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Matthew

Chapter 1

¹This is the record of the people from whom Jesus the Messiah descended. He is the descendant of King David and the descendant of Abraham. ²There were 14 generations from Abraham to King David: Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac was the father of Jacob. Jacob was the father of Judah and of his brothers. ³Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah, and their mother was Tamar. Perez was the father of Hezron. Hezron was the father of Ram. ⁴Ram was the father of Amminadab. Amminadab was the father of Nahshon. Nahshon was the father of Salmon.

⁵Salmon and his wife Rahab were the parents of Boaz. Boaz was the father of Obed. Obed's mother was Ruth. Obed was the father of Jesse. ⁶Jesse was the father of King David. There were 14 generations from David until the time when the people were taken to Babylon. David was the father of Solomon; Solomon's mother was the wife of Uriah. ⁷Solomon was the father of Rehoboam. Rehoboam was the father of Abijah. Abijah was the father of Asa.

⁸Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat was the father of Joram. Joram was an ancestor of Uzziah. ⁹Uzziah was the father of Jotham. Jotham was the father of Ahaz. Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah. ¹⁰Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh. Manasseh was the father of Amon. Amon was the father of Josiah. ¹¹Josiah was the father of Jechoniah and Jechoniah's brothers. They lived at the time when the Babylonian army took the Israelites as captives to the country of Babylonia.

¹²After the Babylonians exiled the Israelites to Babylon, Jechoniah became the father of Shealtiel. Shealtiel was an ancestor of Zerubbabel. ¹³Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud. Abiud was the father of Eliakim. Eliakim was the father of Azor. ¹⁴Azor was the father of Zadok. Zadok was the father of Akim. Akim was the father of Eliud. ¹⁵Eliud was the father of Eleazar. Eleazar was the father of Matthan. Matthan was the father of Jacob. ¹⁶Jacob was the father of Joseph. Joseph was Mary's husband, and Mary was Jesus' mother. Jesus is the one who is called the Messiah.

¹⁷The list of Jesus' ancestors is as follows: There were 14 of them from the time when Abraham lived to the time when King David lived. There were another 14 from the time when David lived until the time when the Israelites went away to Babylonia, and yet another 14 from then until the time when the Messiah was born.

¹⁸This is the account of what happened just before Jesus the Messiah was born. Mary, his mother, had promised to marry Joseph. Before they lived together as husband and wife, they found out that she was carrying a child. This child was given to her by Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Now Joseph was a man who obeyed God's commands. When he found out that she was carrying a child in her womb, he decided not to marry her. But he did not want to shame her in front of other people, so he thought about doing this secretly. ²⁰After Joseph had been thinking about this for a while, an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream. The angel said to him, "Joseph, King David's descendant, do not be afraid to marry Mary. For the child which she is carrying was given to her by the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son. You shall name him 'Jesus,' for he will save God's people from their sins." ²²All of these things happened to prove true what the Lord told the prophet Isaiah to write a long time ago. Isaiah wrote, ²³"Listen, a virgin will become pregnant and will give birth to a son.

They will call him Immanuel"—

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴After Joseph got up from sleep, he did what the Lord's angel had commanded him to do. The angel commanded him to begin to live with Mary as his wife. ²⁵But he did not have sex with her until she gave birth to her son. And Joseph named him Jesus.

Chapter 2

¹Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in the region of Judea. During that time, King Herod the Great ruled there. Some time after Jesus was born, some men from the east who studied the stars came to the city of Jerusalem. ²They were asking people, "Where is the one whom God appointed to be the king over the Jews from the time of his birth? We have seen a star in the east, which was the sign that he has been born, so we have come to worship him."

³When King Herod the Great heard about what these men were asking, he became very troubled. Many of the people in Jerusalem also became troubled. ⁴Then King Herod called together all the chief priests and teachers of the Jewish laws. He asked them where the prophets had predicted that the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They said to him, "He will be born in the town of Bethlehem, here in the region of Judea. We know this because the prophet Micah wrote long ago, ⁶'You who live in Bethlehem in the land of Judah, your town is certainly very important. This is because a man from your town will become a leader. He will guide my people who live in Israel like a shepherd.'"

⁷Then King Herod secretly brought those men who studied the stars to himself. He asked them exactly when the star first appeared. ⁸Then he said to them, "Go out from here to Bethlehem and search everywhere to find where the child is. When you have found him, come back and tell me where he is so that I myself can go there and worship him too."

⁹After the men heard the king's request, they went toward the town of Bethlehem. The star which appeared to them in the east appeared again and led them to the place where the child was. Then, the star remained above that place. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced greatly. ¹¹After they entered the house where the star led them, they saw the child and his mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshiped him. Then they took out gold, frankincense, and myrrh gifts and give them to him. ¹²After they left the place where the child was, God warned them in a dream not to return to King Herod. So they left to go back to their country, traveling back on a different road than the one on which they came.

¹³After the men who studied the stars left Bethlehem, an angel from the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. He said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee into the country of Egypt. Stay there until I tell you that you should return, because King Herod is about to send soldiers to look for the child so that they can kill him." ¹⁴So Joseph woke up that night after having the dream. He took the child and Mary the child's mother, and they fled into Egypt. ¹⁵Joseph, Mary, and Jesus stayed there until King Herod died. Then they left Egypt and returned to Judah. In this way, what God had told the prophet Hosea to write proved true,

"I have brought my son out of Egypt."

¹⁶Before King Herod died, he realized that the men who study the stars had tricked him, and he became furious. Because he thought that Jesus was still near Bethlehem, Herod sent soldiers there to kill all the boy babies two years old and younger. Herod calculated how old the baby was, according to what the men who studied the stars told him about when the star first appeared. ¹⁷When Herod did this, what the prophet Jeremiah had written long ago proved true, when he wrote about Bethlehem near the town of Ramah:

¹⁸"Women in Ramah were weeping and wailing loudly.

The descendants of Rachel were weeping because of what happened to their children.

People tried to comfort them, but they were not able to, because all their children were dead."

¹⁹After Herod died, an angel that the Lord had sent appeared to Joseph in a dream while they were in Egypt. He said to Joseph, ²⁰"Get up and take the child and his mother and return to the country of Israel to live, because the people who were trying to kill the child have died." ²¹So Joseph took the child and his mother, and they returned to Israel.

²²But when Joseph heard that Archelaus now ruled in the region of Judea instead of his father, King Herod the Great, he was afraid to go there. So God instructed Joseph in a dream to go to the district of Galilee instead. ²³They went to live in the town of Nazareth. The result was that what the prophets had said long ago proved true: "People will say that he is from Nazareth."

Chapter 3

¹When Jesus was an adult, John, whom the people called the Baptizer, went to a desolate place in the region of Judea. To the people who came there he was preaching this message: ²"Cease from your evil ways! For God wants you to become of his people over whom he will rule from heaven" ³John the Baptizer is the one about whom God talked through the prophet Isaiah when he wrote,

"He 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!'"

⁴John wore rough clothes made of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist. His food was grasshoppers and honey that he found in that desolate area. ⁵People who lived in the city of Jerusalem, people who lived in the region of Judea, and many others who lived near the Jordan River came to John to hear him preach. ⁶After they heard his message, they were openly sorry for their sins to God, and then John baptized them in the Jordan River.

⁷But John saw that many Pharisees and Sadducees were coming in order for John to baptize them. He said to them, "You people are like poisonous snakes! Do not think that you can escape from God's wrath if you do not genuinely ask for forgiveness! ⁸If you are truly sorry for your sin, you must show this by doing good things. ⁹Do not say to yourselves, 'Since we are descendants of our ancestor Abraham, God will not punish us even though we have sinned.' No! I tell you that he does not need you! For he can just as easily make descendants of Abraham out of these rocks! ¹⁰God is ready right now to punish you, just like a man who is ready to chop away the roots of a plant which is not producing what it is supposed to. He cuts it down and throws it into the fire.

¹¹I am baptizing you with water in the Jordan River because you were sorry for your sins. Soon someone else will come who is much greater than I am. He is so great that I am not even worthy to carry his sandals.

He will baptize some of you in the Holy Spirit. Others of you he will baptize in the fire of judgement. ¹²He is like a farmer who is holding his winnowing fork, ready to separate edible parts of the wheat plant from the inedible parts of the wheat plant. He is ready to clear out all the inedible parts from where he prepares the wheat. He will put his wheat into his storehouse, but he will burn the inedible parts in a fire that never goes out. {Similarly, God will bring to himself those who are pleasing to him and will punish those who are displeasing to him.}"

¹³During that time, Jesus went from the region of Galilee to the Jordan River, where John was. He did this so John could baptize him. ¹⁴When Jesus asked John to baptize him, John refused. He said, "I need you to baptize me! {For you are much greater than I am!}" ¹⁵But Jesus said to him, "Baptize me now, because in this way we two will do everything that God requires." Then John agreed to baptize him.

¹⁶As soon as Jesus came up out of the water, he saw heaven open. The Spirit of God descended {from heaven} like a dove would, and it landed upon him. ¹⁷Then God spoke from heaven and said, "This is my Son whom I dearly love. I am very pleased with him."

Chapter 4

¹Then God's Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness. {He did this in order for} the devil to tempt him. ²After he had not eaten food for 40 days, he was hungry. ³Satan, the one who was tempting Jesus, came to him and said, "If you are really the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread {so that you might eat}!" ⁴But Jesus said to him, "No! I will

not do this, because God has said in the Scriptures which Moses wrote, 'A person should not live only by eating food. He should also listen to what God has said'" ⁵Then the devil took Jesus to Jerusalem, the holy city. He set him on a high part of the temple ⁶and said to him, "If you are truly the Son of God, cause yourself to fall from here. Surely you will not be hurt, for God has promised in his word,

'God will command his angels to protect you.

They will lift you up in their hands when you are falling,

and they will keep you from hitting your foot on a small stone.'" ⁷But Jesus said, "No! I will not jump down, because God has also said in the Scriptures, 'Do not test what the Lord your God can or cannot do.'" ⁸Then the devil took him on top of a very high mountain. There he showed him all the nations in the world and the magnificent things in those nations. ⁹Then he said to him, "I will let you rule all these nations and give you the magnificent things in them if you bow down and worship me." ¹⁰But Jesus said to him, "No, I will not worship you, Satan. Leave me! God has said in the Scriptures, 'It is the Lord your God alone to whom you must bow down and worship'" ¹¹Then the devil went away, and at that moment, angels came to Jesus and began taking care of him.

¹²While Jesus was in the region of Judea, John the Baptizer's disciples came and told him that King Herod had put John in prison. So Jesus returned to the district of Galilee, to the town of Nazareth. ¹³Then he left Nazareth and went to live in the city of Capernaum. Capernaum is located beside the Sea of Galilee in the region that formerly belonged to the tribes of Israel named Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴He went to live there so that these words that the prophet Isaiah had written long ago might come true:

¹⁵"The regions of Zebulun and Naphtali,

regions by the Sea, on the eastern side of the Jordan River,

Galilee, home of many non-Jewish people

¹⁶

the people there are like people who were at one time sitting in darkness, but now they have seen a great light because they now know God.

And while they lived in a region of people who did not know God, now, like a bright light beginning to shine on them, God has revealed himself to them."

¹⁷At that time, while Jesus was in the city of Capernaum, he began to preach to the people, "Cease from your evil ways, for God's rule has come near to us!"

¹⁸One day while Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two men, Simon, who was later called Peter, and Andrew, his younger brother. They were casting their fishing net into the water, for they caught fish for work.

¹⁹Then Jesus said to them, "You know how to gather fish, but come with me and I will teach you how to gather people." ²⁰They immediately left the work that they were doing and went with him.

²¹As the three of them walked on from there, Jesus saw two other men, James and John, the younger brother of James. They were in their boat with Zebedee, their father, mending their fishing nets. Jesus told them that they should leave their work and go with him. ²²Immediately they also left their boat and their father and went with Jesus.

²³Jesus led those four men throughout all of the district of Galilee. He was teaching the people in the synagogues. He was preaching the good news about how God is ruling. He was also healing all the people who were sick.

²⁴When people who lived in other parts of the region of Syria heard what he was doing, they brought to him people who suffered from illnesses, people who suffered from many kinds of diseases, people who suffered from severe pains, people who were controlled by demons, people who were epileptics, and people who were paralyzed.

And Jesus healed them. ²⁵Then large crowds started to go with him. They were people from Galilee, from the Ten Towns, from the city of Jerusalem, from other parts of the region of Judea, and from areas east of the Jordan River.

Chapter 5

¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a hill. He sat down there, and many of his apprentices gathered around him to hear him teach. ²Then he began to teach them. He said,

³"It is well with those of you who admit to having spiritual need,
for you belong to God's people.

⁴It is well with those of you who mourn because of this sinful world,
for God will comfort you.

⁵It is well with those of you who are humble,
for you will inherit the earth that God will one day restore.

⁶It is well with those of you who desire to live a life pleasing to God as much as someone might need to eat and drink,
for God will satisfy your desires.

⁷It is well with those of you who act mercifully toward others,
for God will act mercifully toward you.

⁸It is well with those who do what God desires them to do,
for they will see God in his presence.

⁹It is well with those of you who act peaceably with all people,
for God will regard you as his own children.

¹⁰It is well with those of you whom people treat poorly because you obey God,
for God is ruling over you from heaven.

¹¹It is well with those of you whom people speak falsely against and persecute because of me. ¹²When that happens, rejoice and be glad, because God will give you a great reward in heaven. Remember, that is how they persecuted the prophets who lived long ago.

¹³Just as salt is good for food, so you shall be good for the world, keeping the people of the world from being more evil. But, as useless salt is thrown out onto the ground, so God will no longer use you if you stop obeying him.

¹⁴What light does for people in the dark, this is what you will do for the world. Just as a city on top of a hill is seen from far away, {so your good deeds in the world will be seen by many people.} ¹⁵No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket. Instead, they put it on a lampstand so it can shine upon everyone in the house. ¹⁶Similarly, you need to do what is right in such a way that other people can see what you do. When they see it, they will praise your Father who is in heaven."

¹⁷"You should not suppose that I have come to you in order to do away with the laws that God gave Moses or what the prophets wrote. Rather, I came in order to cause to happen those things that the prophets foretold would happen. ¹⁸This is a true saying: God will never do away with the smallest part of his laws until the end times, when

he has finished everything he planned to do. ¹⁹Therefore, if one of you decides that any of the commands are not important, and you teach others this, you will be the least important person under God's rule from heaven. But if one of you obeys God's commands and teaches others to obey God as you are obeying him, you will become a great person under God's rule from heaven. ²⁰I tell you that you must obey God's laws better than the teachers of the law and the Pharisees obey them. Otherwise, you will never be one of God's people

²¹"Your religious teachers have told you what God said to our ancestors, 'You shall not kill anyone,' and, 'If you kill anyone, the judge will declare you guilty.' ²²But I tell you that even if you are angry with another one of my followers, God himself will judge you. If you say to another one of my followers, 'You are worthless,' a council will bring you before it for judgement. If you say to someone, 'You are a fool,' God will throw you into the fire in hell. ²³So if, when you take your gift for God to the altar, you remember that you have offended someone, ²⁴leave your gift by the altar. Then, go to the person you have offended, and tell that person that you are sorry for what you have done, and ask that person to forgive you. Then go back and offer your gift to God. ²⁵If a fellow citizen takes you before a judge in order to accuse you of doing something wrong, come to an agreement quickly with that person, while you are still walking with that person to court. Do that while there still is time so that he will not take you to the judge, because the judge might say you are guilty and hand you over to his jailor, and the jailor will put you in prison. ²⁶This is a true saying which I am telling to you. You will never come out of prison until you pay everything which you owe to that person."

²⁷"You have heard from your religious teachers that God said to our ancestors, 'Do not commit adultery.' ²⁸But I tell you that even if a man looks at a woman, desiring to sleep with her, to God he has already committed adultery with her. ²⁹If you sin with your eyes, having looked at certain things, you should destroy both of your eyes. If this would help you to avoid sinning, it would be better to be blind and stop sinning than for God to throw you into hell while you can still see. ³⁰And if one of your hands causes you to sin, cut your hand off and throw it away. If this would help you to avoid sinning, it would be better to lose a part of your body than for God to throw your whole body into hell."

³¹"God has said in the Scriptures, 'If a man divorces his wife, he should write a document on which he states that he is divorcing her.' ³²But I tell you that a man may divorce his wife only if she has committed adultery. If a man divorces his wife for any other reason, he causes her to act adulterously. If she marries someone else, then the man who marries her also commits adultery."

³³"You have heard from your religious teachers that God said to our ancestors, 'You shall fulfill your oaths as you have promised to the Lord.' ³⁴But I tell you that when you make a promise, do not use the name of God or anything to guarantee your promise as the Pharisees do! Do not swear by heaven, for God rules from there. ³⁵And do not swear any oath on the promise that the earth would witness it, for the earth belongs to God. Never swear an oath by the city of Jerusalem, because Jerusalem is the city that belongs to God, our great King.

³⁶Also, do not promise that you will do something by the authority of your own knowledge. For you are not even able to change the color of one hair on your head. ³⁷If you promise something, just say 'Yes, I will do it,' or 'No, I will not do it.' If you say anything more than that, it is Satan, the Evil One, who has suggested that you talk this way."

³⁸"You have heard your religious teachers say that God told our ancestors, 'If a person harms one of your eyes, then someone should harm one of that person's eyes as punishment. And if a person harms one of your teeth, then someone should harm one of that person's teeth as punishment.' ³⁹But I tell you that you should not stop someone who does evil against you. Instead, if someone insults you by striking you on one cheek, turn your other cheek toward that person so he can strike it also. ⁴⁰If someone wants to sue you in a court so that you lose your tunic, let that person also have your outer garment, which is of even more worth to you. ⁴¹And if a Roman soldier forces you to carry his burden for one mile, go with him and carry it for him for two miles. ⁴²If someone asks you for something, give it to him. And if someone asks you to lend him something, do not withhold it from him."

