traditions that others have taught.” ⁹Jesus also said to them, “You think that you are clever in refusing to do what God commanded just so that you can obey your own traditions! ¹⁰For example, our ancestor Moses wrote God’s command, ‘Honor your fathers and your mothers.’ He also wrote, ‘The authorities must execute a person who speaks evil about his father or mother.’ ¹¹But you teach people that it is alright if people give their things to God instead of giving them to their parents. You allow them to say to their parents, ‘What I was going to give to you to provide for you, I have now promised to give to God. So I cannot help you any longer!’ ¹²As a result, you are actually telling people that they no longer have to help their parents. ¹³In this way you disregard what God commanded! You teach your own things to others and tell them that they should obey them. And you do many other things like that.”

¹⁴Then Jesus again invited the crowd to come closer. Then he said to them, “All of you people, listen to me! Try to understand what I am about to tell you. ¹⁵Nothing that people eat causes God to consider them to be defiled. On the contrary, it is that which comes from people’s inner beings that causes God to consider them to be defiled.” ¹⁶[Every one of you should think carefully about what you heard me say.]

¹⁷After Jesus had left the crowd and entered a house with his apprentices. They questioned him about the parable that he had just spoken. ¹⁸He replied to them, “Did you not understand what it means? You ought to understand that nothing that enters us from outside can cause God to consider us unacceptable to him. ¹⁹Instead of entering and ruining our minds, it goes into our stomachs, and afterwards the refuse passes out of our bodies.” By saying this, Jesus was declaring that people can eat any food without causing God to consider them unacceptable to him. ²⁰He also said, “It is the thoughts and actions that come from within people that cause God to consider them unacceptable to him. ²¹Specifically, it is a person’s innermost being that causes them to think things that are evil; they act immorally, they steal things, they commit murder. ²²They commit adultery, they are greedy, they act maliciously, they deceive people. They act indecently, they envy people, they speak evil about others, they are proud, and they act foolishly. ²³People think these thoughts, and then they do these evil actions, and that is what causes God to consider them unacceptable to him.”

²⁴After Jesus and his apprentices left Galilee, they went to the region around the cities of Tyre and Sidon. While he stayed at a certain house, he did not want anyone to know it, but people soon found out that he was there. ²⁵A certain woman, whose daughter had an evil spirit within her, heard about Jesus. At once she came to him and knelt at his feet. ²⁶Now this woman was not a Jew. Her ancestors were not Jews. She herself had been born in the region of Phoenicia, in the district of Syria. She pleaded with Jesus that he force the evil spirit out from her daughter. ²⁷He said to the woman, “First let the children eat all they want, because it is not good for someone to take the food the mother has prepared for the children and then throw it to the little dogs.” ²⁸She replied to him, “Sir, what you say is correct, but even the house dogs, who lie under the table, eat the crumbs that the children drop.” ²⁹Jesus said to her, “Because of what you have said, go home. I have caused the evil spirit to leave your daughter.” ³⁰The woman returned to her house and saw that her child was lying quietly on the bed and that the evil spirit had left.

³¹Jesus and his apprentices left the region around Tyre and went north through Sidon, then toward the east through the area of the Ten Towns, and then south to the towns near the Sea of Galilee. ³²There, people brought to him a man who was deaf and could not talk. They begged Jesus to lay his hands on him in order to heal him. ³³So Jesus took him away from the crowd in order that the two of them could be alone. Then he put one of his fingers into each of the man’s ears. After he spat on his fingers, he touched the man’s tongue with his fingers. ³⁴Then he looked up toward heaven, he sighed and then in his own language he said to the man’s ears, “Ephphatha,” which means, “Be opened!” ³⁵At once the man could hear plainly. He also began to speak clearly, because what was causing him to be unable to speak was healed. ³⁶Jesus told the people not to tell anyone what he had done. But, although he repeatedly ordered them and others not to tell anyone about it, they kept talking about it all the more. ³⁷People who heard about it were utterly amazed and were saying, “Everything he has done is wonderful! Besides doing other amazing things, he enables deaf people to hear! And he enables those who cannot speak to speak!”

7:16 ^[1]

Chapter 8

¹During those days, a large crowd of people gathered again. After they had been there for two days, they had no food to eat. So Jesus called his apprentices to come close to him, and then he said to them, ²"This is the third day that these people have been with me, and they have nothing left to eat, so now I am very concerned for them. ³If I send them home while they are still hungry, some of them will faint on the way home. Some of them have come from far away." ⁴His apprentices knew that he was suggesting that they give the people something to eat, so one of them replied, "We cannot possibly find food to satisfy this crowd. No one lives in this place! ⁵Jesus asked them, "How many loaves of bread do you have?" They replied, "We have seven flat loaves." ⁶Jesus commanded the crowd, "Sit down on the ground!" After they sat down, he took the seven loaves, thanked God for them, broke them into pieces, and gave them to his apprentices to give to the people. ⁷They had also found that they had a few small fish. So after he thanked God for these, he told his apprentices, "Give them these also." After they gave the fish to the crowd, ⁸the people ate this food, and they had plenty to satisfy themselves. His apprentices collected the pieces of food that were left over and filled seven large baskets. ⁹His apprentices estimated that there were about 4,000 people who ate on that day. Then Jesus dismissed the crowd. ¹⁰Immediately after that, he got into the boat along with his apprentices, and they sailed across the Sea of Galilee to the district of Dalmanutha.

¹¹Then some Pharisees came to Jesus. They began arguing with him and insisting that he perform a miracle to show that God had sent him. ¹²Jesus sighed deeply within himself, and then he said, "Why are you asking me to perform a miracle? I will not do a miracle for you!" ¹³Then he left them. He and his apprentices got into the boat again and sailed across the Sea of Galilee. ¹⁴His apprentices had forgotten to bring along enough food. Specifically, they had only one flat loaf of bread with them in the boat. ¹⁵As they were going, Jesus warned them and said, "Be careful! Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod!" ¹⁶The apprentices misunderstood him. So they said to one another, "He must have said that because we have no bread." ¹⁷Jesus knew what they were discussing among themselves, so he said to them, "Why are you talking about not having enough bread? You should understand what I have said by now! You are not thinking! ¹⁸You have eyes, but you do not understand what you see! You have ears, but you do not understand what I say!" Then he asked, "Do you not remember what happened ¹⁹when I broke only five loaves and fed the 5,000 people? Not only was everyone satisfied, but there was food left over! How many baskets of pieces of bread that were left over did you collect?" They replied, "We collected 12 baskets full." ²⁰Then he asked, "When I broke the seven loaves in order to feed the 4,000 people, again when everyone had plenty to eat, how many large baskets of uneaten pieces of bread did you collect?" They replied, "We collected seven large baskets full." ²¹Then he said to them, "I am do not know how it can be that you still do not understand."

²²They arrived at the town of Bethsaida. People brought a blind man to Jesus and begged him to touch the man in order to heal him. ²³Jesus took the hand of the blind man and led him outside the town. After he spat into the man's eyes, and he put his hands on the man, he asked him, "Do you see anything?" ²⁴The man looked up and then he said, "Yes, I see people! They are walking around, but I cannot see them clearly. They look like trees!" ²⁵Then Jesus again touched the eyes of the blind man. The man looked intently, and at that moment he was completely healed! He could see everything clearly. ²⁶Jesus said to him, "Do not go into the town!" Then he sent the man to his home.

²⁷Jesus and his apprentices left the town of Bethsaida and went to the villages near the city of Caesarea Philippi. On the way he questioned them, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸They replied, "Some people say that you are John the Baptizer. Others say that you are the prophet Elijah. And others say that you are one of the other former prophets." ²⁹He asked them, "What about you? Who do you say that I am?" Peter replied to him, "We believe that you are the Messiah!" ³⁰Then Jesus warned them strongly that they should not tell anyone yet that he was the Messiah.

³¹Then Jesus began to teach them that he, the Son of Man, would certainly suffer very much. He would be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the men who teach the Jewish laws. He would even be killed, but on the third day after he died, he would become alive again. ³²He said this to them clearly. But Peter took Jesus aside and started to scold him for talking this way. ³³Jesus turned around and looked at his apprentices. Then he rebuked Peter, saying, "Stop thinking like that! Satan is causing you to talk like that! Instead of wanting what God wants me to do, you are wanting me to do only what people would want me to do."

³⁴Then he called the crowd together along with his apprentices so that they might listen to him. He told them, "If any one of you wants to be my apprentice, you must not do only what makes you live easily. You must be willing to suffer pain like criminals who are forced to carry crosses to the places where they will be crucified. That is what anyone who wants to be my apprentice must do. ³⁵You must do that because those who try to save their lives by denying that they belong to me will lose their lives. Those who are killed because they are my apprentices and because they tell others the good news will live forever with me. ³⁶People might get everything they want in this world, but they are really gaining nothing if they do not gain eternal life! ³⁷Think carefully about the fact that there is absolutely nothing that people can give to God that would enable them to gain eternal life! ³⁸And think about this: Many people refuse to say that they belong to me. They reject what I say in these days when many people have turned away from God and live in sin, I, the Son of Man, will also refuse to say that they belong to me when I come back with the holy angels and have the glory that my Father has!"

Chapter 9

¹Jesus also said to the crowds and his apprentices, "Listen carefully! Some of you who are here now will not die before you see God ruling powerfully!"

²Six days later Jesus took with him Peter, James, and James' brother, John, and led them up a high mountain. While they were alone up there, he appeared very different to them. ³His clothes became dazzling white. They were whiter than anyone on earth could make them by bleaching them. ⁴Two prophets who had lived long ago, Moses and Elijah, appeared to them. Then the two of them began talking with Jesus. ⁵After a short time, Peter said, "Teacher, it is wonderful to be here! So allow us to make three shelters. One will be for you, one will be for Moses, and one will be for Elijah!" ⁶He said this because he wanted to say something, but he did not know what to say, because he and the other two apprentices were very frightened. ⁷Then a cloud appeared, and it covered them. God spoke to them from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son. He is the one whom I love. Therefore, you should pay attention to what he says!" ⁸When the three apprentices looked around, they suddenly saw that only Jesus was with them and that Elijah and Moses were no longer there.

⁹While they were coming down the mountain, Jesus told them that they should not tell anyone yet what had just happened to him. He said, "You may tell them after I, the Son of Man, become alive again after I die." ¹⁰So they did not tell others about it for a long time. But they discussed among themselves what it meant when he said that he would rise from the dead.

¹¹The three apprentices asked Jesus, "The men who teach the Jewish laws say that Elijah must come back to the earth before the Messiah comes to earth, {but we have just seen Elijah,} so is what they are teaching wrong?"

¹²⁻¹³Jesus answered them, "It is true that God promised to send Elijah to come first to put everything as it should be. But Elijah has already come, and our leaders treated him very badly, just like they wanted to do just like prophets long ago had said they would. But there is much written in the Scriptures about me, the Son of Man. The Scriptures say that I will suffer a lot and that people will reject me."

¹⁴Then Jesus and those three apprentices arrived where the other apprentices were. They saw a large crowd around the other apprentices and some men who taught the Jewish laws arguing with them. ¹⁵The crowd was very surprised to see Jesus come. So they ran to him and greeted him. ¹⁶Jesus asked them, "What are you arguing about?" ¹⁷A man in the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son here to you {in order that you would heal him}. There is an evil spirit in him that makes him unable to talk. ¹⁸Whenever the spirit begins to control him, it

throws him down. He foams at the mouth, he grinds his teeth together, and he becomes stiff. I asked your apprentices to expel the spirit, but they were not able to do it." ¹⁹Jesus replied to them by saying, "You faithless people! I have become greatly wearied by your unbelief! Bring the boy to me." ²⁰So they brought the boy to Jesus. As soon as the evil spirit saw Jesus, it shook the boy severely, and the boy fell on the ground. He rolled around and foamed at the mouth. ²¹Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" He replied, "This started to happen when he was a child. ²²The spirit does not only do this, but he also often throws him into the fire or into the water in order to kill him. Pity us and help us, if you can!" ²³Jesus exclaimed to him, "Of course I can! God can do anything for people who believe that he is able to do it!" ²⁴Immediately the child's father shouted, "I believe that you can help me, but I do not believe strongly. Help me to believe more strongly!" ²⁵Jesus saw that the crowd was growing. He rebuked the evil spirit: "You evil spirit, you who are causing this boy to be deaf and unable to talk! I command you to come out of him and never enter him again!" ²⁶The evil spirit shouted and shook the boy violently, and then it left the boy. The boy did not move. He seemed like a dead body. So most of the people there said, "He has died!" ²⁷However, Jesus took the boy by the hand and helped him get up. Then the boy stood up. ²⁸Later, when Jesus and his apprentices were alone in a house, they asked him, "Why were we not able to force the evil spirit out?" ²⁹Jesus said to them, "You can force this type of evil spirit out only by abstaining from food and praying to God. There is no other way that you can expel them."

³⁰After Jesus and his apprentices left that region, they traveled through the region of Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone else to know where he was. ³¹Jesus wanted to have time to teach his apprentices. He was telling them, "Someday my enemies will arrest me, the Son of Man, and I will be put into the hands of other men. Those men will kill me. But on the third day after I die, I will become alive again!" ³²The apprentices did not understand what Jesus was telling them, and they were afraid to ask him what he meant.

³³Then Jesus and his apprentices returned to the town of Capernaum. When they were in the house, Jesus asked them, "What were you talking about while we were traveling on the road?" ³⁴But the apprentices did not reply. They were ashamed to reply because, while they were traveling, they had been arguing with each other about which one of them was the most important. ³⁵Jesus sat down. He called his 12 apprentices to come close to him, and then he said to them, "If anyone wants God to consider him to be the most important person of all, he must consider himself to be the least important person of all, and he must serve everyone else." ³⁶Then Jesus took a child and placed him among them. He took the child in his arms, and then he said to them, ³⁷"Those who welcome a child like this one because they love me, God considers that they are welcoming me. Whoever welcomes me, it is as though they are also welcoming God, who sent me to represent him."

³⁸John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone who was forcing evil spirits out of people. He claimed that he had authority from you to do that. So we told him to stop doing it, because he was not one of us apprentices." ³⁹Jesus said, "Do not tell him to stop doing that. For no person will say bad things about me soon after performing a mighty deed with my authority. ⁴⁰Those who are not opposing us are trying to achieve the same goals that we are. ⁴¹God will certainly reward those who help you in any way, even if they simply give you a cup of water to drink because you follow me, the Messiah!"