⁴³"You have heard that God said to our ancestors, 'Love your fellow Israelites and hate foreigners, for they are your enemies.' ⁴⁴But I tell to you that you should also love your enemies and pray for those who cause you to suffer. ⁴⁵{You ought to behave this way} in order to be like God, your Father who is in heaven. {For he acts kindly to all people.} This is seen in that he causes the sun to shine equally on wicked people and on good people, and he sends rain both on people who obey his law and on people who do not. ⁴⁶If you love only the people who love you, do not expect God to reward you at all. Even people who do evil things, such as tax collectors, love those who love them. You must act better than they do! ⁴⁷And if you greet only fellow Israelites, you are not acting any better than other people. Even non-Jews, who do not obey God's law, do the same thing! ⁴⁸So you must act without fault, just as God your heavenly Father acts without fault."

Chapter 6

¹"Make certain that when you do good deeds you are not doing them so people will see what you do. If that is your reason for doing what is good, God, your Father who is in heaven, will not give you any reward. ²So whenever you give something to the poor, do not make other people notice it, as by playing a trumpet. That is what the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the main roads in order that people might praise them. This truth I want you to understand: that is the only reward the hypocrites will receive! ³Instead of doing as they do, when you give something to the poor, do not let other people know what you are doing. ⁴In that way, you will be giving to the poor secretly. As a result, God your Father, who observes what you do while no one else sees it, will reward you.

⁵"Similarly, when you pray, do not do what the hypocrites do. They like to stand in the synagogues and on the corners of the main streets to pray in order that other people will see them and think highly of them. This truth I want you to know: that is the only reward they will get. ⁶But as for you, when you pray, go into your private room and close the door in order to pray to God, your Father, whom no one can see. Your Father observes what you do and will reward you. ⁷When you pray, do not repeat words many times as the people who do not know God do when they pray. They think that if they use many words, their gods will hear their requests. ⁸Do not repeat words as those who do not know God, for God your Father knows what you need before you even ask him. ⁹So you ought to pray to God like this:

'God, our Father who is in heaven,

May everyone glorify you.

¹⁰May your kingdom come.

May everything happen on earth as you desire,

just as it happens in heaven.

¹¹Give us each day the food that we need for that day.

¹²Forgive us of our sins against you in the same way that we forgive the people who have sinned against us.

¹³Do not bring us into situations where we will sin,

but rescue us when Satan tries to harm us.'

¹⁴If you forgive the people who sin against you, God, your Father who is in heaven, will forgive your sins. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive other people for their sins against you, neither will your Father forgive your sins against him.

¹⁶When you keep from eating food in order to please God, do not look sad as the hypocrites look. They make their faces appear sad in order that people will see that they are not eating food. This truth I want you to know: that is the only reward they will get. ¹⁷Instead, each of you, when you keep from eating food to please God, anoint yourselves and wash your face as usual. ¹⁸Do this in order that other people will not notice that you are fasting. But

God, your Father, whom no one can see, will observe that you are not eating food. He sees you even though no one else sees you, and he will reward you because of this.

¹⁹Do not accumulate large quantities of money and material goods for yourselves on this earth. For the earth is where everything perishes—where moths ruin clothing, rust destroys metals, and thieves break into people's houses and steal what belongs to them. ²⁰Instead, do deeds that will please God so that you store up treasures in heaven. Nothing perishes in heaven. In heaven no moths can ruin clothing, there is no rust to destroy metal, and there are no thieves who break in and steal things. ²¹Remember that whatever is most important to you, that is what you will desire the most.

²²"Your eyes are like a lamp for your body, {because they enable you to see things}. So if your eyes are healthy, you will see things clearly. Similarly, if you are generous, then God will tell you all that he wants you to know. ²³But if your eyes are bad, you are not able to see things well. Similarly, if you continue to love your treasure in this world, you will take part in much spiritual darkness."

²⁴"No one is able to serve two different masters at the same time. If he tried to do that, he would hate one of them and love the other one, or he would be loyal to one of them and despise the other one. Similarly, you cannot worship God and money at the same time."

²⁵That is why I tell you that you should not worry about things that you need in order to live. Do not worry about whether you will have enough food to eat and enough things to drink, or enough clothes to wear. Life is much more than just about these things. ²⁶Think about the birds. They do not plant seeds, and they do not harvest crops from seeds nor gather produce into barns. They always have food to eat, because God, your Father who is in heaven, provides food for them. You can be assured that God will supply what you need, for you are certainly worth a lot more than birds! ²⁷None of you can, just by worrying, add any amount of time to your life.

²⁸You should also not worry about whether you will have enough clothes to wear. Think about the way flowers grow in the fields. They do not work to earn money, and they do not make their own clothes. ²⁹But I tell you that even though King Solomon, who lived long ago, wore very beautiful clothes, his clothes were not as beautiful as one of those flowers. ³⁰And if one day the grass is in the field, and the next day people throw them into an oven to burn them, {this shows that} God will surely provide clothes for you. So trust in God, you who have so little faith!

³¹So do not worry and say, 'Will we have anything to eat?' or 'Will we have anything to drink?' or 'Will we have clothes to wear?' ³²Those who do not know God are always worrying about what they will eat, drink, and what they will wear. But God, your Father who is in heaven, knows that you need all those things. ³³Instead, make it the most important thing that you become one of God's people, and that you do what he commands you to do. If you do that, he will give you all the things that you need. ³⁴So do not be worried about what will happen to you tomorrow. For when that day comes, you will have enough to be concerned about."

Chapter 7

¹Do not show how much other people have disobeyed God, unless you would like God to show how much you have disobeyed him. ²For if you call other people sinful, God will show you how you are sinful. Likewise, in whatever way that you treat others, God will treat you yourself in that way. ³{None of you should be concerned about the small faults of another person. You should be concerned about your own serious faults.} Otherwise, that would be like noticing a tiny speck of dirt in the eye of that person while not noticing a huge wooden plank in your own eye. ⁴You should not say to other people about their minor faults, 'Let me remove the tiny speck of dirt from your eye!' while you still have a wooden plank in your own eye. ⁵If you do that, you are a hypocrite! You should first {stop committing your own sins. That will be like} removing a large plank from your own eye. Then, as a result, you will have the spiritual insight you need to help others get rid of the {smaller faults that are like} tiny specks of dirt in their eyes.

⁶“Do not share about God with people who have completely refused to hear it. For this is like giving valuable things to dogs, or like throwing pearls in front of a herd of pigs, who will trample them. For these people will reject what you say to them and will instead attack you.

⁷“Ask God for what you need, and he will certainly give it to you. ⁸For if anyone asks God for something they need, he will give it to them.

⁹If your son asked you for bread, you certainly would not give him a stone! ¹⁰Similarly, if your son asked you for a fish, certainly you would not give him a serpent. ¹¹You know how to give good things to your children even though you are evil. So God, your Father who is in heaven, will even more certainly give good things to those who ask him.

¹²So in whatever way you want others to act toward you, that is the way you should act toward them. For this is what Moses taught in God’s law and what the prophets wrote long ago.

¹³⁻¹⁴“You ought to live with God in Heaven! This is like walking through a narrow gate which is not as easy to walk through. It is also like walking on a narrow path which many people do not find. For there is another way of life, one that most people take, which is like a wide road and a wide gate. This path and this gate lead to living apart from God forever.

¹⁵Watch out for people who come to you and say falsely that they are telling you what God has said. They pretend that they are one of God’s people, but they are really enemies of God’s people. ¹⁶Just as thorn bushes cannot produce grapes and thistles cannot produce figs, so you will recognize that they are not one of God’s people by the way they behave. ¹⁷Likewise, all good fruit trees produce good fruit for eating, but all bad trees produce fruit which you cannot eat. ¹⁸No good fruit tree is able to produce inedible fruit, and no bad tree is able to produce good fruit. ¹⁹Just as every useless tree which produces bad fruit should be chopped down and thrown in a fire to be burned, so God will destroy those who pretend to be his people but are not. ²⁰And just as you can tell if a tree is healthy by the quality of its fruit, so you can tell if someone is one of God’s people by the way they behave.

²¹Even though many people habitually call me Lord, pretending that they are my people, they are not my people, because they do not do what my Father in heaven desires them to do. ²²On the day that God will judge everyone, many people will say to me, ‘Lord, we spoke God’s message by your power! By your power we drove out demons from people! And by your power, we performed many mighty deeds!’ ²³Then I will publicly say to them, ‘I never said that you were one of my people. Go away from me, you who do what is evil!’”

²⁴So then, anyone who hears what I say and obeys me will be like a wise man who built his house on solid ground.

²⁵Even though it rained, and floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, it did not fall down, because it had been built on solid ground. ²⁶On the other hand, anyone who hears what I say but does not obey me will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷When the rain fell and floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house, it crashed down and broke completely apart because it was built on a weak foundation.”

²⁸When Jesus finished teaching, the crowds who had heard him were amazed by what he taught them. ²⁹He 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.

Chapter 8

¹When Jesus went down from the hillside, large crowds followed him. ²Then a man who had a skin disease came and knelt before him. He said to Jesus, “Lord, please heal me, for I know you are able to heal me if you are willing to.” ³Then Jesus stretched out his hand and touched the man. He said to him, “I am willing to heal you, and I heal you now!” Immediately Jesus healed the man from his skin disease. ⁴Then Jesus said to him, “Make sure that you do not report about me healing you to anyone. Instead, go to the temple in Jerusalem and show to the priest that you are healed. Then give the offering that Moses commanded so people will see that you are no longer sick.”

⁵When Jesus went to the city of Capernaum, a Roman officer who commanded 100 soldiers came to him. He begged Jesus to help him. ⁶He said to him, "Lord, my servant is lying in bed at home and is paralyzed, and he is suffering much." ⁷Jesus said to him, "I will go to your house and heal him." ⁸But the officer said to him, "My Lord, I am not worthy for you to come into my house. All you must do is speak, and you will heal my servant. ⁹{I know that you can do this} because I myself am a man who must obey the orders of my superiors. I also have soldiers who must obey my orders. When I say to one of them, 'Go!' he goes. When I say to another one, 'Come!' he comes. When I say to my slave, 'Do this!' he does it." ¹⁰When Jesus heard this, he marveled. He said to the crowd that was walking with him, "Listen to this: I have never before found anyone who trusts in me as much this non-Jewish man. Not even in Israel, where I would expect people to believe in me, have I found anyone who trusts so much in me! ¹¹I tell you that many other non-Jewish people will believe in me also. They will come from distant countries, including those far to the east and far to the west, and have eternal life with God, along with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the rest of God's people. ¹²But as for the Jewish people, whom God intended to be his people—he will throw many of them into hell, which is an evil place where God does not give any spiritual blessings. There they will weep because of their suffering, and they will grind their teeth because they will be in severe pain." ¹³Then Jesus said to the officer, "Go home. What you believed I am able to do will happen." Then the officer went home and found out that his servant had become well at the exact time that Jesus told him that he would heal him.

¹⁴When Jesus and some of his disciples went to the home of Peter, Jesus saw Peter's mother-in-law. She was lying on a bed because she was feeling sick due to having a fever. ¹⁵He touched her hand, and immediately she no longer had a fever. Then she got up and served Jesus and the disciples.

¹⁶When it was evening, the crowd brought to Jesus many people whom demons controlled, as well as other people who were sick. He made the demons leave the people just by commanding them to leave, and he healed all the people who were sick. ¹⁷When he did this, he proved true what the prophet Isaiah had written, 'He healed people from their sicknesses, and he cured them from their diseases.'

¹⁸When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he told his disciples to take him by boat to the other side of the lake. ¹⁹As they were walking toward the boat, a man who taught the Jewish laws came to him and said, "Teacher, I will go with you wherever you go." ²⁰Jesus answered him, "Foxes make their homes in holes in the ground, and birds make their homes in nests in the trees, but even though I am the Son of Man, I do not have a home where I can sleep." ²¹Another man who was one of Jesus' apprentices said to him, "Lord, permit me first to go home. After my father dies I will bury him, and then I will come with you." ²²But Jesus said to him, "Come with me now. Let the people who do not love God and do not desire to follow me bury the people who have died."

²³When Jesus got onto the boat, his apprentices followed him. ²⁴Suddenly a strong windstorm came over the Sea of Galilee. Very high waves were splashing into the boat and filling it, but Jesus was sleeping. ²⁵The disciples went and woke Jesus up and said to him, "Lord, rescue us! We are about to drown!" ²⁶He said to them, "You should not be scared! You do not believe that I can rescue you." Then he got up and told the wind and the waves to stop. Immediately the wind stopped and the water became calm. ²⁷The men were amazed, and they said to each other, "This man is certainly an extraordinary person! He has all things are under his control! He even commands the wind and the waves!"

²⁸When they came to the east side of the lake, they arrived in the region where the Gadarenes lived. Then two men whom demons controlled came out from among the tombs where they were living. Because they were extremely violent and attacked people, no one was brave enough to travel on the road that went by the tombs. ²⁹Suddenly they shouted to Jesus, "Leave us alone, Son of the Most High God! Have you come here to torture us before the time God has appointed to punish us?" ³⁰There was a large herd of pigs grazing not far away. ³¹So the demons begged Jesus and said, "If you are going to send us out of these people, send us into those pigs!" ³²Jesus said to them, "If that is what you want, go!" So the demons left the men and entered the pigs. Suddenly the whole herd of pigs rushed down the steep bank into the water and drowned. ³³The men who had been tending the pigs became afraid and ran into the town. There, they reported everything that had happened, including what had happened to the two men whom demons had controlled. ³⁴Then many people who lived in that town went out to meet Jesus. When they saw him and the two men whom demons had controlled, they pleaded with Jesus to leave their region.

Chapter 9

¹Jesus and his disciples got into the boat. They sailed over the Sea of Galilee and went to the city of Capernaum, where Jesus was living. ²Some people brought to him a man who was paralyzed and who was lying on a sleeping pad. When Jesus perceived that they believed that he could heal the paralyzed man, he said to him, "Be encouraged! I forgive your sins." ³Some of the men who taught the Jewish laws said to each other, "Only God can forgive sins! This man says that he can forgive sins. He is blaspheming!" ⁴Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he said, "You should not think evil thoughts! ⁵You think it would certainly be easier for someone to say to another person 'I have forgiven your sins' {because you cannot see the proof of it happening}. Similarly, you think it would be much more difficult for someone to say to another person '{I have healed you.} Stand up and walk' {because you can see the proof of it happening}. ⁶But I will show you that I, the Son of Man, am able to forgive sins on the earth, {which, according to you, is easier to do}." Then Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Stand up! Take up your sleeping pad and go home!" ⁷The man got up, picked up his sleeping pad, and went home. ⁸When the crowds saw this, they were amazed. They praised God for giving such authority to people.

⁹As Jesus was going away from there, he saw a man named Matthew. He was sitting at a table where he collected taxes for the Roman government. Jesus said to him, "Come with me and be my disciple!" So Matthew got up and went with him. ¹⁰Jesus and his apprentices sat down in a house for a meal. While they were eating, many tax collectors and people who did not obey the law of Moses came and ate with them. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw that, they approached Jesus' disciples and said, "It is shameful that your teacher eats and spends time with tax collectors and people who do not know God." ¹²Jesus heard what they said, and he said to them, "In the same way that people who are sick need a doctor and not people who are well, so, people who are spiritually unwell need spiritual care. ¹³You should learn what these words mean that God said: 'I want you to act mercifully to people and not just to offer sacrifices.' I have not come to make people my disciples who think themselves to be righteous. Rather, I have come to make people my disciples who think of themselves as sinners."

¹⁴Then the apprentices of John the Baptizer came to Jesus and asked him, "We and the Pharisees often abstain from food because we want to please God, but your apprentices do not do that. Why do they not abstain from food?" ¹⁵Jesus answered, "When a man is marrying a woman, his friends will certainly not be sad and abstain from food while he is still with them. But some day, the groom will go away from his friends. Then in those days, they will abstain from food and be sad."

¹⁶People do not sew a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old piece of clothing to mend a hole. If they did that, when they washed the clothing, the patch would shrink and tear the clothing, and the hole would become bigger.

¹⁷Similarly, people do not put new wine into old animal skin bags to store it. If they did, the new wine will burst the skin bags because, being previously stretched, the old bags will not stretch more 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, unfermented wine into new, unstretched skin bags!

¹⁸While Jesus was saying those things to the scribes, a leader in the city came and bowed down before him. Then he said, "My daughter has just now died! But if you come and lay your hand on her, she will live again!" ¹⁹So Jesus and his disciples got up, and they went with the man. ²⁰Then a woman who had been suffering constant bleeding for 12 years came near Jesus. She came behind him and touched the edge of his garment. ²¹She was saying to herself, "If I just touch his garment, I will be healed." ²²Then Jesus turned around to see who had touched him, and when he saw the woman, he said to her, "Be encouraged, dear woman. Because you believed that I could heal you, I have healed you." Jesus healed the woman at that very moment.

²³Jesus came to the man's house and saw the flute players playing funeral music; there were also many mourners who were wailing loudly because the girl had died. ²⁴He said to them, "Go away and stop your mourning, for the girl is not dead! She is just sleeping!" But the people laughed at him because they thought that she was dead. ²⁵But

Jesus told them to get out of the house. Then he went into the room where the girl was lying. He took hold of her hand, and she became alive again and got up. ²⁶And the people of that whole region heard about what Jesus did.

²⁷As Jesus went away from there, two blind men followed him. They were shouting, "Have mercy on us and heal us, you Descendant of King David!" ²⁸Jesus went into the house, and then the blind men went in, too. Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to heal you?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord!" ²⁹Then he touched their eyes and he said to them, "Because you believe that I can heal your eyes, I am healing them right now!" ³⁰Jesus made them able to see. After this, he told them sternly, "Be sure that you do not tell anybody about me healing your eyes!" ³¹But the two men who had been blind went out and spread the news of what Jesus did to many people in that region.

³²Just when those two men were leaving, some people brought to Jesus a man who was unable to speak, because a demon controlled him. ³³After Jesus had driven out the demon, the man began to speak. The crowd saw this, and the people were astonished. They said, "Never before have we seen anything as marvelous as this happen in Israel!" ³⁴But the Pharisees said, "It is Satan, who rules the demons, who enables this man to drive out demons from people."