⁴²Jesus also said, "But if you cause someone who believes in me to sin, God will punish you severely. If someone tied a very heavy stone around your neck and threw you into the sea, that would be better for you than if God punished you for causing a person who believes in me to sin. ⁴³So if you are wanting to use one of your hands to sin, do not use it! Even if you have to cut your hand off and throw it away to avoid sinning, do it! It is better that you live eternally, even though you lack one of your hands while you are here on earth. But it is not good that you sin and as a result God throws your whole body into hell. There, the fires never go out! ⁴⁴[1] [It is a place where maggots never stop feeding on them, and the fire that burns them never goes out.] ⁴⁵If you are wanting to use one of your feet to sin, stop using your foot! Even if you have to cut off your foot to avoid sinning, do it! It is good that you {do not sin and} do live eternally, even though you lack one of your feet while you are here on earth. But it is not good {that you sin, and as a result,} God puts your whole body into hell ⁴⁶[2] [where maggots never stop feeding on them, and the fire that burns them never goes out.] ⁴⁷If because of what you see you are tempted to sin, stop looking at those things! Stop even if you have to gouge out your eye and throw it away to avoid sinning,

do it! It is better to have only one eye and to enter the kingdom over which God reigns, than to have two eyes and have him throw you into hell. ⁴⁸In that place maggots feed on the people there forever, and the fires are never put out.

⁴⁹You must endure difficulties in order that God will be pleased with you. Your difficulties are like a fire that makes things pure. Your enduring is also like people putting salt on their sacrifices to make them pure. ⁵⁰Salt is useful to put on food, but you cannot make it taste salty again if it becomes flavorless. Similarly, you must remain useful to God, because how can you become useful to God again if you become useless. You must also live peacefully with each other."

9:44 ^[1]

9:46 ^[2]

Chapter 10

¹Jesus left that place with his apprentices, and they went through the region of Judea and on across to the east side of the Jordan River. When crowds of people again gathered around him, he taught them again, as he regularly did.

²While Jesus was teaching, some Pharisees approached him and asked him, "Does our law permit a man to divorce his wife?" They asked that in order to be able to criticize him no matter whether he answered "yes" or "no." ³Jesus answered them, "What did Moses command your ancestors about a man divorcing his wife?" ⁴One of them replied, "Moses permitted that a man may write out divorce papers so that he may send her away." ⁵Jesus said to them, "It was because of your rebellious attitude that Moses gave you that rule for you. ⁶Remember that when God first created people, he made one man, and he made one woman to become that man's wife. ⁷That explains why God said, 'When a man and woman marry, they should no longer live with their fathers and mothers after they marry. ⁸Instead, the two of them will live together, and they will become so closely united that they are like one person.' Therefore, although the people who marry were two separate persons before, God regards them as one person after marriage{, so he wants them to remain married to each other}. ⁹Because that is true, a man must not divorce his wife. God has joined them together, and he wishes them to stay together!"

¹⁰When Jesus and his apprentices were alone in a house, they asked him again about this. ¹¹Jesus said to them, "God considers that any man who divorces his wife and marries another woman is committing adultery. ¹²God also considers a woman who divorces her husband and marries another man to be committing adultery."

¹³Now people were bringing children to Jesus so that he would lay his hands on them and bless them. But his apprentices scolded those people. ¹⁴When Jesus saw that, he became angry. He said to his apprentices, "Allow the children to come to me! Do not forbid them! It is people who are humble and trust God as they do who can experience God ruling in their lives. ¹⁵Note this: Those who do not welcome God's rule over them in the same manner as children do—they will surely not enter the kingdom over which God reigns." ¹⁶Then Jesus held the children in his arms. He also put his hands on them and called on God to do good to them.

¹⁷As Jesus was starting to travel again with his apprentices, a man ran up to him. He knelt before Jesus and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do so that I can live with God eternally?" ¹⁸Jesus said to him, "You do not realize what you are saying by calling me good! Only God is good! ¹⁹{But to answer your question,} you know the commandments of Moses: 'Do not murder anyone, do not commit adultery, do not steal from anyone, do not lie about anything, do not cheat anyone, and be respectful towards your father and mother.'" ²⁰The man said to him, "Teacher, I have obeyed all those commandments ever since I was young." ²¹Jesus looked at him with warm affection. He said to him, "There is one thing that you have not yet done. You must go home, sell all that you possess, and then give the money to poor people. As a result, you will be spiritually rich in heaven. After you have done what I have told you, come with me and be my disciple!" ²²The man was upset by Jesus' instructions. He left in great sorrow, for he could not part with his wealth. ²³Jesus looked around at the people. Then he exclaimed to his apprentices, "It is very difficult for people who are wealthy to place themselves under God's rule over them." ²⁴The apprentices were surprised by what Jesus said. {They thought that God favored the rich people, so if God did not

save them, he would not save anyone.} Jesus said again, "You dear believers who are under my care, it is very difficult for anyone to decide to let God rule his life. ²⁵It is impossible for a very large animal like a camel to go through the tiny hole in a sewing needle. It is almost as difficult for rich people to decide to let God rule their lives." ²⁶The apprentices were very amazed. So they said to Jesus, "If that is so, then how can anyone be saved!" ²⁷Jesus looked at them, and then he said, "Yes, it is impossible for people to save themselves! But God certainly can save them, because God can do anything!" ²⁸Peter said, "Look, we have left behind everything, and we have become your apprentices." ²⁹Jesus replied, "I want you to know this: Those who have left their houses, their brothers, their sisters, their father, their mother, their children, or their plots of ground to be my disciples and to proclaim the good news, ³⁰they will receive in this life a hundred times as much as they left behind. That will include houses and family members: brothers and sisters and mothers and children, and plots of ground. Also, people will persecute them {here on earth because they believe in me}, but in the future age they will live with God eternally. ³¹Many people who are considered by others to be very important will be considered unimportant by God, and many people who are considered by others to be unimportant will be considered very important by God!"

³²Some days later as they continued to travel, Jesus and his apprentices were walking on the road that leads up to the city of Jerusalem. Jesus was walking ahead of them. The apprentices were astonished and the other people who were with them were afraid. Along the way Jesus took the 12 apprentices to a place by themselves again. Then he began to tell them about what was going to happen to him. ³³He said, "Listen carefully! We are going up to Jerusalem. There the chief priests and the teachers of the Jewish laws will arrest me, the Son of Man. They will declare that I must die. Then they will take me to the Roman authorities. ³⁴Their men will ridicule me and spit on me. They will scourge me, and then they will kill me. But on the third day after that, I will become alive again!"

³⁵Along the way, James and John, who were the two sons of Zebedee, approached Jesus and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us what we will ask you to do!" ³⁶Jesus said to them, "What is it that you want me to do for you?" ³⁷They said to him, "When you rule gloriously, let one of us sit at your right side and one sit at your left side." ³⁸But Jesus said to them, "You do not understand what you are asking for." {Then he asked them,} "Can you endure suffering like I am about to suffer? Can you endure people killing you as they will kill me?" ³⁹They said to him, "Yes, we are able to do that!" Then Jesus said to them, "It is true that you will endure suffering like I will suffer, and you will endure people killing you as they will kill me. ⁴⁰But I am not the one who chooses who will sit next to me. God will give those places to the ones whom he chooses in advance."

⁴¹The other ten apprentices later heard about what James and John had requested. {As a result,} they were angry with them. ⁴²Then, after Jesus called them all together, he said to them, "You know that those who rule the non-Jews enjoy showing that they are powerful. You also know that their officials enjoy commanding others. ⁴³But do not be like them! On the contrary, if any of you want to achieve greatness, he must consider himself as the servant of others. ⁴⁴And, if any one of you wants God to consider him to be the most important, he must take the role of a slave for the rest of you. ⁴⁵Even I, the Son of Man, did not come to receive service but to give service and to die for people as payment for their sin, buying them freedom from the punishment God set for sinners."

⁴⁶On the way to the city of Jerusalem, Jesus and his apprentices came to the city of Jericho. Then, while they were leaving Jericho along with a great crowd, a man who could not see and who often asked others for money was sitting beside the road. His name was Bartimaeus, and his father's name was Timaeus. ⁴⁷When he heard people say that Jesus from Nazareth was passing by, he shouted, "Jesus! You who are descended from King David, help me!" ⁴⁸Many people scolded him and told him that he should be quiet. Instead, he shouted even more loudly, "You who are descended from King David, be merciful to me!" ⁴⁹Jesus stopped and said, "Call him to come over here!" They called the blind man, saying, "Jesus is calling you! So cheer up and stand up and come!" ⁵⁰He threw aside his cloak as he jumped up, and he came to Jesus. ⁵¹Jesus asked him, "How would you like me to help you?" The blind man said to him, "Teacher, I want to be able to see again!" ⁵²Jesus said to him, "Because you have trusted in me, I have healed you! So you may go!" He could see immediately. And he went with Jesus along the road.

Chapter 11

¹When Jesus and his apprentices came close to Jerusalem, they came to the villages of Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus sent two of his apprentices on ahead of them. ²Jesus said to them, "Go to that village just ahead of us. As soon as you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied up there. It is an animal that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it to me. ³If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing that?' say, 'Jesus needs it. He will send it back here with someone as soon as he no longer needs it.'" ⁴So the two apprentices went, and they found the donkey. It was tied close to the door of a house and was standing in the street. Then they untied it. ⁵Some of the people who were there asked Jesus' two apprentices, "Why are you untying the donkey?" ⁶They told them what Jesus had instructed them to say. So the people permitted them to take the donkey. ⁷The two apprentices took the donkey to Jesus and put their robes on it {to make something for him to sit on}. Jesus then sat on the donkey. ⁸Many people spread their robes on the road in front of him. Others cut branches from palm trees in nearby fields and spread them along the road. ⁹The people who were going in front of him and behind him were all shouting, "Praise God!" {and} "May God bless this one who comes as his representative." ¹⁰{They also shouted,} May God bless you when you rule like our ancestor King David ruled!" "Praise God who is in the highest heaven!"

¹¹Jesus entered Jerusalem with them, and then he went into the temple courtyard. After he looked around at everything there, he left the city because it was already late in the afternoon. He returned to the village of Bethany with the 12 apprentices.

¹²The next day, as Jesus and his apprentices were leaving Bethany, he felt hungry. ¹³At a distance, he saw a fig tree with all its leaves, so he went to it to see if he could find any figs on it. But when he came to it, he found no fruit on it, only leaves. This was because it was not yet the normal time of year when fig trees would produce ripe figs. ¹⁴He said to the tree, "No one will ever eat fruit from you again." And his apprentices heard this.

¹⁵Jesus and his apprentices went back into Jerusalem and entered the temple courtyard. He saw people who were selling and buying animals for sacrifices. He chased those people from the temple courtyard. He also overturned the tables of those who were selling temple tax money in exchange for Roman coins. And he overturned the seats of the men who were selling pigeons for buyers to sacrifice. ¹⁶He would not allow anyone who was carrying anything to sell to go through the temple area. ¹⁷Then as he taught those people, he said to them, "One of the prophets wrote in the Scriptures that God said, 'I want people to call my house a house where people from all nations may pray,' but you robbers have made it like a cave where robbers hide." ¹⁸The chief priests and the men who taught the Jewish laws later heard about what Jesus had done. They were planning how they might kill him, but they feared him because they realized that the whole crowd was amazed at what he was teaching. ¹⁹That evening, Jesus and his apprentices left the city {and again slept in Bethany}.

²⁰The next morning while they were going along the road toward Jerusalem, they saw that the fig tree that Jesus had cursed had dried and shriveled completely. ²¹Peter remembered what Jesus had said to the fig tree, and he said to Jesus, "Teacher, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered!" ²²Jesus replied, "You should not be surprised that God did what I asked! You must trust that God will do whatever you ask him to do! ²³Also note this: If anyone says to this mountain, 'Rise up and throw yourself into the sea,' if he does not doubt that what he asks for will happen, that is, if he believes that it will happen, God will do it for him. ²⁴So I tell you, whenever you ask God for something when you pray, believe that you will receive it, and, if you do trust in him, God will do it for you. ²⁵Now, I tell you this also: Whenever you are praying, if you have a grudge against any person because they have sinned against you, cancel their debt to you so that your Father in heaven will likewise cancel your debt to him for your sins." ²⁶[1] [But if you do not cancel their debt, neither will your Father, who is in heaven, cancel your debt for your sins.]

²⁷Jesus and his apprentices arrived in the temple courtyard in Jerusalem again. While Jesus was walking there, a group consisting of chief priests, some men who taught the Jewish laws, and elders came to him. ²⁸They said to him, "By what authority are you doing these things? Who authorized you to do things like those you did here yesterday?" ²⁹Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question. If you answer me, then I will tell you who authorized

me to do those things. ³⁰Was it God who authorized John to baptize those who came to him? Or was it people who authorized him?" ³¹They debated among themselves as to what they should answer. They said to each other, "If we say that it was God who authorized him, he will say to us, 'Then you should have believed what John said!'" ³²On the other hand, if we say that it was people who authorized John, then what will happen to us?" They were afraid to say that about where John got his authority, because they knew that the people would be very angry with them. They knew that all the people truly believed that John was a prophet whom God had sent. ³³So they answered Jesus, "We do not know who authorized John to baptize people." Then Jesus said to them, "Because you did not answer my question, I will not tell you who authorized me to do those things here yesterday."

11:26 ^[1]

Chapter 12

¹Then Jesus began to tell the Jewish leaders a story with a lesson. He said, "A certain man planted a vineyard. He built a fence around it in order to protect it. He made a stone tank to collect the grape juice that they would press out of the grapes. He also built a tower for someone to sit in to guard his vineyard. He rented the vineyard to some people who would take care of it and he left to travel to a different country. ²When the time came to harvest the grapes, the owner of the vineyard sent a servant to the people who were taking care of his vineyard, because he wanted to receive from them his share of the grapes that the vineyard had produced. ³But when the servant arrived, they grabbed him and beat the servant, and they did not give him any of the fruit. Then they sent him away. ⁴Later the owner sent another of his servants to them. But they beat that one on the head, and they insulted him. ⁵Later the owner sent still another servant. That man the people who were caring for the vineyard killed. They also mistreated many other servants whom he sent. Some they beat and some they killed. ⁶The owner still had one other person with him, his son, whom he loved very much. So, finally he sent his son to them, because he thought that they would recognize his son and treat him well. ⁷But when the people who were caring for the vineyard saw his son coming, they said to each other, 'Look! Here comes the owner's son, who will someday inherit the vineyard! So let us kill him in order that this vineyard will be ours!' ⁸They seized the owner's son and killed him. Then they threw his body outside the vineyard. ⁹So I will tell you what the owner of the vineyard will do. He will come, and he will kill those evil men who were taking care of his vineyard. Then he will arrange for other people to take care of it. ¹⁰Are you not aware of what the scripture says?

The men who were building the building refused to use a certain stone. But the Lord has put that same stone in its proper place, and it has become the most important stone in the building! ¹¹The Lord has done this, and we marvel as we look at it."

¹²Then the Jewish leaders realized that Jesus was accusing them when he told this story about what those wicked people did. So the Jewish leaders wanted to arrest him, but they were afraid of what the crowds of people would do if the Jewish leaders did that. So they left him and went away.