³⁵Then Jesus and his disciples went through many of the cities and towns in the region of Galilee. He was teaching in the synagogues and proclaiming the good news about how God will make them his people. He also was healing the people who had various diseases and illnesses. ³⁶When he saw the crowds of people, he pitied them because they were upset and oppressed. They were like sheep that did not have a shepherd {to lead them and take care of them.} ³⁷Then he said to his apprentices, "The people who are ready to receive my message are like a field where the crops are ready to harvest. But there are not many people to tell them my message. ³⁸So pray and ask the Lord, who causes people to be ready to hear the message. Do this in order that he might send many more workers to gather people to hear the message like one gathers crops at the time of the harvest."

Chapter 10

¹Jesus told his 12 apprentices to come to him. Then he gave them the power to drive out evil spirits that controlled people. He also enabled them to heal people who had every kind of sickness. ²Here is a list of the names of the Twelve whom he chose to represent him. They were: Simon, to whom he gave the new name Peter; Andrew, Peter's younger brother; James the son of Zebedee; John, the younger brother of James; ³Philip; Bartholomew; Thomas; Matthew, the tax collector; James, the son of Alphaeus; Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon, the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who was disloyal to Jesus and brought the authorities to where he was so that they could arrest him.

⁵When Jesus was about to send the Twelve to represent him, telling the good news to people in various places, he gave them these instructions: "Do not go where the Gentiles live. Do not go into the towns where the Samaritans live. ⁶Instead, go to the people of Israel; they are like sheep who have strayed away from their shepherd. ⁷When you go to them, proclaim to them that they can become God's people, over whom he will rule from heaven. ⁸Heal sick people, cause dead people to become alive, heal people with leprosy and bring them back into society, and cause demons to leave those whom they control. God did not charge you any money for helping you, so you should not charge other people money to help them. ⁹Do not take any money with you as you travel. ¹⁰Neither should you take a bag for what belongs to you. Do not take an extra tunic or sandals in addition to what you are wearing, or a walking stick. Every worker deserves to receive pay from the people for whom he works, so you deserve to receive food from the people to whom you go. ¹¹In any town or village that you enter, find a person who wants you to stay in his home. Stay in that person's home until you decide to leave that place. ¹²When you go into that house, greet the people who live there, {and ask God to bring them peace}. ¹³If the people who live in that house receive you, God will indeed bring them peace. But if they do not receive you, then God will not bring them peace. ¹⁴If the people who live in any house or town do not welcome you or listen to your message, leave that place. As you leave, shake off the dust from your feet {to warn them that God will judge them for not welcoming

you}. ¹⁵For certainly at the time when God judges all people, he will punish the wicked people who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah. But if the people who live in any city or town reject you, God will punish them even more severely.

¹⁶"Take note of what I am about to say: When I send you out to share my message, you will be as defenseless as sheep among people who are as dangerous as wolves. So be as wise as snakes are wise in dangerous situations and be harmless as pigeons are harmless. ¹⁷Be careful around such people, because they will arrest you and take you to the members of the governing councils, who will judge you. They will also whip you in their synagogues.

¹⁸And because you belong to me, they will arrest you and take you before governors and kings in order that they may put you on trial and punish you. But you will testify to those rulers and to other non-Jews about me. ¹⁹When those people arrest you, do not be worried about what you will say to them, because I will tell you the words that you should say at that time. ²⁰It is not that you will decide what to say. Instead, you will say what the Holy Spirit of your heavenly Father tells you to say. ²¹It will be so dangerous for you that a man will have his own brother arrested and have the leaders kill him. Also, fathers will have their own children arrested and have the leaders kill them. Similar to this, children will have their parents arrested and have the leaders kill them. ²²Many people will hate you because you are my disciple. But anyone who continues to be my disciple until they die, those people God will save. ²³When people in one city try to harm you, escape to another city. For it is certain that I, the Son of Man, will certainly return before you have finished going from one town to another town throughout Israel and telling people about me.

²⁴An apprentice is not greater than his teacher, and servants are not superior to their master. ²⁵You do not expect that people will treat a student better than they treat his teacher or that they will treat a servant better than they treat his master. Similarly, because I am your teacher and master, you can expect that people will mistreat you because they have mistreated me. I am like the ruler of a household, and they call me Satan. If they act that poorly toward me, surely they will act poorly towards you."

²⁶"Do not be afraid of those people. For everything which is done in secret God will reveal when he judges the world. ²⁷You should say to many people the message which I have told you privately. Likewise, which I told you quietly you should shout from the places where many people can hear you that. ²⁸Do not be afraid of people who are able to kill your body but are not able to destroy your soul. Instead, fear God, because he is able to destroy both your body and your soul in hell. ²⁹Sparrows have so little value that you can buy two of them for only one small coin. But when any sparrow dies, God, your heavenly Father, knows it, for he knows everything. ³⁰He knows so much about you that he even knows how many hairs you have on your head! ³¹God values you much more than he values many sparrows. So, do not be afraid of people who threaten to kill you! ³²If people are willing to say that they belong to me while standing in front of people who want to harm them, I will also acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven that they belong to me. ³³But if they are afraid to say in front of others who want to harm them that they belong to me, I will tell my Father, who is in heaven, that they are not mine."

³⁴"Do not think that I came to earth to cause people to live together in peace. Because I have come, some of those who follow me will die. ³⁵For example, because I have come, some sons will oppose their fathers because the fathers believe in me. Similarly, some daughters will oppose their mothers because they believe in me, as well as some daughters-in-law will oppose their mothers-in-law. ³⁶Because a person belongs to me, sometimes a person's enemies will be members of his own household! ³⁷People who care more for their father or mother than for me do not honor me, and those who care for their son or daughter more than they care for me do not honor me. ³⁸If you are not ready to die because you belong to me, then you are not worthy to belong to me. ³⁹People who deny that they belong to me in order to escape dying will not live with God eternally. But people who are willing to lose their lives because people hate them for belonging to me will live with God eternally."

⁴⁰"From God's perspective, anyone who welcomes you welcomes me. Likewise, from his perspective, anyone who welcomes me welcomes God, who is the one who sent me. ⁴¹To those who welcome someone because they know that person is a prophet, God will give the same reward that he gives to prophets. Likewise, to those who welcome a person because they know that person is righteous, God will give the reward that he gives to righteous people.

⁴²And if a person gives a thirsty person some water because they are one of my apprentices, then God will surely reward them."

Chapter 11

¹When Jesus had finished instructing his 12 apprentices about what they should do, he went to proclaim his message in other towns in that area.

²While John the Baptizer was in prison, he heard what Jesus the Messiah was doing. So he sent some of his apprentices to Jesus ³to ask him, "Are you the Messiah {whom the prophets said} would come, or is someone else coming that we should expect?" ⁴Jesus answered John's disciples, "Go back and report to John what you hear me teaching people and what you see me doing. ⁵I am making blind people to see again, and I am making lame people able to walk. I am healing people who have leprosy and making them able to enter back into the community. I am making deaf people to hear again, and I am making dead people to become alive again. I am telling the poor people God's good news. ⁶Also tell John that I am teaching people that God is pleased with people who do not get offended when they see what I do and hear what I teach."

⁷As John's disciples went away, Jesus began to talk to the crowd of people {following him} about John. He said to them, "When you went out into the wilderness {to hear John teach and to have him baptize you}, you certainly were not expecting to see {the kind of person} that is easily influenced by others, like a reed which is blown around in the wind! ⁸What did you expect to see? Surely not a man who was wearing expensive clothes. You know very well that people who wear clothes like that reside in kings' palaces and not in the wilderness. ⁹What did you expect to see? A prophet? Yes, but let me tell you this: John is not just any ordinary prophet, but he is greater than all of the prophets. ¹⁰John the Baptist is the one to whom God was referring when someone wrote in the Scriptures and said, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you. He will prepare people for your coming.'

¹¹What I say to you is true: Of all the people who have ever lived, God considers John the Baptist to be the greatest. At the same time, God considers those that seem unimportant among his people whom he rules to be even more important than John is. ¹²From the time that John the Baptist preached openly in public until now, some violent people have been causing harm to those who are God's people. ¹³Everything that I am saying about John is proven true by the fact that the prophets wrote about it and Moses wrote in the law about it. All of these wrote about John the Baptist before he was alive. ¹⁴Not only that, but if you are willing to try to understand this, I will tell you that John is in fact like the prophet Elijah, who the prophets said would come a second time in the future. ¹⁵Whoever is willing to listen, listen to what I say.

¹⁶Many of you who are alive now are like when children are playing in the marketplace. In this scenario, John the Baptist and I are like some of them who call out to you, other children ¹⁷and say to them, 'We played happy music on the flute for you, but you refused to dance! Then we sang sad funeral songs for you, but you refused to cry!' ¹⁸I say this because you did not listen to John the Baptist when he came to you. He did not eat good food and did not drink wine like most people do, yet you rejected him and said, 'A demon is controlling him!' ¹⁹I also say this because I, the Son of Man, was not like John when I came. I eat the same food and drink wine as other people do. But you similarly reject me and say, 'Look! This man eats too much food and drinks too much wine, and he is friends with tax collectors and those who do not obey the law of Moses!' But God shows his wisdom through how people's lives are changed by my ministry and John's ministry."

²⁰In the towns where Jesus had performed many of his miracles, the people there still refused to repent of their evil deeds. So he began to scold them saying, ²¹"You people who live in the city of Chorazin and you in the city of Bethsaida, God will certainly punish you because of your great evil! For I did many miracles in your cities, but you did not stop sinning. If I had done these miracles in the evil cities of Tyre and Sidon, which existed a long time ago, those wicked people would certainly have stopped sinning. They would have put on rough, scratchy mourning clothes and sat in the cold ashes of their fires, as is the custom of people who are sorry for their evil deeds. ²²Let me tell you this: God will punish the wicked people who lived in the cities of Tyre and Sidon. But he will punish you even more severely on the final day, when he judges all people. ²³I also have something to say to you people who live in the city of Capernaum. Do you think that others will praise you so much that you will go right up to heaven?

That will not happen! On the contrary, you will go down to where God punishes people after they die! If I had done these same miracles even among the people of Sodom long ago, they would have stopped sinning and their city would have been here even today. ²⁴Let me tell you this: God will punish the wicked people who lived in Sodom. But he will punish you people of Capernaum even more severely on the final day, when he judges all people."

²⁵At that time Jesus prayed, "My Father who rules over everything in heaven and on the earth, I thank you that you have prevented people who think that they are wise and well-educated from knowing these things. Instead, you have revealed them to people who accept your truth just as little children believe what an older person tells them.

²⁶Yes, Father, you have done that because it seemed good to you to do so."

²⁷Then Jesus said to the crowd, "God, my Father, has revealed to me everything about himself. Only my Father knows who I truly am. Furthermore, only I, his Son, and those to whom I reveal him, know the Father. ²⁸Come to me, all you people who are very tired of trying to obey all the {man-made} laws your leaders say you should obey. I will let you stop {trying to do everything perfectly}. ²⁹Let me help you carry your heavy burden like two beasts of burden would pull a heavy load. For I feel compassion towards you. If you let me help you, and you learn from me, you will have spiritual peace within yourselves. ³⁰For I will carry most of the heavy burden for you, and it will be much easier for you."

Chapter 12

¹Soon after that, Jesus and his apprentices were walking through grain fields on the Sabbath. His apprentices were hungry, so they began to pick grain and eat it. ²Some Pharisees saw the apprentices picking grain, so they said to Jesus, "Look! Your apprentices are doing work on the Jewish day of rest. The law of Moses does not allow that!" ³But Jesus answered, "Certainly you have read in the scriptures what our ancestor King David did when he and the men with him were hungry! ⁴King David entered the sacred tent where they worshiped God and ate the bread that had been on display before God. According to the law of Moses, only priests were permitted to eat that bread. But David and the men who were with him ate it. ⁵Likewise, certainly you have read what Moses wrote when he said that the priests, when they work in the temple on the Jewish day of rest, which is not lawful, they are not guilty of breaking the law. ⁶But let me tell you this: I have come to you, and I am much greater than the temple. ⁷You should understand these words which God spoke through a prophet in the scriptures: 'I want you to act mercifully toward people. I do not want you to just offer sacrifices.' If you had understood what that means, you would not have condemned my disciples, who have done nothing wrong by eating this grain. ⁸I, the Son of Man have the authority to tell people what they are allowed to do on the Jewish day of rest."

⁹After Jesus left there that day, he went into a Jewish meeting place. ¹⁰In that place he saw a man with a withered hand. The Pharisees continued to ask Jesus about the Sabbath, "Does God permit us to heal people on the Jewish day of rest?" They asked Jesus this question in order that they might accuse him of doing something wrong. ¹¹He replied to them, "Suppose that one of you had a single sheep, and it fell into a deep hole on the Jewish day of rest. You would certainly take it out of the hole! ¹²But a person is much more valuable than a sheep. So it is certainly right for us to heal a person on the Jewish day of rest." ¹³Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" The man stretched out his withered hand, and Jesus made it well like the other hand. ¹⁴Then the Pharisees left the synagogue and began to plan together how they could kill Jesus.

¹⁵Jesus knew that the Pharisees were plotting to kill him, so he went away from there, and many of his disciples followed him. He healed many of those who were following him from their illnesses. ¹⁶But he told them sternly that they should not tell other people about him. ¹⁷By doing this he fulfilled what Isaiah the prophet had written long ago. He wrote,

¹⁸"Here is my servant whom I have chosen,

the one whom I love and who does what pleases me.

I will put my Spirit within him,

and he will proclaim to the non-Jews that God is going to judge them justly.

¹⁹He will not quarrel with people, nor will he shout loudly.

And he will not yell in the streets for people to hear him.

²⁰will not judge people harshly who have weak faith,

and people who have very little faith he will help them to continue to believe in him.

He will help these people to have faith until he declares them innocent and allows them to live with him forever.

²¹So the non-Jewish people will confidently trust in him."

²²One day some men brought to Jesus a man who was blind and unable to speak because he had a demon. Jesus drove out the demon and healed him. Then the man began to talk and was able to see. ²³All the crowds who saw what Jesus did marveled. They began asking each other, "Could this man be the Messiah, the descendant of King David, whom we have been expecting?" ²⁴When the Pharisees heard that the people were saying Jesus is the Son of David, they said, "It is not God, but Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, who enables this man to drive demons from people!" ²⁵But Jesus knew what the Pharisees were thinking. So he said to them, "If the people in one nation fight against each other, they will divide their nation and destroy it fighting against each other. If people who live in the same city or house fight each other, they will certainly not remain united. ²⁶Thus, if Satan were driving out his own demons, he would be fighting against himself. He would not be able to continue to rule over his demons and have control over people! ²⁷Furthermore, if it is true that Satan enables me to drive out demons, then it is also true that your disciples who drive them out do so by Satan's power. So they will judge you for saying that Satan's power was behind their work. ²⁸But it is God's Spirit who enables me to drive out demons, which proves that God is causing people to become his people to rule over.

²⁹I will tell you why I am able to drive out demons. A person cannot drive out all of Satan's demons unless Satan is first restrained. But if he is restrained, then that person will be able to drive Satan's demons out from people.

³⁰You must support me {when I do miracles}. Otherwise, you are against what I am doing. Similarly, you must help me gather people to hear my message as one gathers sheep from the field. Otherwise, you are only causing people to go away from me.

³¹Therefore, this I say to you. God will forgive every sin which man commits except the sin which you are committing when you say that it is Satan empowering my work when it is really God's Holy Spirit. ³²For God is willing to forgive people who criticize me, the Son of Man. But I warn you that he will not forgive now or in eternity those who say such evil things about what the Holy Spirit does."

³³In the same way that you determine that a tree is healthy by looking at whether it bears good fruit or not. So, you can tell whether I am good or evil by whether I do good or bad things. ³⁴You who are like snakes in how you harm people are certainly not able to speak good things. For you are evil. What a person says shows whether the person is truly a good person or a bad person. ³⁵In the same way that a good person might use his money to give other people good things, a good person speaks to people kindly because he has good intentions. But in the same way that an evil person might use his money for bad things, an evil person speaks to people harmfully because he has evil intentions. ³⁶I tell you that on the day when God will judge people, he will make people aware of every single harmful word they have spoken, and he will judge them because of these words. ³⁷God will either declare that you are righteous based on the good words that you have spoken, or he will condemn you based on the evil words that you have spoken."

³⁸Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the Jewish laws said to Jesus, "Teacher, we want to see you do something that will convince us that God sent you." ³⁹Then Jesus replied to them, "You people have already seen me perform miracles, but you still do not believe God sent me. This is because you are evil, and you do not faithfully worship God! You desire to see proof that I am from God, but God will prove to you that I am from him in only one way. This will be like what happened to Jonah the prophet in the scriptures. ⁴⁰Jonah was in the stomach of

a huge fish for three entire days before God caused the fish to spit him out. Similarly, for three entire days I, the Son of Man, will be buried in the ground, and then God will cause me to live again. ⁴¹When God judges everyone, he will resurrect the people who lived in the city of Nineveh long ago alongside of you people, and they will condemn you. They will be able to condemn you because they repented when the prophet Jonah told them to repent. But when I came to you and told you to repent, you did not repent. And I am certainly greater than Jonah!

⁴²The Queen from the country of Sheba, which is south of Israel, who lived long ago, came from far away in order to listen to King Solomon teach many wise things. Now I have come to you, and I am far more important than Solomon was, but you have not listened to me. So when God judges everyone, God will resurrect the Queen of Sheba alongside of you and she will condemn you."

⁴³"Listen to this parable: An evil spirit might leave someone and wander around in desolate areas looking for someone else to live in. If it does not find anyone there, ⁴⁴it says to itself, 'I will return to the person in whom I used to live and have control.' So he goes back and finds that the Spirit of God is not in control of that person's life. The person's life is like a house that has been swept clean and everything put in order, but it is empty with no one living in it. ⁴⁵Then this evil spirit goes and gets seven other spirits that are even more evil, and they all enter that person and begin living there. So although that person's condition was bad before, it becomes much worse. That is what you wicked people who have heard me teach will experience."