¹³The Jewish leaders sent to Jesus some Pharisees {who thought that the Jews should pay only the tax that their own Jewish authorities required people to pay}. They also sent some members of the party that supported Herod Antipas and the Roman government. They wanted to trick Jesus; they wanted to make Jesus say something that would make one of those groups angry with him so they could bring charges against him. ¹⁴After they arrived, one of them said to Jesus, "Teacher, we know that you teach only what is true. We also know that you are not influenced by people's opinions. Instead, you truthfully teach all people what God wants them to do; you do not show regard for their social position. {So tell us what you think about this matter:} Is it right that we pay taxes to the Roman government, or not? Should we pay the taxes, or should we not pay them?" ¹⁵Jesus knew that they did not really want to know what God wanted them to do. So he said to them, "I know that you are just trying to make me say something wrong for which you can accuse me, {but I will answer your question anyway.} Bring me a coin so that I might look at it." ¹⁶After they had brought him a coin, he asked them, "Whose picture is on this coin? And whose name is on it?" They replied, "It is a picture and the name of Caesar {the man who rules the Roman government}."

¹⁷Jesus said to them, “[In that case] give to the government what belongs to the government and give to God what belongs to God.” They were amazed by what he said.

¹⁸Men who belong to the Sadducee group deny that people become alive again after they die. [In order to discredit Jesus by ridiculing the idea that people will live again, some of them] came to him and asked him, ¹⁹“Teacher, Moses instructed us Jews that if a man who has no children dies, his brother should marry the dead man’s widow. Then if those two bear children, everyone will consider that those children are the children of the man who died, and in that way the dead man will continue to have descendants. ²⁰So here is an example: There were seven brothers in one family. The oldest one married a woman, but he and his wife did not bear any children. Then he later died. ²¹The second brother [followed this law and] married that woman and he, too, did not bear any children. Then he later died. The third brother did like his other brothers did. But he also did not bear any children, and later died. ²²Eventually all seven brothers married that woman one by one, but no one had any children, and one by one they died. Afterwards the woman died, too. ²³[Therefore, if what some people say were true, that people will become alive again after they die,] whose wife do you think that woman will be when people become alive again? Keep in mind that she had been married to all seven brothers!” ²⁴Jesus replied to them, “You are certainly wrong. You do not know what the Scriptures teach about this. You also do not understand God’s power to make people alive again. ²⁵[That woman will not be the wife of any of those brothers,] because when people become alive again, instead of men having wives and women having husbands, they will be like the angels in heaven. [Angels do not marry.] ²⁶But let me talk about people becoming alive again after they die. In the book that Moses wrote, he said something about people who have died that I am sure that you have read. When Moses was looking at the bush that was burning, God said to him, ‘I am the God whom Abraham worships and the God whom Isaac worships and the God whom Jacob worships.’ [God would not have said that if he had not made those men alive again and if he was not still their God.] ²⁷Now it is not dead people who worship God. It is living people who worship him. So when you say that dead people do not become alive again, you are very wrong.”

²⁸A man who taught the Jewish laws heard their discussion. He knew that Jesus had answered the Sadducees’ question very well. So he stepped forward and asked Jesus, “Which commandment is the most important?” ²⁹Jesus answered, “The most important commandment is this: ‘Listen, you people of Israel! The Lord our God, he only is our God. ³⁰You must love the Lord your God in all that you want and feel, in all that you think, and in all that you do!’ ³¹The next most important commandment is: ‘You must love the people around you as much as you love yourself.’ No other commandment is more important than these two!” ³²The man said to Jesus, “Teacher, you have answered well. You say truthfully that God is the only God and that there is no other God. ³³You have also said correctly that we should love God in all that we want and feel, in all that we think, and in all that we do. And you have said correctly that we must love people with whom we come in contact as much as we love ourselves. And you have also correctly said that doing these things pleases God more than burning food or animals as an offering or giving other sacrifices.” ³⁴Jesus realized that this man had answered wisely. So he said to him, “[I perceive that] you are close to deciding to let God rule over you.” After that, the Jewish leaders were afraid to ask him any more questions like that to try to trap him.

³⁵Later, while Jesus was teaching in the temple area, he said to the people, “How is it that those who teach the Jewish laws say—and they are correct in saying—that the Messiah is a descendant of King David? ³⁶The Holy Spirit caused David to say about the Messiah, ‘God said to my Lord, “Sit here beside me at my right hand, in the place where I will highly honor you above everyone else! Sit here until the time when I completely defeat your enemies!”’ ³⁷Therefore, because David himself calls the Messiah ‘my Lord,’ how can the Messiah be just a man who descended from King David? He must be much greater than David!” Many people listened gladly to him as he taught those things.

³⁸While Jesus was teaching the people, he said to them, “Beware that you do not act like the men who teach our Jewish laws. They like people to honor them, so they put on long robes and walk around in order to show people how important they are. They also like people to greet them respectfully in the marketplaces. ³⁹They like to sit in the most important seats in the Jewish meeting place. At festivals, they like to sit in the seats where the most honored people sit. ⁴⁰They [also] steal all the property of widows. But to make other people think that they are righteous, they pray for a long time [in public]. God will certainly punish them severely!”

⁴¹Later, Jesus sat down in the temple area opposite the boxes in which people put offerings for God. As he was sitting there, he watched as many people put money into one of the boxes, and he noticed many rich people put in large amounts of money. ⁴²Then a poor widow came along and dropped in two small copper coins, which together are equal in value to one Roman quadrans. ⁴³⁻⁴⁴Jesus gathered his apprentices around him and said to them, "The truth is that those other people have a lot of money, but they gave only a small part of it. But this woman, who is very poor, has put in all the money that she had to pay for the things she needed for today. So this poor widow has put more money into the box than all the others!"

Chapter 13

¹While Jesus was leaving the temple area, one of his apprentices said to him, "Teacher, look at how marvelous these huge cut blocks of stone in the walls are and how wonderful these buildings are!" ²Jesus said to him, "Yes, these buildings that you are looking at are wonderful, but I want to tell you something about them. {Foreign invaders} will destroy them completely, with the result that no stone here in this temple area will be left on top of another stone."

³After they arrived at the Mount of Olives across the valley from the temple, Jesus sat down. When Peter, James, John, and Andrew were alone with him, they asked him, ⁴"Tell us, when will these things that God has planned happen? What will happen to show us these things are about to take place?" ⁵Jesus replied to them, "Beware that no one deceive you concerning what will happen! ⁶Many people will come, and each will claim to be me. Each will say about himself, 'I am the Messiah!' They will deceive many people. ⁷Whenever people tell you about wars that are happening and about wars that could happen, do not let yourself be troubled. These things will definitely happen. But when they do happen, do not think that it is the end of the world! ⁸Groups who live in various countries will fight each other, and various governments will fight each other. There will also be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines. Yet, when these things happen, people will have only just begun to suffer. These first things that they suffer will be like the first pains a woman suffers who is about to bear a child. They will suffer much more after that.

⁹Be ready for what people will do to you at that time. Because you believe in me, they will arrest you and put you on trial before the religious councils. In the Jewish meeting place, others will beat you. People will put you on trial in the presence of high government authorities. As a result, you will be able to tell them about me. ¹⁰My followers must proclaim the good news to people in all nations before God finishes everything that he has planned. ¹¹When people arrest you in order to prosecute you, do not worry about what you will say. Instead, say what God puts into your mind at that time. Then it will not be just you who will be speaking. It will be the Holy Spirit who will be speaking through you. ¹²{Other evil things will happen:} People who do not believe in me will help others seize their brothers and sisters in order that the government can execute them. Some parents will betray their children and some children will betray their parents so that government officials will kill their parents. ¹³Many people will hate you because you believe in me. But God will save all of you who continue to trust in me strongly {until your life ends}.