⁴⁶While Jesus was still speaking to the crowd, his mother and his younger brothers arrived. They stood outside the house, wanting to speak with him. ⁴⁷Someone said to him, "Your mother and your younger brothers are standing outside the house wanting to talk to you." ⁴⁸Then Jesus responded to the person who said this to him, "I will tell you who are really my mother and brothers." ⁴⁹He then pointed toward his apprentices and said, "These apprentices are like my mother and my brothers to me. ⁵⁰Those who do what God my Father who is in heaven wants are to me like my brother, my sister, or my mother."

Chapter 13

¹That same day, Jesus, along with the disciples, left the house where he was teaching and went to the shore of the Sea of Galilee. He sat down there. ²After arriving there, a large crowd came to him. So Jesus got into a boat to sit {and teach}, and all of the people stood on the beach {to listen to him}. ³Jesus taught them using many parables. He said, "Listen carefully to what I say! A man went out to his field to sow seeds. ⁴As he was scattering the seeds over the soil, some of the seeds fell along the edge of the path. Then, some birds came and ate those seeds. ⁵Other seeds fell on ground in a place where there was not much soil on top of rocks. The sun quickly warmed the shallow soil, so the seeds sprouted very quickly. ⁶But when the day got very hot because the sun was at its highest point in the sky, the plants were scorched. Then, because they did not have deep roots {because of the shallow soil}, they dried up. ⁷Other seeds fell on ground that had thorny weeds. The thorny weeds grew much quicker than the plants, so they crowded out the plants. ⁸Still other seeds fell on good soil. These plants grew and produced a lot of grain. Some plants produced 100 times as many seeds as were planted. Some plants produced 60 times as much. Some plants produced 30 times as much. ⁹Whoever is willing to listen, listen to what I say."

¹⁰The apprentices approached Jesus after he spoke that parable and asked him, "Why do you use parables when you speak to the crowd?" ¹¹Jesus answered, "God is revealing to you what he has not revealed before about how he is making people to be his people to rule over from heaven. But he has not revealed this to the people in this crowd. ¹²Those who are able to understand what God has revealed to them, God will enable them to understand more. But from those who are not able understand what I say in my parables, even the little that they are able to understand God will take from them. ¹³This is why I use parables when I speak to people, because although they see the miracles that I do, they do not understand what it means, and although they hear what I teach, they do not really learn what it means. ¹⁴What these people do completely fulfills what God told the prophet Isaiah to say long ago when he said: 'You will hear what I say, but you will not understand it. Similarly, you will see what I do, but you will not learn what it means.'

¹⁵God also said to Isaiah,

'These people are not able to understand these things.

Even though they have ears which are able to hear, they do not understand my message.

Even though I have done many great things in their sight, it is as if they shut their eyes. For they do not understand the things they have seen me do.

If they had not done this, they would be able to see with their eyes and understand what I have done. Similarly, they would be able to hear my message and understand what it means. They would have been able to understand what I have done and what I have said, and they would have repented of their sins, and I would have forgiven their sins.'

¹⁶But God has blessed you by making you able to understand what you see with your eyes and hear with your ears.

¹⁷For what I say to you is true: Many prophets and righteous people who lived long ago desired to see what you are seeing me do, but they did not see it. Those prophets and righteous people also desired to hear the things that you have heard me say, but they did not hear what you have heard me say."

¹⁸Now listen to me explain the parable about the man who sowed seeds in various kinds of soil. ¹⁹Some people hear the message about how God is causing people to be his people, but they do not understand it. They are like the path where some of the seeds fell. Like the bird who eats the seed, Satan, the evil one, comes and causes these people to forget what they have heard. ²⁰Some people hear God's message and immediately accept it joyfully. They are like the rocky places where some seeds fell. ²¹But because it does not penetrate deeply into their hearts like deep roots, they believe it for only a short time. When others treat them badly and make them suffer because they believe in what I have told them, they quickly stop believing it any longer. ²²Some people hear God's message, but they desire to be rich, so they worry only about what they need to live, as well as money and possessions. These things choke out their understanding of God's message like weeds that choke a plant growing among them. As a result, they do not do the things that please God. ²³But some people hear my message and understand it. They do many things that please God. In this way they are like the seed which fell on good soil, and it produces thirty, sixty, or one hundred grains."

²⁴Jesus also told the crowd another parable. He said, "When God makes people to be his people to rule over from heaven, it will be like this story: A man is sowing good seed in his field. ²⁵While that man was sleeping and not guarding the field, someone who did not like the man came and scattered weed seeds in the midst of the good seeds. Then he left. ²⁶After the seeds sprouted and the plants grew, the heads of grain began to form. But the weeds also grew and were visible to the man. ²⁷So the servants of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, you certainly gave us good seeds and those are the ones we sowed in your field. So where did these weeds come from?' ²⁸The landowner said to them, 'My enemy did this.' Then his servants said to him, 'Do you want us to pull up the weeds?' ²⁹He said to them, 'No! Do not do that. For you might pull up some of the wheat at the same time as pulling up the weeds. ³⁰Let the wheat and the weeds grow together until harvest time. At that time, I will say to those who will reap, 'First gather the weeds, and tie them into bundles for burning. Then gather the wheat and put it into my storehouse.'"

³¹Jesus also told this parable: "When God makes people his people to rule from heaven, it is similar to what happens when mustard seeds grow after a man plants them in his field. ³²For the mustard seed starts as the smallest seed of any seed. But after it grows, it becomes a tree on which birds can live, much bigger than any other plants which are planted in a garden. It is the same way when God makes people his people to rule over. It starts out with few people, but eventually, many people become God's people whom he rules over."

³³Jesus also told this parable: "When God makes people his people to rule over from heaven, it is like when a woman mixed yeast into 40 liters of bread. This caused the bread to get bigger. Similarly, God's kingdom will start out being small, but will grow much bigger."

³⁴When Jesus taught the crowd these lessons, he only taught them using parables. ³⁵By doing that, he proved true what God told one of the prophets to write long ago:

"I will speak in parables; I will tell parables to teach what I have kept secret since I created the world."

³⁶After Jesus sent the crowd away, he went into the house. Then the apprentices approached him and said, "Explain to us the parable about the weeds that grew in the wheat field." ³⁷He answered, "The one who sows the good seed in the story represents me, the Son of Man. ³⁸The field represents this world, where people live. The seeds that grew food represent God's people who he rules over as their father. The weeds represent the people who have the devil as their father. ³⁹The enemy who sowed the weed seeds represents the devil. The time when the reapers will harvest the grain represents the time when the world will end. The reapers represent the angels. ⁴⁰These weeds are gathered from the field and burned. That represents what will happen {to evil people} when God judges all people, when the world will end. It will be like this: ⁴¹I, the Son of Man, will send my angels, and they will gather from among all that I am ruling the people that cause others to sin and all those who violate God's law. ⁴²The angels will throw those people into the fires of hell, which is like a furnace. There they will weep because of their suffering, and they will grind their teeth because they will be in severe pain. ⁴³However, the people who have pleased God with their actions will be glorified with him in heaven when he rules over them as a loving father. Whoever is willing to listen, listen to what I say.

⁴⁴"When God makes people his people to rule from heaven, it is like a treasure that a man found which another person had buried in a field. When he dug it up, he buried it again so no one else would find it. Then he happily went and sold all his possessions to obtain money to buy that field. He then went and bought the field and acquired that treasure.

⁴⁵Also, when God makes people his people to rule from heaven it is like what a merchant did who was looking for very valuable pearls to buy. ⁴⁶When he found one very valuable pearl that was for sale, he sold all his possessions to acquire enough money to buy that pearl. Then he went and bought it.

⁴⁷Similarly, when God makes people his people to rule from heaven, it is like what happens when fishermen cast their net into the sea. They caught all kinds of fish, both useful and worthless fish. ⁴⁸When the net was full, the fishermen pulled it up onto the shore. Then they sat there and put the good fish into containers, but they threw the worthless ones away. ⁴⁹This is like what will happen to people when the world ends. The angels will come to where God is judging people and will separate the wicked people from the righteous people. ⁵⁰The angels will throw the wicked people into the fire in hell. There they will weep because of their suffering, and they will grind their teeth because they will be in severe pain."

⁵¹Then Jesus asked the disciples, "Do you understand all these parables I have told you?" They said to him, "Yes, we understand them." ⁵²Then he said, "Those teachers of the law who have become God's people over whom he rules from heaven are like a house owner who shares new and old things out of their treasure. Similarly, the teacher of the law teaches people old teachings as well as new teachings from me."

⁵³When Jesus had finished telling these parables, he left that area. ⁵⁴Then Jesus went to the town of Nazareth, his hometown. On the Sabbath he began to teach the people in the synagogue. The result was that the people there were astonished, and some were saying, "From where does this man get his wisdom and ability to do miracles?

⁵⁵For he is just the son of the carpenter. His mother is certainly named Mary, and his younger brothers are James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas! ⁵⁶And all of his sisters also live here in our town. So how is he able to teach and do all these things?" ⁵⁷The people there sinned and refused to accept that Jesus had such authority. So Jesus said to them, "People honor me and other prophets everywhere else we go, but in our hometowns and among our own families, we are not honored." ⁵⁸Jesus did not perform many miracles there, because the people did not believe that he had such authority.

Chapter 14

¹During that time the ruler Herod Antipas heard reports about Jesus performing miracles and teaching. ²He said to his servants, "That must be John the Baptizer. He must have risen from the dead, and that is why he has power to do these miracles." ³⁻⁴{Herod said John had been raised from the dead because John had died.} This is how he died: John was saying to Herod Antipas that it was not lawful to have Herodias as his wife. Herodias, who was the wife of Herod's brother Philip, had her servants throw John in prison because he was saying this. ⁵Herod wanted to order his men to execute John, but he was afraid of the masses of people, because they believed that John was a prophet speaking for God.

⁶One day, there was a party to celebrate Herod's birthday, and Herodias' daughter danced for his guests. Her dancing pleased Herod very much, ⁷so he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. ⁸Herodias told her daughter beforehand what to say, so she said to Herod, "I want you to cut off the head of John the Baptizer and bring it here on a platter to show that he is really dead!" ⁹The king was now very sorry that he had promised to give Herodias' daughter whatever she wanted. But because he had made a vow, and because all his guests had heard him do so, he felt that he had to do what he promised. So he ordered his servants to do what she wanted. ¹⁰He sent soldiers to the prison, and they cut off John's head. ¹¹Then they put John's head on a platter and brought it to the girl. Then the girl took it to her mother. ¹²Later, John's apprentices went to the prison, took John's body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus what had happened. ¹³After Jesus heard that news, he went with the disciples by boat on the Sea of Galilee to a place where no one lived.

After the crowds heard about where he had gone, they left their towns and followed him, walking along the shore.

¹⁴When Jesus got out of the boat, he saw the large crowd waiting for him. He felt sorry for them, and he healed the sick people who were among them.

¹⁵When it was evening, the apprentices came to Jesus and said, "This is a place where nobody lives, and it is very late in the day. Tell the crowds to go back to their towns so they can buy food." ¹⁶But Jesus said to his disciples, "They do not need to leave to get food. Instead, you yourselves should give them something to eat!" ¹⁷The disciples said, "We only have five loaves of bread and two cooked fish here with us!" ¹⁸He said, "Bring them to me!" ¹⁹Jesus told the crowd of people who had gathered there to sit on the grass. Then he took the five loaves and the two fish from the apprentices. He looked up to the sky and prayed, thanking God for them, and broke them into many pieces. Then he gave the pieces back to his apprentices, and they distributed them to the crowd. ²⁰All the people ate until they were no longer hungry. Then the disciples gathered the pieces that were left over and filled twelve baskets with them. ²¹About 5,000 men ate at that time, not counting the women and children!

²²Right after that happened, Jesus compelled the disciples to get in the boat and to go ahead of him to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. In the meantime, he was going to send the crowd home. ²³After he sent the crowd away, he went up into the hills to pray by himself. It was evening, and he was alone in that place. ²⁴By this time the disciples were in the middle of the Sea of Galilee. The wind was blowing very hard in the opposite direction that they were sailing, tossing the boat around on the waves. ²⁵Then Jesus came down from the hills to the water sometime between three and six o'clock in the morning. He approached the boat, walking on the water. ²⁶When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they thought that he must be a ghost. So they were terrified, and they screamed in fear. ²⁷Immediately Jesus said to them, "Take courage! It is I. Do not be afraid!" ²⁸Peter said to him, "Lord, if it really is you, tell me to walk on the water to you!" ²⁹Jesus said, "Come!" So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. ³⁰But when Peter saw the big waves from the strong wind, he became afraid. Thus, he began to sink in the water and cried out, "Lord, rescue me!" ³¹Right away Jesus reached out with his hand and grabbed Peter. He said to him, "You only trust in me a little bit! You should not have doubted that I could keep you from sinking!" ³²Then, when Jesus and Peter got in the boat, the wind stopped blowing. ³³All of the disciples who were in the boat bowed down and worshiped Jesus, and they said, "You certainly are the Son of God!"

³⁴When they had gone across the lake in the boat, they reached the shore at the town of Gennesaret. ³⁵The men of that area recognized Jesus, so they sent people to inform those who lived in the whole region that Jesus had come.

Then the people brought to Jesus everyone who was sick. ³⁶The sick people kept begging him to allow them to touch even the edge of his robe so that they would be healed. And so, everyone who touched his robe was healed from their sicknesses.

Chapter 15

¹Then some Pharisees and men who taught the Jewish laws came from Jerusalem to talk to Jesus. They said, ²"We see that your apprentices disobey the traditions of our ancestors! They do not perform the proper ritual of washing their hands before they eat!" ³Jesus answered them, "And I see that you refuse to obey God's commands just so that you can follow what your ancestors taught you! ⁴God gave these two commands: 'Honor your father and your mother.' He also wrote, 'Anyone who speaks in an evil way about their father or mother God will punish with death.'⁵But you tell the people that they can say to their father and mother, 'What I was going to give to you to help provide for you, I have now promised to give to God', ⁶and you tell people that they do not need to honor their father since they are giving their goods to God. By telling them to do that, you ignore what God commanded so that you can follow what your ancestors taught you! ⁷You only pretend to be good! Isaiah told the truth about you when God spoke through him saying, ⁸'These people talk as if they honor me, but they do not really desire to honor me, ⁹They do not really worship me. For they teach people to obey man-made commandments which I did not command them to follow.'"

¹⁰Then Jesus called the crowd to come nearer to him. He said to them, "Listen to what I am about to tell you and try to understand it. ¹¹Nothing that a person puts into his mouth to eat causes God to consider them ceremonially unclean. But rather, it is what people say that shows that a person is ceremonially unclean."

¹²Later the apprentices went to Jesus and said, "Do you know that the Pharisees heard what you said and became very angry at you?" ¹³Then Jesus told them this parable. "My Father in heaven will get rid of all those who teach things that are against what he says, just like a farmer gets rid of plants that he did not plant by pulling them up by their roots. ¹⁴Do not pay any attention to the Pharisees. They are like blind people who lead other blind people into a pit because they cannot see where they are going. For they do not know how to teach people to obey God."

¹⁵Peter said to Jesus, "Explain to us the parable about what a person eats." ¹⁶Jesus replied to them, "You ought to be able to understand what I am teaching by now! But you still do not understand. ¹⁷You ought to understand that whatever food people eat enters their stomachs and then passes out of their bodies. ¹⁸But the evil words which a person speaks from their innermost desires is what causes God to consider them ceremonially unclean. ¹⁹This is because it is people's innermost desires that cause them to think evil things, to murder people, to commit adultery, to commit sexual sins, to steal things, to testify falsely against someone, or to speak evil about others. ²⁰It is these actions that cause God to consider people ceremonially unclean. But to eat with unwashed hands does not cause God to consider people this way."

²¹After Jesus and his disciples left the district of Galilee, they all went toward the region where the cities of Tyre and Sidon are located. ²²A woman from the group of people called Canaanites, who live in that region, came to Jesus. She kept shouting to him, "Lord, you are the descendant of King David. You are the Messiah! Help me! For my daughter is suffering very much because a demon controls her." ²³But Jesus did not answer her at all. The apprentices said to him, "Tell her to leave, for she keeps bothering us by shouting behind us as we are walking." ²⁴Jesus said to her, "God has sent me only to the people of Israel, because they are like sheep who have lost their way." ²⁵But the woman came closer to Jesus. She knelt down in front of him and pled, "Lord, help me!" ²⁶Jesus responded to her, "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." ²⁷But the woman replied, "Lord, what you say is correct, but even the little dogs eat the crumbs that fall to the floor when their masters sit at their tables and eat!" ²⁸Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, because you believe in me, I will heal your daughter as you desire!" At that moment the demon left her daughter, and she became well.

²⁹Then Jesus and his disciples went away from that area, and came near to the Sea of Galilee. Then Jesus climbed the hill near there and sat down to teach the people. ³⁰Large crowds came to him bringing lame people, crippled people, and blind people, those who were unable to talk, and many others who had various sicknesses. They laid them in front of Jesus in order that he would heal them. And he healed them. ³¹The crowd saw him heal people who could not talk, crippled people, lame people, and blind people, and they were amazed and glorified God.

³²Then Jesus called his apprentices to him and said, "This crowd of people has been with me for three days, and they have nothing left to eat. Therefore, I feel sorry for them, and do not want to send them away while they are still hungry. For if I did that, they might faint on the way home." ³³The disciples said to him, "We certainly will not find enough food for this large crowd here in the desert!" ³⁴Jesus asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They answered him, "Seven small loaves and a few small, cooked fish." ³⁵Then Jesus told the people to sit on the ground. ³⁶He took the seven loaves and the cooked fish. After he had thanked God for them, he broke them into pieces, and he gave them to the apprentices to distribute to the crowd. ³⁷All those people ate and had plenty to satisfy them. Then the disciples collected the pieces of food that were left over, and they filled seven large baskets with them. ³⁸There were 4,000 men who ate, and this was not counting the women or the children who also ate.

³⁹After Jesus sent the crowd away, he and the disciples got in a boat and sailed to the region of Magadan.

Chapter 16

¹Some Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus in order to test him. They said to him, "Show us that God has really sent you to us! Perform for us a sign from God!" ²He answered them,^[1] ["In our country, if the sky is red in the evening, we say, 'It will be good weather tomorrow.' ³But if the sky is red in the morning you say, 'It will be stormy weather today.' By looking at the sky, you can tell what the weather will be, but when you see the things that are now happening all around you, you do not understand how they tell what God is about to do.] ⁴You are an evil people who does not love God faithfully. You seek a sign, but I will only give you one sign, the sign of Jonah the prophet." And Jesus and his disciples departed from them.

⁵After they sailed to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, the apprentices realized that they had forgotten to take any food with them. ⁶At that point, Jesus said to them, "Be careful not to accept the yeast that the Pharisees and Sadducees want to give you." ⁷They were discussing among themselves about what Jesus might have meant, saying "He must have said that because we forgot to bring any bread" ⁸But Jesus knew what they were discussing and said to them, "I am disappointed that you think it is because you forgot to bring bread that I talked about the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees. You believe in me only a little bit. ⁹I am disappointed that you do not realize the significance of, nor do you remember when I fed 5,000 people with five loaves of bread. You even gathered up many baskets! ¹⁰Neither do you realize the significance of nor remember when I fed 4,000 people with seven loaves of bread. You also gathered up many baskets then! ¹¹You should have understood that I was not really speaking about bread. Do not accept yeast from the Pharisees and the Sadducees." ¹²Then the disciples understood that Jesus was not talking about the yeast that is in bread. Instead, he was talking about the wrong teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

¹³When Jesus and his apprentices entered into the region near the city of Caesarea Philippi, he asked them, "Who do people say that I, the Son of Man, really am?" ¹⁴They answered, "Some people say that you are John the Baptizer, who has come back to life again. Others say that you are the prophet Elijah, who has returned from heaven as God promised. Still others say that you are the prophet Jeremiah or one of the other prophets who lived long ago, who has come back to life again." ¹⁵Jesus said to them, "Who then do you say that I am?" ¹⁶Simon Peter said to him, "You are the Messiah! You are the Son of the one true God." ¹⁷Then Jesus said to him, "Simon, son of Jonah, God, my Father who is in the heavens, has blessed you by revealing this to you. For no human could have revealed this to you. ¹⁸I also say to you: You are Peter, which means 'rock.' You will be like a sturdy foundation for those who believe in me, like a rock is for a building. And no enemy, not even death, will be able to destroy it." ¹⁹Then he said, "I will give you authority among God's people over whom he rules from heaven. God will approve your decision

about anything you prohibit on the earth. Similarly, God will approve your decision about anything you permit on the earth.” ²⁰Then Jesus warned the apprentices not to tell anyone at that time that he was the Messiah.

²¹From that time on, Jesus the Messiah began to teach the apprentices that it was necessary for him to go to the city of Jerusalem. There, the ruling elders, the chief priests, and the men who taught the Jewish laws would cause him to suffer and die. Then on the third day after that, he would come alive again. ²²But Peter took Jesus aside and began to scold him for saying these things. He said, “Lord, may God never permit that to happen to you!” ²³Then Jesus turned to look at Peter, and he said to him, “Get out of my sight! For Satan is speaking through you and trying to get me to disobey God. You are not thinking what God thinks, but only what people think!”

²⁴Then Jesus said to his apprentices, “If any one of you wants to be my apprentice, you must disregard what you desire. You must also 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. ²⁵You must do that because those who try to save their lives by denying that they belong to me will not live with me forever. But those who are killed because they are my apprentices will live forever with me. ²⁶For it benefits no one eternally to save their life now, and then for God to punish them eternally after they finally die. For there is nothing in this world which is worth the price which God puts on the life of a person. ²⁷I, the Son of Man, will come in the glory of my Father, along with his angels. After this, he will judge people based on whether they have done things that pleased him or displeased him. ²⁸Listen carefully! Some of you who are here will see me, the Son of Man, coming to rule over his people before you die!”

16:2 ^[1]

Chapter 17

¹Seven days after Jesus said those things, he took Peter, James, and John, the younger brother of James, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. ²While they were on the mountain, the three disciples saw Jesus’ appearance change. His face shone like the sun, and his clothing shone and became bright like light. ³Suddenly the prophets Moses and Elijah appeared, and they were talking with Jesus. ⁴Peter saw them and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is a good thing for us to be here! If you want me to, I will set up three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁵While Peter was speaking, a bright cloud came over them. They heard the voice of God saying from the cloud, “This is my Son, whom I love. He pleases me very much. So you must listen to him!” ⁶When the three apprentices heard God speaking, they were exceedingly afraid. As a result, they fell face down on the ground. ⁷Jesus came to them and touched them and said to them, “Stand up! Do not be afraid!” ⁸And when they looked up, they saw that Jesus was the only one who was still there.

⁹While they were walking down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, “Do not tell anyone what you saw on the mountain top until God has caused me, the Son of Man, to become alive again after I die.” ¹⁰The three apprentices who were on the mountain with Jesus asked him, “If you are the Messiah, why do the men who teach the Jewish laws say that it is necessary for Elijah to come back to earth before the Messiah is supposed to come?” ¹¹Jesus answered them, “It is true that Elijah is coming and will prepare people for the coming of the Messiah. ¹²But note this: Elijah has already come, and our leaders did not recognize him as the one who would come before the Messiah. Instead, they did all of the evil things to him which they desired. And those same leaders will soon treat me, the Son of Man, in the same manner.” ¹³Then the three apprentices understood that when he was talking about Elijah, he was referring to John the Baptist.

¹⁴When Jesus and the three disciples returned to the crowds of his apprentices, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. ¹⁵He said to him, “Master, have mercy on my son and heal him! He has epilepsy and suffers very much. Because of this illness, he has fallen into fire and into water many times. ¹⁶I brought him to your apprentices in order that they might heal him, but they were not able to heal him.” ¹⁷Jesus responded, “You people do not believe at all in God’s ability to heal people. How corrupt you are! I have been with you this long, and you still are not able to do this! Bring the boy here to me!” ¹⁸When they brought the boy to Jesus, Jesus commanded the demon to come

out of the boy. The demon went out, and the boy was healed from that time onward. ¹⁹Later, some of the apprentices approached Jesus when he was by himself and asked him, "Why were we not able to drive out the demon?" ²⁰He answered them, "It is because you believe in God only a little bit. What I say is true: Mustard seeds are very small seeds, but they grow and become large plants. Similarly, if you believe even a little bit that God will do what you ask him to, you will be able to do anything! You could command a mountain to move, and it would move.

²¹^[1] [But this kind of demon does not go out except with prayer and fasting.] ²²When the disciples had gathered together in the region of Galilee, Jesus said to them, "Someone will have the leaders arrest me, the Son of Man. ²³They will kill me, but God will cause me to become alive again on the third day after I am killed." When the disciples heard that, they became very sad.

²⁴When Jesus and the disciples came to the city of Capernaum, the men who collected taxes for the temple approached Peter and said to him, "Surely your teacher pays the temple tax, correct?" ²⁵He answered them, "Yes, he does pay it." Then the disciples came into the house where Jesus was. Before Peter began to speak, Jesus said to him, "Simon, from whom do you think rulers get their money? Do they collect taxes from the citizens of their own country, or from citizens of countries they have conquered?" ²⁶Peter answered him, "From citizens of other countries." Then Jesus said to him, "So citizens of their own country do not need to pay taxes. ²⁷But so that the tax collectors will not become angry with us, go to the Sea of Galilee, cast your fish line and hook, and take the first fish that you catch. When you open its mouth, you will find a silver coin that is worth enough to pay the tax for you and me. Take that coin and give it to the temple tax collectors."

17:21 ^[1]

Chapter 18

¹Immediately the apprentices approached Jesus and asked him, "Which of us people over whom God rules from heaven are most important?" ²Jesus called a child to come to him, and he placed that child in the middle of the group of him and his apprentices. ³He said, "What I tell you is true: If you do not change and become as humble as little children, surely you will not become one of God's people over whom he rules from heaven. ⁴The people who become as humble as this child are the most important among the people over whom God rules from heaven. ⁵Whoever welcomes a person who is humble like this child in my authority, to God it is as though they receive me.

⁶God will severely punish anyone who causes one who is humble like these little children who believe in me to sin. It would certainly be better for them if they tied a heavy stone around their neck and someone threw them into the depths of the sea than for God to judge them. ⁷There will always be people in this world who will cause others to sin. God will certainly judge the people of this world because they cause people to sin! ⁸So if you are wanting to use one of your hands or feet to sin, stop using that hand or foot! Even if you have to cut it off so you will not sin! Suppose you had only one hand or one foot and still lived forever with God. How much better is that than if you had both hands and both feet and God threw you into the eternal fire in hell because of your sin. ⁹If you are also wanting to use one of your eyes to sin, stop looking at things that cause you to sin, even if you have to gouge it out so you will not sin! Suppose you had only one eye and still lived forever with God. How much better is that than if you had both eyes and God threw you into the eternal fire in hell.

¹⁰Be sure not to look down on even one person who is humble like a child. I tell you truly that the angels who protect them can always go to my Father and report to him if you mistreat them. ¹¹^[1] [For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.] ¹²Consider the following situation. If a person had 100 sheep and one of them got lost, he would surely leave the 99 sheep that were on the hillside and go and search for the lost one. ¹³What I say to you is true: If the person found it, they would rejoice very much. They would be happy that none of the 99 sheep strayed away, but they would rejoice even more because they had found the one sheep that had strayed away. ¹⁴In the same way that the shepherd does not want one of his sheep to stray away, so God, your Father in the heavens, does not want any of these children to go to hell away from him.

¹⁵If a fellow believer sins against you, go to him by yourself, and reprove him for sinning against you. If that person listens to you and feels sorry that he has sinned against you, you will be like brothers once again. ¹⁶If, however, that person does not listen to you or feel sorry for sinning against you, have one or two other believers go with you. Do this so that there will be two or three witnesses to confirm everything of which you accuse them, just as the law of Moses says. ¹⁷If the one who has sinned against you does not listen to the other believers you bring, tell the matter to the entire congregation so that they can correct him. And if the person does not listen to the congregation, exclude him from among you, just as you would exclude non-Jewish people and tax collectors who do not believe. ¹⁸What I say to you is true: God will approve whatever you prohibit on the earth. Similarly, God will approve whatever you permit on the earth. ¹⁹I also say to you: If two of you who live on earth agree with each other about whatever you ask for, my Father who is in heaven will give you what you ask. ²⁰Your Father does this because when two or three of you are gathered together because of me, I am there spiritually also."

²¹Then Peter approached Jesus and said to him, "Lord, how many times must I forgive a fellow believer who keeps on sinning against me? If he keeps asking me to forgive him, must I forgive him as many as seven times?" ²²Jesus said to him, "I tell you that the number of times you must forgive someone is not just up to seven, but you must forgive him 77 times. ²³For this reason, when God rules over his people from heaven, it is like when a king wanted his servants to pay the debts they owed him. ²⁴The king first brought to himself a servant who owed him a very large sum of money. ²⁵But because the servant did not have enough money to repay what he owed, the king demanded that his people sell the servant, his wife, his children, and everything he possessed to someone else. Then the king would take that money as a repayment. ²⁶Then that servant fell on his knees in front of the king. He said to him, 'Be patient with me, master, and I will pay you all of it eventually.' ²⁷The king, knowing that the servant could never pay all of that huge debt, felt sorry for him. So he canceled his debt and released him. ²⁸Then, after going out from the king, that servant went to another one of the king's servants who owed him a smaller sum of money. He grabbed him by the throat, started choking him, and said to him, 'Pay back what you owe me!' ²⁹That other servant fell on his knees and begged him saying, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you all of it, eventually.' ³⁰But that servant would not cancel the small debt that the man owed him. Instead, he put the other servant into prison until he could pay back the debt that he owed to him. ³¹When the other servants of the king learned that this had happened, they were very distressed. So they went to the king and reported in detail what the one servant did to the other servant. ³²Then the king summoned the servant who had owed him a very large sum of money. He said to him, 'You wicked servant! I canceled the large debt that you owed me because you begged me to do so! ³³You should have been merciful and canceled your fellow servant's debt, just like I was merciful to you and canceled your debt!' ³⁴The king was very angry, so he handed this servant over to some jailers, who would torture him severely until he paid all of the debt that he owed." ³⁵Then Jesus concluded the parable by saying, "That is what my Father in heaven will do to you if you are not merciful and sincerely forgive a fellow believer who sins against you."

18:11 ^[1]

Chapter 19

¹After Jesus said these things, he took his disciples and left the region of Galilee. They went to the part of the region of Judea that is east of the Jordan River. ²Large crowds followed him there, and he healed the sick among them.

³Some Pharisees approached him and said to him, "Does the Law of Moses permit a man to divorce his wife for any reason?" They asked that in order to test him. ⁴Jesus said to them, "You have read in the scriptures that at the time when God first created people, he made them male and female. ⁵That explains why God said, 'That is why a man leaves his father and mother and marries his wife. The two of them will be united as though they were one person' ⁶Consequently, although they functioned as two separate people before, they are now united as if they were one person. Since that is true, a man must not separate from his wife whom God has joined to him."

⁷The Pharisees then said to him, "If that is true, why did Moses command that a man who wanted to divorce his wife should give her a paper stating his reason for divorcing her and then send her away?" ⁸Jesus said to them, "It was because your ancestors were stubborn that Moses allowed them to divorce their wives, and you are no different than them. But when God first created a man and a woman, he did not intend for them to separate from each other. ⁹I am telling you that God considers any man adulterous who divorces his wife, unless it is because she committed adultery, and marries another woman. Similarly, God considers adulterous whoever marries the woman whom the man divorced." ¹⁰The apprentices said to him, "If that is true, it is better for men never to marry!" ¹¹He answered, "Not every man is able to accept this teaching, but only the men whom God enables to accept it. ¹²There are men who do not marry because their genitals have been defective ever since they were born. There are other men who do not marry because they have been castrated. Then there are still other men who decide not to marry in order to serve God as he rules from heaven. You who are able to understand what I have said about marriage should accept it."

¹³Then some people brought little children to Jesus in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray for them. But the apprentices scolded the people for doing that. ¹⁴But Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them! For it is these that God rules over from heaven." ¹⁵Jesus then laid his hands on the children to bless them. Then he left that place.

¹⁶As Jesus was walking along, a young man approached him and said to him, "Teacher, what good deeds must I do in order to live with God forever?" ¹⁷Jesus said to him, "Why are you asking me about what is good to do? Only one being is good, and he has told people what good they should do. That being is God. But in order to answer your question about desiring to live with God forever, I will tell you to keep the commandments that God gave Moses." ¹⁸The man asked Jesus, "Which commandments must I keep?" Jesus answered him, "Do not murder anyone, do not commit adultery, do not steal things, do not testify falsely, ¹⁹honor your father and your mother, and love every other person as much as you love yourself." ²⁰The young man said to Jesus, "I have perfectly obeyed all those commandments. What else must I do in order to live with God forever?" ²¹Jesus said to him, "If you desire to be blameless before God, go home, sell everything that you own, and give the money to poor people. In doing this, you will be spiritually rich because you will live with God in heaven forever. Then come and be my disciple!" ²²When the young man heard those words, he went away feeling sad. This was because he was very rich and did not want to give away everything he owned.

²³Then Jesus said to the apprentices, "What I say to you is true: It is very difficult for rich people to please God and for him to rule over them from heaven as his people. ²⁴Also I say to you: It is impossible for a camel to pass through the small hole that is in a needle. It is even more difficult for rich people to please God and for him to rule over them from heaven as his people." ²⁵When the apprentices heard this, they were very astounded. So they said to Jesus, "Certainly no one will be able to live with God forever if this is true!" ²⁶Then Jesus looked intently at them and said, "Yes, it is impossible for people to save themselves. But it is possible for God to do anything!" ²⁷Then Peter said to him, "Look at us. We have left everything behind and we have become your apprentices in order to follow you. So what benefit will we get for doing that?" ²⁸Jesus said to them, "What I say to you is true: When God makes the new earth, and when I, the Son of Man, sit on my throne in my glory, those of you who have accompanied me will each sit on a throne. You will judge the people of the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹God will reward those who, because they were my apprentice, left behind a house or a plot of ground, their brothers, their sisters, their father, their mother, their children, or any other family members. God will give them a hundred times as many benefits as they have given up. And they will live with God forever. ³⁰But many people who consider themselves to be important in this life now will be unimportant in eternity when they are living with God. Likewise, many people whom people consider to be unimportant now will be important in eternity, when they are living with God."

Chapter 20

¹"When God rules from heaven, it is like when a person who owns land goes out in the morning to hire people to work in his vineyard. ²He promised the men whom he hired that he would pay them the standard wage for

working one day. Then he sent them to his vineyards. ³At nine o'clock that same morning he went back to the marketplace. There he saw more men who did not have work. ⁴He said to them, 'Go to my vineyard as other men have done, and work there. I will pay you whatever wage is fair.' So they also went to his vineyard and began to work. ⁵At noon and at three o'clock he again went to the marketplace and found other laborers whom he promised to pay a fair wage. ⁶At five o'clock he went to the marketplace again and saw other men standing there who were not working. He said to them, 'Why are you standing here all day and not working?' ⁷They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'I will hire you. Go to my vineyard as other men have done, and work there.' So they went.