¹⁴During that time the detestable thing will enter the temple. It will defile the temple and cause people to abandon it. When you see it where it should not be, you should run away quickly! (May everyone who is reading this pay attention to this warning!) At that time those people who are in the district of Judea should flee to higher hills.

¹⁵Those people who are outside their houses should not enter their houses in order to get anything. ¹⁶Those who are working in a field should not return to their houses in order to get additional clothes. ¹⁷When this happens, how terrible it will be for pregnant women and for those who are nursing their babies. ¹⁸⁻¹⁹In those days people will suffer very severely. People have never suffered like that from the time when God first created the world until now, and people will not suffer that way again. So pray that this painful time will not happen in winter, {when it will be hard to travel}. ²⁰If God had not decided that he would shorten that time when people suffer so much, everyone would die. But he has decided to shorten that time because he is concerned about the people whom he has chosen. ²¹⁻²²At that time people will falsely say that they are the Messiah. And some will appear claiming to be prophets from God. Then they will perform many kinds of miracles. They will even try to deceive the people whom

God has chosen. So at that time if someone says to you, 'Look, here is the Messiah!', or if someone says, 'Look, there he is!', do not believe it! ²³Be alert! Remember that I have warned you about all this before it happens!

²⁴After the time when people suffer like that, God will cause the sun to become dark and the moon will not shine;

²⁵God will cause the stars to fall from the sky and all the things in the sky to shake out of their place. ²⁶Then people will see me, the Son of Man, coming in the clouds powerfully and gloriously. ²⁷Then I will send out my angels so they can gather together the people whom God has chosen from everywhere, from the most remote places on earth.

²⁸Now I want you to learn something from how fig trees grow. When their branches become tender and their leaves begin to sprout, you know that summer is almost here. ²⁹Similarly, when you see what I have just described happening, you yourselves will know that it is very near the time for me to return. It will be as though I am already at the door. ³⁰Keep this in mind: this generation will not die until every one of these things take place. ³¹{You can be certain that these things that I have prophesied will happen.} The earth and what is in the sky will one day be destroyed, but these things that I have told you will certainly happen. ³²But no one knows the exact time when I will return. The angels in heaven also do not know. Even I, God's Son, do not know. Only my Father knows. ³³So be ready! Always be alert and prayerful, because you do not know the time when I will return! ³⁴It will be similar to this. When a man who wants to travel to a distant place is about to leave his house, he tells his servants that they should manage the house. He tells each one what he should do. Then he tells the doorkeeper to be ready for his return. ³⁵That man must always be ready, because he does not know whether his master will return in the evening, at midnight, when the rooster crows at dawn, or in the morning after light from the sun has appeared in the sky. Similarly, you also must always be ready, because you do not know when I will return. ³⁶May it not happen that when I come suddenly, I will find that you are not ready! ³⁷These words that I am saying to you apprentices I am saying to everyone: Always be ready!"

Chapter 14

¹It was only two days before the people would begin to celebrate the week-long festival that they called the Passover. During those days they also celebrated the festival which they called The Feast of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the men who taught the Jewish laws were planning how they could arrest Jesus deceitfully. They wanted to accuse him in front of the Roman authorities so that they would execute him. ²They were saying to one another, "We must not do it during the celebration because if we do it then, the people will be very angry with us and riot!"

³Jesus was a guest in the village of Bethany, in the house of Simon, who previously had leprosy. While they were eating, a woman came to him. She was carrying a stone jar that contained an expensive, fragrant ointment which was made of very expensive, pure nard. She opened the jar and then poured all the fragrant ointment on Jesus' head. ⁴Some of the people who were present became angry and said to themselves, "It is terrible that she wasted that fragrant ointment! ⁵It could have been sold for a year's wages, and then the money could have been given to poor people!" They rebuked her. ⁶But Jesus said, "Stop scolding her! She has done to me what I consider to be very appropriate. So you should not bother her! ⁷You will always have poor people among you. So you can help them whenever you want to. But I will not be here with you much longer. ⁸{It is appropriate that} she has done what she was able. It is as if she knew that I was going to die soon and has anointed my body for their burying it. ⁹I will tell you this: Wherever my followers preach the good news throughout the world, they will also tell what she has done, and people will remember her."

¹⁰Then Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests to talk about helping them to capture Jesus. {He did that even though} he was one of the 12 apprentices. ¹¹When the chief priests heard what he was willing to do for them, they were very happy. They promised that they would reward him with money in return. Judas agreed and began watching for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them.

¹²On the first day of the celebration that they call Unleavened Bread, when they kill the lambs for the Passover, Jesus' apprentices said to him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare the meal for the Passover celebration so that we can eat it?" ¹³So Jesus chose two of his apprentices to prepare everything. He said to them, "Go into the city of Jerusalem. You will meet a man who will be carrying a large jar full of water. Follow him. ¹⁴When he enters a house, say to the man who owns the house, 'Our teacher wants us to prepare the meal of the Passover celebration so that he can eat it with us his apprentices. Please show us the room.' ¹⁵He will show you a large room that is on the upper floor of the house. It will have carpets, eating couches, and an eating table, and it will be ready for us to eat a meal in it. Then prepare the meal there for us." ¹⁶So the two apprentices left. They went into the city and found everything to be just as he had told them. Then they prepared the meal for the Passover celebration.

¹⁷When it was evening, Jesus arrived at that house with the 12 apprentices.

¹⁸As they were all lying back beside the table and eating, Jesus said, "Listen carefully to this: One of you will enable my enemies to arrest me. It is one of you who is eating with me right now!" ¹⁹The apprentices became very sad, and each one said to Jesus, one after another, "Certainly it is not I who will betray you, right?" ²⁰Then he said to them, "It is one of you 12 apprentices, the person who is dipping bread into the sauce in the dish along with me. ²¹It is certain that I, the Son of Man, will die, because that is what the prophets have written about me. But there will be terrible punishment for the man who will help my enemies seize me! In fact, it would be better for that man if he had never been born!"

²²While they were eating, he took a flat loaf of bread and thanked God for it. Then he broke it into pieces and gave it to them and said to them, "This bread is my body. Take it and eat it." ²³Afterwards, he took a cup that contained wine and thanked God for it. Then he gave it to his apprentices, and they all drank from the cup. ²⁴Jesus said to his apprentices, "This wine is my blood, which is about to flow from my body when my enemies kill me. With this blood I will confirm the agreement that God has made to forgive the sins of many people. ²⁵I want you to know this: I will not drink any more wine until the time when I drink it again when God rules everywhere as king." ²⁶After they sang a song praising God, Jesus and his apprentices went out toward the Mount of Olives.

²⁷While they were on their way, Jesus said to his apprentices, "Zechariah the prophet wrote in the Scriptures that God said about me, 'I will kill the shepherd and his sheep will scatter.' Those words will come true. You will all leave me and run away. ²⁸But after God makes me alive again, I will go ahead of you to the district of Galilee and meet you there." ²⁹Peter said to Jesus, "Perhaps all the other apprentices will leave you, but not I! I will not leave you!" ³⁰Then Jesus said to Peter, "The truth is that this very night, before the rooster crows two times, you yourself will say about me three times that you do not know me." ³¹But Peter replied strongly, "Even if they kill me, I will never say that I do not know you." And all the other apprentices said the same thing.