⁸When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Tell the workers to come so that you can give them their pay. Pay the men first who started working last, and pay the men last who started working first.' ⁹The manager paid a standard day's wage to each of the men who started working around five o'clock in the afternoon. ¹⁰When the men who had begun working early in the morning went to get their wages, they thought that they would receive more than the standard wage. But they also received only the standard wage. ¹¹So they complained to the owner of the vineyard because they thought their payment was unfair. ¹²They said to him, 'These men only worked one hour! Yet, you have paid them the same wage as you paid us even though we worked hard all day. We even worked through the hottest part!' ¹³The owner of the vineyard said to one of those who complained, 'Friend, I did not treat you unfairly. You agreed with me to work the whole day for a standard day's wage. ¹⁴Stop complaining to me! Take your wages and go! For I desire to give the men who started working after you the same wage as you. ¹⁵I certainly have a right to spend my money as I desire! You should not be envious because I am generous!'" ¹⁶"Similarly, some people whom people consider to be unimportant now will be important when they are living with God forever. Likewise, people who consider themselves to be important in this life now will be unimportant after they receive God's judgment."

¹⁷When Jesus was walking on the road up to Jerusalem along with the 12 apprentices, he took them to a place by themselves in order that he could talk to them privately. Then he said to them, ¹⁸"Listen carefully! We are now going up to Jerusalem. While we are there, someone will compel the chief priests and the men who teach the Jewish laws to arrest me, the Son of Man. They will put me on trial and they will condemn me to die. ¹⁹Then they will give me to non-Jewish people so that they can make fun of me, whip me, and kill me by nailing me to a cross. But on the third day after that, God will cause me to live again."

²⁰After this, the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, brought her two sons to Jesus. She bowed down before Jesus and asked him to do her a favor. ²¹Jesus said to her, "What do you want me to do for you?" She said to him, "Permit my two sons to sit in the places of most honor when you become king, one on your right and the other on your left." ²²Jesus said to her and her sons, "You do not understand what you are asking for. Are you willing to suffer like I am about to suffer?" James and John answered him, "Yes, we are willing to do that." ²³Then Jesus said to them, "Yes, you will suffer as I will suffer. But I am not the one who chooses those who will sit next to me and rule with me. God, my Father, will give those places to the ones whom he appoints."

²⁴When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had requested, they became angry with them. For they also wanted to rule with Jesus in the positions of most honor. ²⁵So Jesus called all of them together and said to them, "You know that those who rule the non-Jewish people enjoy showing that they are powerful. ²⁶You should not be like those rulers among yourselves. On the contrary, if any of you wants God to consider him great, he must serve the rest of you. ²⁷Likewise, everyone among you who wants God to consider him to be the most important must become a servant for the rest of you. ²⁸You should imitate me. Even though I am the Son of Man, I did not come for others to serve me. On the contrary, I came in order to serve others. I came also to allow them to kill me, so that when I die, it would be like a payment to set people free from God punishing them for their sins."

²⁹As they were leaving the city of Jericho, a large crowd of people followed them. ³⁰As Jesus and the apprentices walked along, two blind men who were sitting on the side of the road heard that Jesus was passing by. So they yelled to him, "Lord, Descendant of King David, take pity on us!" ³¹People in the crowd scolded them and told them to be quiet. But the blind men yelled even louder, "Lord, Descendant of King David, have pity on us!" ³²Jesus

stopped and called them to come to him. Then he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" ³³They answered him, "Lord, heal our eyes so that we can see!" ³⁴Jesus felt sorry for them and touched their eyes. Immediately they were able to see, and they followed after Jesus.

Chapter 21

¹⁻²As Jesus and his apprentices approached the city of Jerusalem, they came to the village of Bethphage, near the Mount of Olives. Jesus said to two of his apprentices, "Go to the village just ahead of you. As soon as you enter it, you will see a donkey and her colt which someone tied up. Untie them and bring them here to me. ³If anyone asks you why you are taking them, tell him that the Lord needs them. He will then allow you to lead them away." ⁴⁻⁵All of this happened to prove true what God said through the prophet long ago. That prophet wrote, "Tell the people who live in Jerusalem, 'Look! Your king is coming to you! He will come humbly, riding on a colt, the offspring of a donkey.'"

⁶So the two apprentices went and did what Jesus told them to do. ⁷They brought the donkey and its colt to Jesus. They placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. Then Jesus mounted and sat on the cloaks. ⁸Then a large crowd spread some of their outer clothing on the road. Other people cut off branches from palm trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds that walked in front of him and those who walked behind him were shouting,

"Praise the Messiah, the Descendant of King David!"

"May the Lord bless this one who comes as God's representative!"

"Praise God, who is in heaven!"

¹⁰As Jesus entered Jerusalem, many people from all over the city became excited and were saying, "Who is this man whom they are honoring in this way?" ¹¹The crowd that was walking with him answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from the town of Nazareth in the region of Galilee!"

¹²Then Jesus went into the temple courtyard and chased out all of those who were buying and selling things there. He also overturned the tables of those who were changing Roman coins for money that people used to pay the temple tax. He also overturned the seats of those who were selling pigeons for sacrifices. ¹³Then he said to them, "A prophet wrote in the Scriptures that God said, 'I want my house to be a place where people pray to me,' but you people have made it into a place where robbers hide!"

¹⁴After that, many blind people and lame people came to Jesus in the temple to ask him to heal them. And Jesus healed them. ¹⁵The high priests and the men who taught the Jewish laws saw the marvelous deeds that Jesus did. They also saw the children shouting in the temple, "We praise the Messiah, the Descendant of King David!" And so, they were very angry at Jesus. ¹⁶They asked him, "What they are saying cannot be correct!" Then Jesus said to them, "Yes, it is! For you have certainly read what the psalmist wrote, when he said to God, 'You have taught infants and young children to praise you.'"

¹⁷Then Jesus and the apprentices left the crowds and the city. They went to the village of Bethany, and they stayed there that night.

¹⁸Early the next morning, when they were returning to the city, Jesus was hungry. ¹⁹He saw a fig tree near the road, so he went over to it to pick some figs to eat. But when he got close, he saw that there were only leaves on it. So he said to the fig tree, "May you never again produce figs!" As a result, the fig tree immediately dried up. ²⁰When the apprentices saw that the tree dried up, they were astonished and said to Jesus, "How did the fig tree dry up so quickly?" ²¹Jesus said to them, "What I say to you is true: If you believe that God has power to do what you ask him to and you do not doubt that, you will be able to do things such as I have done to this fig tree. You will even be able to do marvelous deeds such as saying to that hill over there, 'Uproot yourself and throw yourself into the sea,' and

it will happen! ²²In addition to that, whenever you ask God for something when you pray to him, and you believe that he will give it to you, you will receive it from him."

²³After that, Jesus went into the temple courtyard. While he was teaching the people, the chief priests and the elders of the people approached him. They asked, "By what authority are you doing these things?" ²⁴Jesus said to them, "First I will ask you a question, and if you answer me, I will tell you who authorized me to do these things.

²⁵Who authorized John the Baptizer to baptize people? Was it God, or was it people?" The chief priests and elders debated among themselves about what they should answer. They said to each other, "If we say it was from God, he will say that we should have believed John's message!" ²⁶But if we say, 'It was from people,' the crowd might react violently against us. For all the people believe that John was a prophet whom God had sent." ²⁷So 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 the things I did here yesterday."

²⁸"Tell me what you think about this story: There was a man who had two sons. He went to his older son and said, 'My son, go and work in my vineyard today!' ²⁹But the son said to his father, 'I will not go!' But later he changed his mind, and he went to the vineyard and worked. ³⁰Then the father approached his younger son and said what he had said to his older son. That son said, 'Sir, I will go and work in the vineyard today.' But he did not go and work. ³¹So which of the man's two sons did what their father desired?" They answered, "The older son." Then Jesus said to them, "What I say to you is true: God will rule over tax collectors and prostitutes much sooner than he will rule over you. ³²This is because, even though John the Baptizer explained to you how to live in the right way, you did not believe his message. But tax collectors and prostitutes believed his message, and they turned away from their sinful behavior. But you did not change your minds later and believe in his message when you saw tax collectors and prostitutes believing."

³³"Listen to another story that I will tell you. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He built a fence around it. He made a place to collect the juice that would come out of the grapes. He also built a tower in which someone could sit to guard that vineyard. He rented the vineyard to some men who would work in it. Then he went away to another country. ³⁴When it was time to harvest the grapes, the landowner sent some of his servants to the men who were working in the vineyard to get his share of the grapes that the vineyard had produced. ³⁵But the renters seized the servants. They beat one of them. Another one they killed, and they killed a third one of them by throwing stones at him. ³⁶So the landowner sent more servants than he had sent the first time. The renters treated those servants the same way that they had treated the other servants. ³⁷After he heard about this, the landowner sent his own son to those working the vineyard to get his share of the grapes. When he sent him, he said to himself, 'They will certainly respect my son and give him my share of the grapes.' ³⁸But when those working in the vineyard saw his son arriving, they said to each other, 'This is the man who will inherit this vineyard! Let us kill him together and divide the property among ourselves.' ³⁹So they grabbed him, dragged him outside the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰Now I ask you, when the landowner returns to his vineyard, what do you think he will do to those renters?" ⁴¹The people replied, "He will thoroughly destroy those wicked men! Then he will rent the vineyard to others. They will give him his share of the grapes when they are ripe." ⁴²Jesus said to them, "Certainly you have read these words which are written in the scriptures:

'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! The Lord has done this, and we marvel as we look at it.'

⁴³So I am telling you this: God will no longer let you be the people who belong to him. Instead, he will let a people who do what he requires them to do be his people. ⁴⁴Anyone who falls on this stone will break into pieces, and the stone will crush anyone on whom it falls."

⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard this story, they realized that Jesus was accusing them because they did not believe that he was the Messiah. ⁴⁶They wanted to seize him, but they did not do so since they were afraid of what the crowds would do to them if they did that. This is because the crowds thought that Jesus was a prophet.

Chapter 22

¹Then Jesus told the Jewish leaders other stories. The first one went like this: ²"When God rules from heaven, it will be like a king who told his servants that they should prepare a wedding feast for his son. ³When the feast was ready, the king sent his servants to tell the people whom he had invited that it was time for them to come to the wedding feast. The servants went out and told the people, but the people whom the king invited did not want to come. ⁴So the king sent other servants to tell those people again to come to the feast. He told them to say, 'This is what the king says to you, "My servants have prepared the meal. They have butchered and cooked the oxen and the fattened calves. Everything is ready. It is time now for you to come to the wedding feast!"' ⁵But when the servants told them these things, they disregarded what the servants said. Some of them went to their own fields. Others went to their places of business. ⁶The rest of those whom the king had invited seized his servants, treated them poorly, and killed them. ⁷When the king heard what had happened, he became furious. He commanded his soldiers to go and kill those murderers and burn their city. ⁸After his soldiers had done that, the king said to his other servants, 'I have prepared the wedding feast, but the people whom I invited do not deserve to come to it. ⁹So go to the intersections of the main roads in the town. Tell whomever you find there that they should come to the wedding feast.' ¹⁰So the servants went there. They gathered everyone they could find, both bad people and good people. They brought them into the hall where the wedding feast was about to take place, so that those people filled the hall. ¹¹But when the king went into the hall to see the guests, he saw someone who was not wearing the clothes that he provided for the guests to wear at a wedding feast. ¹²The king said to him, 'Friend, you should not have entered this hall. For you are not wearing the clothes that guests wear at wedding feasts!' The man did not say anything, for he did not know what to say. ¹³Then the king said to his servants, 'Tie this person's feet and hands and throw him outside where there is total darkness. This is where people cry out and gnash their teeth because of the pain they are in.'" ¹⁴Then Jesus said, "The message of this story is that God has invited many to come to him, but only a few people are the ones whom he has chosen to come."

¹⁵After Jesus said that, the Pharisees met together in order to plan how they could cause him to say something that would allow them to arrest him. ¹⁶They sent to him some of their apprentices along with some of the Jews who supported Herod Antipas, who ruled the region of Galilee. They said to Jesus, "Teacher, we know that you teach only what is true. We also know that people's opinions do not influence you. Instead, you truthfully teach all people what God wants them to do. You do not show regard for their social position. ¹⁷So tell us what you think about this matter: Is it right that we pay taxes to the Roman government, or is it wrong that we pay taxes to it?" ¹⁸But Jesus knew that they were only asking him this because they wanted to find a reason to get him in trouble with either the Jewish or the Roman authorities. So he said to them, "You are hypocrites! Stop pretending to ask me a genuine question! ¹⁹Show me one of the coins with which people pay the Roman tax." So they showed him a coin called a denarius. ²⁰He said to them, "Whose picture is on this coin? And whose name is on it?" ²¹They answered, "It has a picture and the name of Caesar, the man who rules the Roman government." Then he said to them, "In that case give to the government what belongs to the government and give to God what belongs to God." ²²When those men heard Jesus say that, his answer amazed them. Then they departed from him.

²³During that same day, some Sadducees came to Jesus. They are a Jewish group that does not believe that God cause people to become alive again after they die. They asked Jesus, ²⁴"Teacher, Moses wrote in the Scriptures, 'If a man dies who did not have any children, his brother must marry the dead man's widow. This is in order that she can have a child by him that will be considered the descendant of the man who died. That way the dead man will have descendants.' ²⁵There were seven brothers in a family. The oldest one married someone. He and his wife did not have any children, and he died. So, the second brother married the widow. ²⁶The same thing happened to the second brother, as well as to the other five brothers, who each married the woman, and then died without having any children. ²⁷Finally, the woman also died. ²⁸So, at the time when God makes people alive again after they have died, which of the seven brothers will be her husband? They all were married to her at different times." ²⁹Jesus replied to them, "You are incorrect in what you are thinking. You do not understand what is written in the Scriptures. You also do not understand that God is able to make people alive again. ³⁰When God causes all people

who have died to become alive again, no one will marry. Rather, they will be like the angels who are with God. For they also do not marry. ³¹But you surely have read what God said to your ancestors about how he causes people to live again after they have died. He said, ³²'I am the God whom Abraham worships, the God whom Isaac worships, and the God whom Jacob worships.' It is not dead people who worship God. It is living people who worship him. So, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are living with God!"

³³When the crowds of people heard Jesus teach that, it amazed them.

³⁴But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had answered the Sadducees in such a way that the Sadducees were not able to respond to him, the Pharisees gathered together to plan what they would say to him. Then they approached him. ³⁵One of them, a man who was an expert in the laws that God gave Moses, wanted to test Jesus. He asked him, ³⁶"Teacher, which commandment in the laws that God gave Moses is the most important?" ³⁷Jesus quoted the Law as he replied, "'You must love the Lord your God with all that you feel, with all that you desire, and with all that you think.' ³⁸That is the most important commandment in the laws that God gave Moses. ³⁹The next most important commandment that everyone must surely obey is: 'You must love the people around you as much as you love yourself.' ⁴⁰These two commandments are the basis of every law that Moses wrote in the Scriptures and of all that the prophets wrote."

⁴¹While the Pharisees were gathered together near Jesus, he asked them, ⁴²"What do you think about the Messiah? Whose descendant is he?" They said to him, "He is the descendant of King David." ⁴³Then Jesus said to them, "If the Messiah is King David's descendant, why did David call him 'Lord' when he spoke what the Holy Spirit told him to speak and said, ⁴⁴'God said to my Lord, "Sit here at my right side, in the place where I will highly honor you above everyone else! Sit here until the time when I completely defeat your enemies!"' ⁴⁵So, since King David called the Messiah 'my Lord,' the Messiah cannot be just someone descended from David! He must be much greater than David!" ⁴⁶No one who heard what Jesus said was able to think of something to say to him in response. After that, no one else ever dared to ask him another question to try to trap him.

Chapter 23

¹Then Jesus said to the crowd and to his apprentices, ²"The Pharisees and the men who teach the Jewish laws have the authority that Moses had when he led Israel. ³Therefore, you should do whatever they tell you that you must do. But do not do what they do, because they themselves do not do those things that they tell you to do. ⁴They require you to obey many rules that are difficult to obey. But they themselves do not obey those rules. It is as if they were tying up very heavy loads and putting them on your shoulders for you to carry. But they will not even move one finger to help you carry them. ⁵Whenever they do good deeds, they do those things so that other people will see them and admire them. For example, they make extra wide the tiny boxes containing portions of Scripture that they wear on their arms. They enlarge the tassels on their robes to make others think that they honor God. ⁶They also want other people to honor them when, at dinners, they sit in the seats where the most important people sit. In the synagogues they want to sit in the same kind of places. ⁷They love for people to greet them with great honor in the markets, and for people to call them 'Teacher.' ⁸But you, my apprentices, should not allow people to call you 'Teacher,' as they do other Jewish teachers. I am the only one who is really your teacher. This means that you are all equal to each other, like brothers and sisters. ⁹Do not honor anyone on earth by addressing him as 'Father.' For God, your Father in heaven, is your only true father. ¹⁰Do not allow people to call you 'teacher.' For the Messiah is your only teacher. ¹¹Instead, everyone among you who wants God to consider him to be important must serve others as servants do. ¹²God will humble those who try to make themselves important. Those who humble themselves, God himself will make important."

¹³"You teachers of the law and you Pharisees are hypocrites! How terribly God will punish you, because you refuse to become one of God's people over whom he rules, and you also keep others from becoming God's people. It is as if you shut the door to a house and do not let people enter it."

¹⁴^[1] Because of this, God will punish you more severely ¹⁵“You teachers of the law and you Pharisees are hypocrites! How terribly God will punish you! You work hard to get even one non-Jewish person to believe what you teach. You even travel across seas and on land to distant places in order to do that. But as a result, when someone believes what you teach, you make that person deserve for God to punish them even more than you yourselves deserve.”

¹⁶“How terribly God will punish you Jewish leaders! You are like blind people who try to lead others. You say, ‘If someone swears to do something and asks the temple to be a witness to this oath like a person would witness it, and he does not do what he promised, he is not obligated by God to do it. But if a person asks the gold in the temple to be a witness to this oath like a person would do, then he must keep his promise.’ ¹⁷You are fools, and you are like people who are blind! The gold that is in the temple is only important because people use it in God’s temple. ¹⁸Also you say, ‘If someone swears to do something and asks the altar to be a witness to this oath, as a person would witness it, and he does not do what he promised, he is not obligated by God to do it. But if he asks what the priests are offering on the altar to be a witness to this oath as a person would do, then he must keep his promise.’ ¹⁹You are fools, and you are like people who are blind! What the priests offer on the altar is only important because they offer it on God’s altar. ²⁰So those who swear to do something and ask the altar to be a witness to the oath are also asking everything on the altar to witness to the oath. ²¹Likewise those who swear to do something and ask the temple to be a witness to the oath like a person would do, they are also asking the one who dwells in the temple to witness the oath. ²²If someone swears to do something and asks heaven to be a witness to the oath, they are asking the throne where God sits to be a witness, and so, they are also asking God himself, who sits on that throne, to be a witness.”

²³“You teachers of the law and you Pharisees are hypocrites! How terribly God will punish you! You give to God a tenth of the herbs you produce, such as mint, dill, and cumin. But you do not obey God’s laws that are more important. For example, you do not act justly toward other people, you do not act mercifully toward people, and you do not act as God wants you to act. It is good to give a tenth of your herbs to God, but you should also obey these other more important laws. ²⁴You leaders are like blind people who are trying to lead others. You are careful not to offend God in small ways. But you are not careful to offend God in great ways!

²⁵“You teachers of the law and you Pharisees are hypocrites! How terribly God will punish you! You make yourselves appear like good people to others by how you act. But you truly desire greed and taking what belongs to others. You are like dishes that are clean on the outside but are still dirty on the inside. ²⁶You blind Pharisees! First you must stop desiring to do evil things such as stealing from others. Then you will truly be able to act righteously and will be like a dish that is clean both outside and inside.”

²⁷“You men who teach the laws and you Pharisees are hypocrites! How terribly God will punish you! You are like tombs where people have buried dead people. Those tombs are painted white on the outside in order to look beautiful. Even though they look beautiful on the outside, inside they are full of dead people’s bones and things that would make a person unclean if they touch them. ²⁸You are like those tombs in that, when people look at you, they see you doing good deeds. But you are truly hypocrites, because you disobey God’s commands.”

²⁹“You men who teach the Jewish laws and you Pharisees are hypocrites! How terribly God will punish you! You rebuild the tombs of the prophets whom Jewish people killed long ago. You decorate the monuments that honor righteous people. ³⁰You say, ‘If we had lived when our ancestors lived, we would not have helped those who killed the prophets.’ ³¹When you say this, you admit that you are like your ancestors and would kill the prophets just as they did. ³²You are as ready to murder people as your ancestors were! ³³You wicked people are as dangerous as poisonous snakes! You certainly will not escape from God punishing you in hell! ³⁴This is why I will send you prophets, wise men, and people who will teach the law of Moses. You will kill some of them by nailing them to crosses, and you will kill some in other ways. You will whip some of them in the places where you worship and you will chase them from city to city. ³⁵So God will consider that you and your ancestors are guilty for killing all the righteous people who have ever lived on earth. This includes everyone from Adam’s son Abel, who was a righteous man, until one of the last prophets, Zechariah, the son of Barachiah, whom your ancestors killed in the holy place

between the temple and the altar. ³⁶What I say to you is true: You people who have witnessed what I have done God will punish for killing all those prophets!"

³⁷"O people of Jerusalem, you killed the prophets who lived long ago, and you who killed with stones others whom God had sent to you. Many times I have wanted to gather you together to protect you, as a hen gathers her young chicks under her wings. But you did not want me to do that. ³⁸So listen to this: Your city will become a place where no one lives. ³⁹Keep this in mind: You will see me again only when I return, when you say about me, 'God is truly pleased with this man who comes with God's authority!'"

23:14 ^[1]

Chapter 24

¹Jesus left the temple courtyard. As he was walking along, his apprentices came to him and began talking about how beautiful the temple buildings were. ²He said to them, "Certainly you are able to see these buildings! But what I say to you is true: An army will completely destroy them. They will throw down every stone in these buildings, so that no stone will remain on top of another stone."

³Later, as Jesus was sitting alone on the Mount of Olives, the apprentices came to him and asked him, "When will these things happen to the buildings of the temple? And what will God show us to demonstrate that you are about to come again and that this world is about to end?"

⁴Jesus replied, "Beware that no one deceives you about when it will happen! ⁵I say this because many people will come and say that they are me. They will say, 'I am the Messiah,' and they will deceive many people. ⁶Whenever people tell you about wars that are happening and about wars that could happen, do not let this trouble you. These things will definitely happen. But when they do happen, do not think that it is the end of the world! ⁷Groups 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. ⁸Yet, 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.

⁹After these things happen, people who oppose you will take you away to suffer and die. Every group of people will hate you because you believe in me. ¹⁰Also, many people will stop believing in me because they suffer in this way. They will have their own fellow believers arrested and they will hate each other. ¹¹Many will come saying that they are prophets, but they will be lying, and they will deceive many people. ¹²Because more people will disobey God's laws, many believers will no longer love each other. ¹³But God will save all of you who continue to trust in me strongly until your life ends. ¹⁴Furthermore, believers will proclaim to all of the people of the world the good news that God is reigning as a king. Then the end of the world will come.

¹⁵During that time the detestable thing will enter the temple. It will defile the temple and cause people to abandon it. Daniel the prophet spoke and wrote about that long ago." (May everyone who reads this pay attention, because I am warning you.) ¹⁶"At that time those people who are in the region of Judea should flee to higher hills. ¹⁷Those people who are outside their houses should not enter their houses in order to get anything. ¹⁸Those who are working in a field should not return to their houses in order to get additional clothes. ¹⁹When this happens, how terrible it will be for pregnant women and for those who are nursing their babies! ²⁰Pray that this painful time will not happen in winter, when it will be hard to travel, or on the Sabbath, the day of rest. ²¹People will suffer very severely when those things happen. People have never suffered that severely since God created the world until now, and no one will ever suffer like that again. ²²If 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.

²³At that time people will falsely say that they are the Messiah. So at that time, if someone says to you, 'Look, here is the Messiah!', or if someone says, 'Look, here he is!', do not believe it! ²⁴And some will appear claiming falsely to be prophets from God. Other will claim to be the Messiah. Then they will perform many kinds of miracles. They will even try to deceive the people whom God has chosen. ²⁵Do not forget that I have warned you about all this before it happens. ²⁶So if someone says to you, 'Look, the Messiah is in the wilderness!' do not go there. Likewise, if someone says to you, 'Look, he is in a secret room!' do not believe that person. ²⁷You should not believe them since, just as lightning flashes across the whole sky and people see it, in the same way everyone will see the Son of Man when he returns again. ²⁸It will be clear to everyone in the same way that, when you see vultures gathering, you know that an animal carcass is there.

²⁹After the time when people suffer like that, God will cause the sun to become dark, and the moon will not shine. God will cause all of the things in the sky to shake out of their places. ³⁰After that, everyone will see me, the Son of Man, appear in the sky. Then unbelieving people from all people groups on earth will wail because they will be afraid. They will see me, the Son of Man, coming on the clouds that are in the sky powerfully and gloriously. ³¹Then I will have an angel blast a trumpet to alert the whole world that I am coming. I will send out my angels to gather together the people whom God has chosen from everywhere, from the most remote places on earth.

³²Now I want you to learn something from this story about how fig trees grow and tell you about seasons. When the branches of a fig tree begin to sprout leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³Similarly, when you see all these things happening, you will know that the time for me to return is very close. ³⁴What I say to you is true: All of these events will happen before all the people who have been with me have died. ³⁵You can be certain that these things that I have said will happen. One day God will destroy the earth and what is in the sky when he restores all of creation, but these things that I have told you will always be true.

³⁶But 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. ³⁷⁻³⁹But when I, the Son of Man, come again, people will be doing things just as people were doing at the time when Noah lived. At that time, people ate and drank as usual, and they got married as usual, up until the day when Noah and his family entered the great boat that God told Noah to build. But then the flood came and destroyed all those who were not in the boat. For they did not know what was coming. Similarly, the unbelieving people will not know when I, the Son of Man, will return. ⁴⁰When that happens, God will only take those who believe in him. For example, two people will be in the fields. God will take one of them up to heaven and the other person God will leave here to punish him. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding grain together. God will take one of them and leave the other one behind. ⁴²So, because you do not know what day your Lord will return to the earth, you need to be ready all the time. ⁴³Consider this: If the owner of a house knew at what time in the night a thief was coming, he would stay awake and prevent the thief from breaking in. ⁴⁴So be ready, because I, the Son of Man, will come again at a time when you do not expect me.

⁴⁵Think about what every faithful and wise servant is like. The house owner appoints one servant to supervise the other servants. He tells him to give them food at the proper times. Then he leaves on a long trip. ⁴⁶Happy is that servant whose master will find him doing these things when he comes. ⁴⁷What I say to you is true: The master will put that servant in charge of all he owns. ⁴⁸But a wicked servant might say to himself, 'The owner has been away for a long time, so he probably will not return soon and find out what I am doing.' ⁴⁹So he will begin to beat the other servants and eat and drink with those who are drunk. ⁵⁰If he does that, his master might return at a time when the servant does not expect him. ⁵¹The master will punish that servant severely. He will put him where the hypocrites are put. In that place, the people cry and grind their teeth because they suffer very much."

Chapter 25

¹"At that future time when God reveals his rule from heaven, it will be like what happened to ten unmarried girls {in this story}. {At night} they took their oil lamps and went to {the place where they would} meet the bridegroom.

²Five of these girls were foolish, and {the other} five girls were wise. ³The foolish girls took their oil lamps, but they

did not take any {extra} olive oil with them {to keep their lamps lit}. ⁴But the wise girls took {extra} olive oil in their jars along with their oil lamps. ⁵The bridegroom delayed coming{, and it became late at night}. So all the girls became drowsy and then fell asleep. ⁶Around midnight someone shouted, 'Pay attention! The bridegroom {is arriving}! Go outside to meet him!' ⁷At that time all the girls woke up and adjusted their oil lamps to burn properly. ⁸The foolish girls said to the wise girls, 'Give us some of your olive oil, because {the fire of} our oil lamps is about to burn out!' ⁹The wise girls replied, '{No, because} there will certainly not be enough olive oil for our lamps and yours. Go to the sellers and buy some olive oil for yourselves!' ¹⁰But the bridegroom arrived while the foolish girls were on their way to buy olive oil. Then the wise girls, who were ready, went inside with him to the wedding celebration. Then someone closed the door {to that place}. ¹¹Later, the rest of the girls arrived {at that place} as well. They called {to the bridegroom}, 'Sir! Please open the door for us!' ¹²But he said to them, 'I tell you truly that I do not know you{, so I will not open the door for you}'! ¹³So, {in order that this does not happen to you,} stay ready because you do not know exactly when {I will return}."

¹⁴"{You must stay ready} because when God reveals his rule from heaven, it will be like a man who was about to go {on a long journey} to a different country. He called his servants together and entrusted them with some of what he owned. ¹⁵He gave each of them money according to their ability to use it. He gave one servant money equivalent to 30,000 days' wages. He gave another servant money equivalent to 12,000 days' wages, and he gave another servant money equivalent to 6,000 days' wages. Then he left at once on his journey to a different country. ¹⁶After he left, his servant who had received money equivalent to 30,000 days' wages used that money to gain another 30,000 days' wages. ¹⁷Similarly, the servant who had received money equivalent to 12,000 days' wages {used that money} to gain another 12,000 days' wages. ¹⁸But the servant who had received money equivalent to 6,000 days' wages went and dug a hole in the ground and hid it there {to keep it safe}.

¹⁹After a long time the servants' master returned. He called them together to find out what they had done with his money. ²⁰The servant who had received money equivalent to 30,000 days' wages brought 60,000 days' wages to his master. He said, 'Master, you entrusted me with 30,000 days' wages. Look, I have used it to gain another 30,000 days' wages!' ²¹His master replied, 'You are a very good servant! You have been very faithful to me. You have managed a small amount of money very well, so I will put you in charge of a lot of things. Come and rejoice with me!'

²²The servant who had received money equivalent to 12,000 days' wages also came {to his master}. He said, 'Master, you entrusted me with 12,000 days' wages. Look, I have used it to gain another 12,000 days' wages!' ²³His master replied, 'You are a very good servant! You have been very faithful to me. You have managed a small amount of money very well, so I will put you in charge of a lot of things. Come and rejoice with me!'

²⁴Then the servant who had received money equivalent to 6,000 days' wages also came {to his master}. He said, 'Master, I understand that you are a harsh man. {You are} just like a farmer who harvests crops that he did not plant. ²⁵So I was afraid of you. I went and buried your money in the ground. Look, here is your money!' ²⁶His master replied, 'You are an evil servant! You have been lazy! Suppose it is true that I am just like a farmer who harvests crops that I did not plant! ²⁷Then you should at least have given my money to money lenders! Then when I returned I would have gotten it back plus the interest it earned!' ²⁸So {the master said to his other servants,} 'Take the 6,000 days' wages from him and give it to the servant who has 60,000 days' wages! ²⁹To everyone who uses well what they have received, I will give even more, and they will have abundantly more. But from those who do not use well what they have received, I will take away from them even what they already have. ³⁰Furthermore, throw this useless servant into hell, which is an evil place where God does not give any spiritual blessings. There people will weep because of their suffering, and they will grind their teeth because they will experience severe pain.'

³¹"When I, the Son of Man, come again and show how glorious I am and bring all my angels, I will sit {as king} on my majestic throne. ³²Angels will assemble people from every people group in front of me. Then I will separate those people into two groups, as a shepherd separates his sheep from his goats. ³³I will honor the righteous

people by putting them on my right side, but I will put the unrighteous people on my left side, {as a shepherd puts sheep on one side and goats on the other side}.

³⁴Then I, the King, will tell those {righteous people} on my right side, 'You people whom my Father has blessed, come! Come receive the benefits of those over whom I rule over. My Father has prepared these benefits for you since he made the world. ³⁵{These things belong to you,} because you fed me when I was hungry. You gave me something to drink when I was thirsty. You welcomed me to stay in your houses when I was a stranger in your town. ³⁶You gave me clothes when I did not have any. You took care of me when I was ill. You even visited me when I was in jail.'

³⁷Then those righteous people will reply, 'Lord, when were you hungry and we saw you and fed you? When were you thirsty and we gave you something to drink? ³⁸When were you a stranger {in our town} and we saw you and welcomed you {to stay} in our houses? When did you not have any clothes and we gave you some? ³⁹When were you sick or in jail and we visited you?'

⁴⁰Then I, the King, will reply to those righteous people, 'I tell you truly that you did for me whatever you did for even the least important one among these people who are as dear to me as brothers.'

⁴¹But then I will say to those {people} on my left side, 'Leave me! God has cursed you! {Go} into the fire that burns forever! God has prepared that fire for the devil and his {evil} angels. ⁴²{You deserve to go there,} because you did not feed me when I was hungry. You did not give me something to drink when I was thirsty. ⁴³You did not welcome me to stay in your houses when I was a stranger in your town. You did not give me clothes when I did not have any. You did not take care of me when I was ill and in jail.'

⁴⁴Then those people on my left side will reply, 'Lord, when were you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or without clothing or ill or in jail, and we did not provide you with what you needed?'

⁴⁵He will reply, "I tell you truly that you did not do for me whatever you did not do for even the least important one among these people of mine."

⁴⁶Then those people on my left will go away to the place where God will punish them forever. However, the righteous people will go to the place where they will live forever {with God}."

Chapter 26

¹When Jesus had finished saying all those things, he told his apprentices, ²"You are aware that the Jewish Passover celebration will begin in two days. At that time someone will take me, the Son of Man, to people who will kill me by nailing me to a cross."

³At the same time, the chief priests and elders {who ruled} over the Jewish people assembled in the home of the high priest. His name was Caiaphas. ⁴{There} they planned how they could secretly arrest Jesus and have someone execute him. ⁵They kept saying among themselves, "{We must not arrest him} during the {Passover} celebration. {If we do it then,} the people might riot."

⁶Jesus {and his apprentices} were in the village of Bethany. They were in the home of Simon, {whom Jesus had healed} of a skin disease. ⁷A woman came to Jesus {while he was in the house}. She was carrying a beautiful stone jar that contained very valuable perfume. She poured all the perfume on Jesus' head while he was sitting at the table for a meal. ⁸When Jesus' apprentices saw {the woman do} that, they were very upset. They said {to one another}, "She wasted {that valuable perfume}! ⁹We could have sold it and gotten a lot of money for it! Then we could have given {that money} to poor people." ¹⁰Jesus knew what they were saying, so he told them, "Do not bother this woman! She has done a good thing to me. ¹¹There will always be poor people among you, {so you can help them whenever you want to}. However, I will not always be with you! ¹²When she poured this perfume on my body, {it was as if} she was preparing my body to be buried {after I die}. ¹³I tell you truly that in every place in the

entire world where people preach the good news {about me}, they will also speak about what this woman has done {for me}. {As a result,} people will always remember her."

¹⁴After {Jesus said} this, one of his 12 apprentices went to the chief priests. His name was Judas Iscariot. ¹⁵He asked {them}, "If I help you arrest Jesus, how much money will you give me?" {In response,} they counted out 30 silver coins {and gave them} to him. ¹⁶From that time on Judas started looking for a chance to help {the ruling priests} arrest Jesus.

¹⁷On the first day of the festival when Jewish people eat bread without yeast, Jesus' apprentices went to him and asked, "Where do you want us to prepare the Passover Celebration meal so that we can eat it?" ¹⁸Jesus told them, "Enter the city and go to a man {with whom I have previously arranged this}. Tell him, 'Our Teacher says that it is almost the time {that he told you about}. He will eat the Passover Celebration meal with us, his apprentices, at your house.'" ¹⁹So his apprentices did as Jesus told them to do. They went and prepared the Passover Celebration meal {in that man's house}.

²⁰When it was evening, Jesus sat at the table with his 12 apprentices {to eat the Passover Celebration meal}.