³²Jesus and his apprentices went to the place that people call Gethsemane. Jesus said to some of his apprentices, "Stay here while I pray!" ³³He took Peter, James, and John with him. Jesus became extremely emotionally anguished. ³⁴He said to them, "I am very sorrowful. It is as if I were about to die. You men stay here and keep watch!" ³⁵Jesus went a bit farther and threw himself on the ground. Then he prayed that if it were possible, he would not have to suffer. ³⁶He said, "O my Father, because you are able to do everything, rescue me so that I do not have to suffer now! But do not do what I want. Instead, do what you want!" ³⁷Then Jesus returned to where he had left Peter, James, and John. He found these apprentices sleeping. He woke them up and said to Peter, who was also called Simon, "Simon! I am disappointed that you fell asleep and that you were not able to stay awake for just a short time!" ³⁸{And Jesus said to them,} "You want to do what I say, but you are not strong enough. Keep awake and pray so that you can resist when you are tempted!" ³⁹Then he went away again and prayed again what he had prayed before. ⁴⁰When Jesus returned, he found that they were sleeping again; they were so sleepy that they could not keep their eyes open. Because they were ashamed, they did not know what to say to him when he awakened them. ⁴¹Then Jesus went and prayed once more. He returned a third time and found them sleeping again. He said to them, "I am disappointed that you are sleeping again! You have slept enough. The time for me to suffer is about to begin. Look! Someone is about to enable sinful men to seize me, the Son of Man. ⁴²So get up! Let us go! Look! Here comes the one who is enabling them to seize me!"

⁴³While he was still speaking, Judas arrived. Even though he was one of Jesus' 12 apprentices, he came to enable Jesus' enemies to capture him. A crowd who carried swords and clubs was with him. The leaders of the Jewish Council had sent them. ⁴⁴Judas, who was helping Jesus' enemies to seize him, had previously told this crowd, "The man whom I kiss is the one whom you want. When I kiss him, seize him, and lead him away while you guard him carefully." ⁴⁵So, when Judas arrived, he immediately approached Jesus and said, "My teacher!" Then he kissed Jesus. ⁴⁶Then the crowd grabbed Jesus and arrested him. ⁴⁷But one of his apprentices, who was standing nearby, drew his sword. He struck the servant of the high priest with it, but he only cut off the servant's ear. ⁴⁸Jesus said to them, "It is surprising that you have come here with swords and clubs to arrest me, as if I were a bandit. ⁴⁹For many days I was with you in the temple courtyard teaching the people. Why did you not try to arrest me then? But this is happening in order that what the prophets wrote in the Scriptures about me may happen." ⁵⁰Then all Jesus' apprentices left him and ran away. ⁵¹At that time, a young man was following Jesus. He was wearing only a linen cloth around his body. The crowd grabbed the young man, ⁵²but, as he pulled away from them, he left behind the linen cloth in their hands, and then he ran away naked.

⁵³The men who had seized Jesus led him away to the house where the high priest lived. All of the Jewish council were gathering there. ⁵⁴Peter followed Jesus at a distance. He went into the courtyard of the house where the high priest lived, and he sat there with the men who guarded the house of the high priest. He was warming himself beside a fire. ⁵⁵The chief priests and all the rest of the Jewish council tried to find people who would tell lies about Jesus so that they could convince the Roman authorities to execute him. They did not succeed. ⁵⁶A number of people spoke lies about Jesus, but the statements they made did not agree with each other. ⁵⁷Finally, some people stood up and accused Jesus falsely by saying, ⁵⁸"We heard him when he said, 'I will destroy this temple that was built by men, and then within three days I will build another temple without help from anyone.'" ⁵⁹But what some of these men said did not agree with what others of them said.

⁶⁰Then the high priest himself stood up in front of them and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to reply to anything that they have said? What do you say about all the things that they are saying in order to accuse you?" ⁶¹But Jesus was silent and did not reply. Then the high priest tried again. He asked him, "Are you the Messiah? Do you say that you are the Son of God?" ⁶²Jesus said, "I am. Furthermore, you will see me, the Son of Man, ruling beside God, who is completely powerful. You will also see me coming down through the clouds in the sky!" ⁶³In response to Jesus' words, the high priest tore his outer garment in protest, and the high priest said, "We surely do not need any more witnesses to testify against this man! ⁶⁴You have heard his blasphemous claim to be God!" They all agreed that Jesus was guilty and that he deserved to be killed. ⁶⁵Then some of them began spitting on Jesus. They put a blindfold on him, and then they began striking him and saying to him, "If you are a prophet, tell us who hit you!" And those who were guarding Jesus struck him with their hands.

⁶⁶While Peter was outside in the courtyard of the high priest's house, one of the girls who worked for the high priest came near him. ⁶⁷When she saw Peter warming himself beside the fire, she looked at him closely. Then she said, "You also were with Jesus, that man from the town of Nazareth!" ⁶⁸But Peter denied it by saying, "I do not know or understand what you are talking about!" Then he went away from there to the gate of the courtyard. ⁶⁹The servant girl saw him there and said again to the people who were standing nearby, "This man is one of those who have been with that man they arrested." ⁷⁰But he denied it again. After a little while, those who were standing there said to Peter again, "{The way you speak shows that} you also are from the district of Galilee. So it is certain that you are one of the men who accompanied Jesus!" ⁷¹But he began to exclaim, "I do not know the man about which you are talking! For God knows that I am speaking truthfully, and may he punish me if I am lying!" ⁷²Right then the rooster crowed again. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said to him earlier, "Before the rooster crows a second time, you will deny three times that you know me." When Peter realized that he had denied Jesus three times, he was extremely sad. Peter wept.

Chapter 15

¹Very early in the morning the chief priests met together with the rest of the Jewish council to decide how to accuse Jesus before the Roman governor. Their guards tied Jesus' hands again. They took him to the residence of Pilate, the governor. ²Pilate asked Jesus, "Do you say that you are the king of the Jews?" Jesus answered him, "You yourself have said so." ³Then the chief priests claimed that Jesus had done many bad things. ⁴So Pilate asked him again, "Don't you have anything to say? Listen to how many bad things they are saying that you have done!" ⁵But {even though Jesus was not guilty,} he did not say anything more. The result was that Pilate was very much surprised.

⁶Now it was the governor's custom each year during the Passover celebration to release one person who was held in prison. He customarily released whichever prisoner the people requested. ⁷At that time there was a man called Barabbas {whom the soldiers had put} in prison with some other men. The men had murdered some soldiers during a rebellion against the Roman government. ⁸A crowd approached Pilate and asked him to release someone, just like he customarily did for them during the Passover celebration. ⁹Pilate replied to them, "Would you like me to release for you the man whom you Jewish people say is your king?" ¹⁰He asked this because he realized what the chief priests were wanting to do. They were accusing Jesus because they were jealous of him {because many people were becoming his disciples}. ¹¹But the chief priests urged the crowd to request that Pilate release Barabbas for them instead of Jesus. ¹²Once more, Pilate said to them, "If I release Barabbas, what do you want me to do with the man whom some of you Jews say is your king?" ¹³Then they shouted again, "Command your soldiers to crucify him!" ¹⁴Then Pilate said to them, "Why? What crime has he committed?" But they shouted even louder, "Command your soldiers to crucify him!" ¹⁵So because Pilate wanted to please the crowd, he released Barabbas for them. Then, after his soldiers had whipped Jesus with leather straps into which they had fastened metal and bone pieces, Pilate told the soldiers to take Jesus away to crucify him.

¹⁶Pilate's soldiers took Jesus into the courtyard of the palace where Pilate lived. That place was the government headquarters. Then they summoned the whole group of soldiers who were on duty there. ¹⁷After the soldiers gathered together, they put a purple robe on Jesus. Then they placed on his head a crown that they had woven from branches of thornbushes. {They did those things in order to ridicule him by pretending that they thought he was a king.} ¹⁸Then they greeted him like they would greet a king, again in order to ridicule him, saying, "Hooray for the King who rules the Jews!" ¹⁹They struck his head again and again with a heavy reed, and they spat on him. They knelt down in front of him to pretend to honor him. ²⁰When they had finished ridiculing him, they pulled off the purple robe. They put his own clothes on him, and then they led him outside of the city in order to nail him to a cross.

²¹After Jesus carried his cross a short distance, a man named Simon from the city of Cyrene came along. He was the father of Alexander and Rufus. He was passing by while he was returning home from outside the city. The soldiers compelled Simon to carry the cross for Jesus, because Jesus was weakened by all the mistreatment he had received. ²²The soldiers brought them both to a place that they call Golgotha. That name means, "The Place of the Skull." ²³Then they tried to give Jesus wine that they had mixed with a medicine called myrrh, but he refused to drink it. ²⁴Some of the soldiers took his clothes. Then they nailed him to a cross. Afterwards, they divided his clothes among themselves by gambling for them with something like dice. They did this to determine which piece of clothing each one would get.

²⁵It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. ²⁶To the cross above Jesus' head they attached a sign on which someone had written the reason why they were nailing him to the cross. It said, "The King of the Jews." ²⁷They also nailed to other crosses two other prisoners who were bandits. They nailed one to a cross at the right side of Jesus and one to a cross at the left side of Jesus. ²⁸^[1] [And by crucifying him with robbers they fulfilled the scripture passage that says, 'And they considered him as being among wicked people.'] ²⁹The people who were passing by insulted him by shaking their heads at him. They said, "Ha! You said that you would destroy the temple and then you would build it again within three days. ³⁰If you could do that, then rescue yourself by coming down from the cross!" ³¹The chief priests, along with the men who taught the Jewish laws, also wanted to make fun of Jesus. So they said to each other, "People claim that he has saved others from trouble, but he cannot save himself!

³²He claimed to be the Messiah and the king who rules the people of Israel. If his words are true, he should come down now from the cross! Then we will believe him!" The two men who were nailed onto crosses beside him also insulted him.

³³At noon the whole land became dark, and it stayed dark until three o'clock in the afternoon. ³⁴At three o'clock Jesus called out, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" That means, "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?" ³⁵When some of the people who were standing there heard the word 'Eloi', they misunderstood it and said, "Listen! He is calling for the prophet Elijah!" ³⁶One of them ran and filled a sponge with sour wine. He placed it on the tip of a reed, and then held it up to try to get Jesus to suck out the wine that was in it. While he was doing that, someone said, "Wait! Let's see whether Elijah will come to take him down from the cross!" ³⁷And then, after Jesus shouted loudly, he stopped breathing and died. ³⁸At that moment the heavy, thick curtain that closed off the most holy place in the temple split into two pieces from top to bottom. ³⁹The officer who supervised the soldiers who had nailed Jesus to the cross was standing in front of Jesus. When he saw how Jesus had died, he exclaimed, "Certainly, this Jesus was God's Son!" ⁴⁰⁻⁴¹There were also some women there, watching what happened from further back. They had accompanied Jesus when he was in the district of Galilee, and they had provided what he needed. They, and many other women, had come with him to the city of Jerusalem. Among those women was Mary from the town of Magdala. There was another Mary, who was the mother of the younger James and of Joseph. There was also Salome.

⁴²⁻⁴³When evening was near, a man named Joseph from a town called Arimathea came there. He was a member of the Jewish council, one whom everyone respected. He was also one of those who had been waiting expectantly for the time when God would send his king to begin to rule. {He knew that, according to Jewish law, a body must be buried on the day the person died. He also realized that it was the Day of Preparation, the day when people prepared things for the Jewish day of rest, and that the Jewish day of rest would start when the sun set.} Evening was now approaching. Courageously, he went to Pilate and asked his permission to take the body of Jesus down from the cross and bury it immediately. ⁴⁴Pilate was surprised when he heard that Jesus was already dead. So he summoned the officer who was in charge of the soldiers who had crucified Jesus, and he asked him if Jesus had already died. ⁴⁵When the officer told Pilate that Jesus had died, Pilate allowed Joseph to take away the body. ⁴⁶After Joseph had bought a linen cloth, he and others took Jesus' body down from the cross. They wrapped it in the linen cloth and laid it in a tomb that previously had been hewn out of the rock cliff. Then they rolled a huge flat stone in front of the entrance to the tomb. ⁴⁷Mary from Magdala and Mary the mother of Joseph were watching where they placed Jesus' body.

15:28 ^[1]

Chapter 16

¹On Saturday evening when the Jewish day of rest had ended, Mary from Magdala, Mary the mother of the younger James, and Salome bought fragrant ointments to be used for anointing Jesus' body. {These women wanted to follow this Jewish burial custom}. ²Very early on Sunday, the first day of the week, just after the sun rose, they went to the tomb with the fragrant ointments. ³On their way, they were asking each other, "Who will help us by rolling away for us the heavy stone that closes the opening of the tomb?" ⁴Arriving, they looked up and were surprised to see that someone had rolled away the stone, because it was very large. ⁵They entered the tomb and saw a young man. He was wearing a white robe and he was sitting at the right side of the cave. The sight alarmed them! ⁶The young man said to them, "Do not be alarmed! I know that you are looking for Jesus, the man from the town of Nazareth, the one they nailed to a cross. But he has become alive again! He is not here! Look! Here is the place where they placed his body. ⁷But, instead of remaining here, go and tell his apprentices! Particularly, be sure that you tell Peter. Tell them, 'Jesus is going ahead of you to the district of Galilee, and you will see him there, just like he told you previously'." ⁸The women went outside and ran from the tomb. They were trembling because they were afraid, and they were astonished. But they did not say anything to anyone about this, because they were afraid.

⁹^[1] [When Jesus became alive again early on Sunday morning, the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary from the town of Magdala. She was the woman from whom he had previously forced out seven evil spirits. ¹⁰She went to those who had been with Jesus, while they were mourning and crying. She told them what she had seen. ¹¹But when she told them that Jesus was alive again and that she had seen him, they refused to believe what she said. ¹²Later that day, Jesus appeared to two of his followers while they were walking from Jerusalem to their homes in the surrounding area. They did not recognize him quickly because he looked very different. ¹³{After they recognized him,} those two went back to Jerusalem. They told his other followers what had happened, but they did not believe what they heard. ¹⁴Later Jesus appeared to the eleven apprentices while they were eating. He scolded them severely, because they had stubbornly refused to believe the reports of those who saw him after he had become alive again.

¹⁵He said to them, "Go into the whole world and preach the good news to everyone! ¹⁶God will save everyone who believes your message and who is baptized. But everyone who does not believe your message God will condemn. ¹⁷Those who believe the good news will perform miracles. Specifically, by my power they will force evil spirits out of people. They will speak in languages that they have not learned. ¹⁸As they pick up a snake or if they drink any poisonous liquid, they will not be hurt. God will heal sick people on whom they lay their hands."

¹⁹After the Lord Jesus had said this to his apprentices, God took him up into heaven. Then Jesus sat down on his throne beside God's right hand, the place of highest honor, to rule with him. ²⁰As for the apprentices, they went out from Jerusalem, and then they preached everywhere. Wherever they went, the Lord enabled them to perform miracles. By doing that, he showed people that God's message is true.]

16:9 ^[1]

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