²¹While they ate, he told them, "I tell you truly that one of you is going to help {my enemies} arrest me." ²²The apprentices were very sad. They began to tell Jesus, one after the other, "Lord, I surely will not {betray you}!" ²³He replied, "The one who will help {my enemies} arrest me is the one {among you} who is dipping bread {into the sauce} in the dish along with me. ²⁴It is certain that I, the Son of Man, will die, because that is what the prophets wrote about me in the Scriptures. Nevertheless, there will be terrible punishment for the man who betrays me! {In fact,} it would be better for him if he had never been born!" ²⁵Then Judas, the one who was going to betray him, said, "Teacher, surely it is not I!" Jesus replied, "Yes, it is you."

²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took {a flat loaf of} bread and thanked God for it. Then he broke the bread into pieces, gave it to his apprentices, and said, "Take and eat this bread. It is my body." ²⁷Then he took a cup {with wine in it} and thanked God {for it}. Then he gave it to his apprentices and said, "Drink {some wine} from this cup, each one of you. ²⁸{The wine in} this cup is my blood, which will soon 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. ²⁹I want you to know this: I will not drink any more wine until the time when I drink it again with you when my Father rules everywhere as king."

³⁰After they sang a song praising God, Jesus and his apprentices went out toward the Mount of Olives.

³¹Jesus then told them, "Tonight all of you will desert me because of {what will happen to} me! {This is certain to happen} because Zechariah wrote in the Scriptures {that God said}, 'I will kill the shepherd, and the sheep of his flock will scatter.' ³²But after {I have died and} God causes me to become alive again, I will go ahead of you to the district of Galilee and meet you there." ³³Peter replied, "All {of your other apprentices} may desert you because of {what will happen to} you, but I certainly will never desert you!" ³⁴Jesus replied to him, "I tell you the truth: This very night, before the rooster crows {at dawn}, you will say three times that you do not know me!" ³⁵Peter told him, "Even if I must die with you, I will never say that I do not know you!" All the rest of Jesus' apprentices also said the same thing.

³⁶Jesus then went with his apprentices to a place that people call Gethsemane. There he told his apprentices, "Stay here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷He took Peter, James, and John, with him. Jesus became very sad and distressed. ³⁸Then he told those three apprentices, "I am very sorrowful. It is as if I were about to die! You men stay here with me and keep watch!" ³⁹After going a little farther, Jesus threw himself facedown on the ground. He prayed, "O my Father, if it is possible, rescue me so that I do not have to suffer now! But do not do what I want. Instead, do what you want!" ⁴⁰Then he returned to the three disciples and saw that they were sleeping. He {woke Peter up} and told him, "I am disappointed that you {men} were not able to keep watch with me for just a short time!" ⁴¹{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!"

⁴²Jesus went away a second time. He prayed, "O my Father, if it is necessary for me to suffer, may what you want happen!"

⁴³When he returned to the three apprentices, he saw that they were asleep again. {This was} because {they were so sleepy that} they could not keep their eyes open. ⁴⁴So he left them and went away again. He prayed a third time, saying the same thing that he had prayed before. ⁴⁵Then he returned to the three apprentices. He woke them up and told them, "I am disappointed that you are still sleeping and resting! Look! The time for me to suffer is about to begin. Someone is about to help sinful men to arrest me, the Son of Man! ⁴⁶So get up! Let us go! Look! Here comes the one who is helping them to arrest me!"

⁴⁷While Jesus was still speaking, Judas arrived. He was one of the 12 apprentices. {He brought} with him a large crowd of people carrying swords and clubs. The chief priests and elders {who ruled} over the Jewish people had sent them {to arrest Jesus}. ⁴⁸Judas, who was helping Jesus' enemies to arrest him, had previously told this crowd, "The man whom I will kiss is the one you want. Arrest him!" ⁴⁹He immediately went to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Teacher!" Then he kissed Jesus {on the cheek}. ⁵⁰Jesus told him, "Friend, do what you came here to do." Then the men who came with Judas grabbed Jesus and arrested him. ⁵¹Suddenly, one of the men who was with Jesus pulled his sword {out of its sheath}. He struck someone who served the high priest and cut off that man's ear. ⁵²Jesus then told him, "Put your sword back in its sheath! Someone will kill with a sword all those who try to kill others with a sword! ⁵³Surely you know that if I asked my Father, he would immediately send more than 12 armies of angels to help me! ⁵⁴{But if I did that,} then the scriptures that the prophets have written {about what will happen to the Messiah} would not come true."

⁵⁵At that time Jesus told the groups of people {who were arresting him}, "You have come here with swords and clubs to arrest me, as if I were a bandit! Day after day I sat in the temple courtyard, teaching {the people}. You could have arrested me then! ⁵⁶But all this is happening in order that what the prophets wrote {about me in the Scriptures} may happen." Then all of Jesus' apprentices left him and ran away.

⁵⁷The men who had arrested Jesus took him to {the house where} Caiaphas, the high priest{, lived}. The men who taught the Jewish laws and the Jewish elders had {already} assembled there. ⁵⁸Peter followed Jesus at a distance. He went into the courtyard {of the house where} the high priest {lived}. He sat {there} with the men who guarded {the house of the high priest} in order to see what would happen.

⁵⁹The 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 Romans to} execute him. ⁶⁰They did not succeed. Even though many people spoke lies about Jesus, {what they said was not useful}. Finally, two men came forward. ⁶¹They said, "This man said that he can destroy God's temple and rebuild it within three days." ⁶²Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to reply {to what they have said}? What do you say about all the things that they are saying in order to accuse you?" ⁶³But Jesus remained silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I command you to tell us {the truth}, knowing that the one true God {is listening}: Are you the Messiah, the Son of God?" ⁶⁴Jesus replied, "Yes, it is as you say. But I will also say this to {all of} you: Some day 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!"

⁶⁵Then the high priest was so upset that he tore his outer garment. Then he said, "This man has insulted God! We certainly do not need anyone else to testify {against him}! You all surely heard how he insulted God! ⁶⁶What have you decided?" The Jewish leaders replied, "He deserves to be executed!" ⁶⁷Then some of them spit in Jesus' face, hit him {with their fists}, and slapped him. ⁶⁸They said, "{If you who claim to be} the Messiah are really a prophet, then tell us who hit you!"

⁶⁹Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant girl came up to him and said, "You also were with Jesus, that man from the region of Galilee!" ⁷⁰But while everyone there was listening, he denied having been with Jesus. He said, "I do not know what you are talking about!" ⁷¹Then he went out to the entrance {of the courtyard}. Another servant girl saw him and told the people who were standing nearby, "This man was with Jesus, that man from the

town of Nazareth.” ⁷²But Peter again denied having been with Jesus. He said, “May God punish me if I am lying! I do not even know that man!” ⁷³A short time later, the people who were standing there went up to Peter and said to him, “It is certain that you are one of those {who were with that man}. {We know this} because the way you speak proves that you are from the district of Galilee.” ⁷⁴Then Peter began to exclaim, “I do not know that man! For God knows that I am speaking truthfully, and may he punish me if I am lying!” Right then a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵Then Peter remembered the words that Jesus had spoken to him {when he said}, “Before the rooster crows {at dawn}, you will say three times that you do not know me.” Peter went out {of the courtyard} and cried with great sorrow.

Chapter 27

¹Early the next morning all the chief priests and elders {who ruled} over the Jewish people planned together in order to {persuade the Romans to} execute Jesus. ²Then their guards tied Jesus’ hands {again}. They took him {from Caiaphas} to Pilate, the {Roman} governor.

³Then Judas, the one who had helped Jesus’ enemies arrest him, realized that the chief priests and elders had decided that Jesus must die. So he regretted {helping them}. He brought the 30 silver coins back to the chief priests and elders {who had given them to him}. ⁴He said, “I have sinned. I have helped you condemn an innocent man to die.” They replied, “That means nothing to us! That is your problem!” ⁵So Judas took the money and threw it into the temple. Then he went away and hanged himself {so that he died}.

⁶The chief priests picked up the coins {Judas had thrown}. They said, “This is money that we paid for a man to die. Therefore, our laws prohibit us from putting this money into the temple treasury.” ⁷After discussing the matter {further}, they used that money to buy a field that people called the Potter’s Field. {They bought that field} in order to make it a place where they could bury strangers who died {in Jerusalem}. ⁸That is why people still call that place the “Field of Blood.” ⁹{By buying that field} they made these words come true that the prophet Jeremiah had written {in the Scriptures}: “They took the 30 silver coins, which were what the Israelites had decided that he was worth, ¹⁰and with that money they bought the potter’s field. {They did that} according to what the Lord had commanded me.”

¹¹Then Jesus stood in front of {Pilate,} the governor. Pilate asked him, “Do you say that you are the king of the Jews?” Jesus answered him, “You yourself have said so.”

¹²But when the chief priests and elders {of the Jews} accused Jesus {of doing various wrong things}, he did not reply. ¹³So Pilate told him, “You surely hear all these things they are accusing you of doing! {You should reply!”

¹⁴But Jesus did not say anything at all to him in response. As a result, the governor was very surprised.

¹⁵It was the governor’s custom {each year} during the Passover Celebration to release one person who was in prison. He released {from prison} whomever the people wanted {him to release}. ¹⁶At that time the Romans were holding a well-known prisoner {in Jerusalem}. His name was Barabbas. ¹⁷So when the people assembled, Pilate asked them, “Which prisoner would you like me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus, whom some of you call the Messiah?” ¹⁸{He asked that question} because he was aware that the Jewish leaders had brought Jesus to him {only} because they were jealous {of Jesus}.

¹⁹While Pilate was sitting on the seat where he usually pronounced verdicts, his wife sent this message to him: “Today I dreamed about that man, and it distressed me greatly. So do not pronounce that righteous man guilty!”

²⁰The chief priests and elders {of the Jews} convinced the groups of people to ask Pilate to release Barabbas, and {to command soldiers} to execute Jesus. ²¹The governor replied by asking them, “Which one of these two men do you want me to release for you?” They replied, “{We want you to release} Barabbas!” ²²Pilate asked them, “So what should I do with Jesus, whom some of you call the Messiah?” They all replied, “{Command your soldiers to} crucify him!” ²³Pilate replied, “No! He has not committed any crime!” But they shouted even louder, “{Command your soldiers to} crucify him!”

²⁴Pilate realized that he was not accomplishing anything. Rather, the people were starting to riot. So he took {a basin of} water and washed his hands while the group of people was watching. He said, "{By washing my hands, I have shown you that} I am not guilty of killing this man! That is your problem!" ²⁵And all the people replied, "May we and our descendants be responsible for killing this man!" ²⁶Then Pilate ordered the soldiers to release Barabbas to the group of people. But he ordered his soldiers to whip Jesus with leather straps into which they had fastened metal and bone pieces. Then he told the soldiers to take Jesus away to crucify him.

²⁷Pilate's soldiers then took Jesus into the government headquarters. Then the whole group of soldiers who were on duty there assembled around Jesus. ²⁸They pulled off his clothes and put a red robe on him {in order to pretend that he was a king}. ²⁹They {also} took some branches with thorns and wove them together to make a crown and put it on his head. They put in his right hand a stick {like a king's staff}. Then they knelt in front of him and ridiculed him by saying, "Hooray for the King who rules the Jews!" ³⁰They kept spitting on him. They took the stick {from him} and kept striking him on the head {with it}. ³¹When they had finished ridiculing him, they pulled the robe off of him and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away {from the government headquarters} in order to nail him to a cross.

³²While they were going out {of Jerusalem}, the soldiers saw a man from the city of Cyrene. His name was Simon. They forced him to carry the cross for Jesus. ³³They came to a place that people called Golgotha. That name means the "Place of the Skull." ³⁴Then they gave Jesus wine that they had mixed with bitter medicine so that he would drink it. After tasting it, Jesus refused to drink it. ³⁵After nailing Jesus to the cross, they divided his clothes among themselves by gambling for them. ³⁶Then the soldiers sat down there to guard him {so that no one could rescue him}. ³⁷Above Jesus' head they fastened to the cross a sign on which someone had written why they had nailed him to the cross. {It said,} 'This man is Jesus, the King of the Jews.' ³⁸Along with Jesus they also nailed to other crosses two 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. ³⁹The people who were passing by insulted him by shaking their heads {at him}. ⁴⁰They said {to him}, "You said that you would destroy the temple and then you would build it again within three days. {If you could do that, then} rescue yourself! If you are really God's Son, then prove it by coming down from that cross!"

⁴¹Similarly, the chief priests, the men who taught the Jewish laws, and the elders ridiculed Jesus. They said {to each other}, ⁴²"People claim that he has saved others from trouble, but he cannot save himself! He claimed to be 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!" ⁴³He says that he trusts in God, and that he is God's Son. So if God is pleased with him, God should rescue him now!" ⁴⁴Similarly, the two bandits whom the soldiers nailed on crosses beside Jesus insulted him as well.

⁴⁵At noon the whole land became dark. {It stayed dark} until three o'clock in the afternoon. ⁴⁶At about three o'clock Jesus shouted loudly, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" That means, "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?" ⁴⁷When some of the people standing there heard {him say} that, they misunderstood it and said, "He is calling for the prophet Elijah!" ⁴⁸At that moment one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with cheap wine. Then he put the sponge on {the tip of} a reed and held it up to try to get Jesus to suck out the wine that was in it. ⁴⁹But the other people there said, "Wait! Let us see if Elijah comes to rescue him!" ⁵⁰Then after Jesus shouted loudly again, he voluntarily died. ⁵¹Just then the heavy, thick curtain {that closed off the Most Holy Place} in the temple split into two pieces from top to bottom. God also shook the earth and broke apart {some} rocks. ⁵²God caused burial chambers to open up. He also caused the dead bodies of many of his people to become alive again. ⁵³Those people came out of the burial chambers, and they went into Jerusalem after Jesus became alive again. Many people saw them there.

⁵⁴When the centurion {who was commanding the soldiers} and those soldiers who were guarding Jesus with him felt the earthquake and saw all the other things that happened, they were terrified. They exclaimed, "Certainly, this Jesus was God's Son!"

⁵⁵Many women were there, watching {what happened} from farther back. These women had accompanied Jesus from the district of Galilee in order to provide him with what he needed. ⁵⁶Among these women were Mary from the town of Magdala, another Mary who was the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of James and John.

⁵⁷When evening was near, a rich man came there. His name was Joseph and he was from the city of Arimathea. He also was a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸Joseph went to Pilate and asked him to allow him to take the body of Jesus {and bury it}. Pilate ordered {his soldiers} to give him the body {so he could take it away}. ⁵⁹So Joseph {and others} took the body. They wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. ⁶⁰Then they put Jesus' body into Joseph's own newly made burial chamber that workers had cut into a rock cliff. Then they rolled a huge flat stone in front of the entrance to the burial chamber. Then they left. ⁶¹Mary from the town of Magdala and the other woman whose name was Mary were sitting there, facing the burial chamber.

⁶²The next day was the Jewish day of rest. {On that day} the chief priests and some of the Pharisees assembled {and met} with Pilate. ⁶³They said, "Sir, we remember that while that deceiver was still alive, he said that on the third day {after he died}, God would cause him to become alive again.' ⁶⁴So {we ask you to} order your soldiers to secure the burial chamber for three days. If you do not do that, his apprentices may go there and steal the body. Then they will tell the people that God caused him to become alive again after he had died. If they deceive the people {in this way}, then it will be worse than the first {way he deceived people}." ⁶⁵Pilate told them, "Take some soldiers. Go {to the burial chamber and} secure it as best as you can." ⁶⁶So they went {to the burial chamber and} secured it by putting a seal on the huge flat stone {in front of the entrance to the burial chamber}. They also left some soldiers there to guard {the burial chamber}.

Chapter 28

¹When the Sabbath ended at dawn on Sunday morning, Mary from the town of Magdala and the other woman whose name was Mary went to look at Jesus' burial chamber. ²Suddenly there was a powerful earthquake because an angel from the Lord came down from heaven. He went {to the burial chamber and} rolled the large stone away {from the burial chamber's entrance}. Then he sat on the stone. ³{The angel was as bright as lightning, and his clothes were as white as snow.} ⁴The guards trembled because they were terrified of the angel, and then they fell down as if they were dead.

⁵The angel told the two women, "You should not be afraid! I know that you are looking for Jesus, whom people nailed to a cross. ⁶{But} he is not here {anymore}, because God has caused him to become alive again! {It happened} just as Jesus told you it would! Come and look at the place {in the burial chamber} where his body lay! ⁷Then go quickly and tell his apprentices, 'God has caused him to become alive again after he had died! Listen! He will go ahead of you to the region of Galilee. You will see him there.' Listen to what I have told you!"

⁸So the two women left the burial chamber quickly. They were afraid but also very joyful. They ran {to where his disciples were staying} in order to tell them {what had happened}. ⁹Suddenly Jesus appeared to them. He said, "Greetings to you!" The two women came close to him. They {knelt down and} clasped his feet {to honor him}, and they worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, "You should not be afraid! Go and tell my apprentices to go to the region of Galilee. They will see me there."

¹¹While the two women were going {to Jesus' apprentices}, some of the soldiers who had been guarding Jesus' burial chamber went into Jerusalem. They reported to the chief priests everything that had happened {at the burial chamber}. ¹²So the chief priests and elders {of the Jews} assembled and decided what they would do. They gave the soldiers a lot of money {as a bribe}. ¹³They said, "Tell people that his apprentices came during the night and stole his body while you were asleep. ¹⁴If the governor hears about this, we ourselves will convince him not to punish you. So you will not have to worry." ¹⁵So the soldiers {who had guarded Jesus' burial chamber} took the money and did what the chief priests and elders had told them to do. And people are still telling this story among the Jews.

¹⁶Later Jesus' 11 apprentices went to the region of Galilee. They went to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷When they saw him {there}, they worshiped him. However, some of them were not sure that it was really Jesus. ¹⁸Then Jesus came close to them and said, "My Father has authorized me to rule over everything and everyone. ¹⁹So go and proclaim my message to people from every people group so that they may become my disciples. Baptize them to show that they have devoted themselves to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰Teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And indeed, I will always be with you, until the time when the world ends."

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