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Matthew

Abraham to Christ—1997 BC→5 BC

1 A genealogy [†] of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham:

2 Abraham begot Isaac, then Isaac begot Jacob, then Jacob begot Judah and his brothers;

3 then Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, then Perez begot Hezron, then Hezron begot Ram;

4 then Ram begot Amminadab, then Amminadab begot Nahshon, then Nahshon begot Salmon;

5 then Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, then Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, then Obed begot Jesse,

6 then Jesse begot David the king. Then King David begot Solomon by her *who was* of Uriah, ^{††}

7 then Solomon begot Rehoboam, then Rehoboam begot Abijah, then Abijah begot Asa;

8 then Asa begot Jehoshaphat, then Jehoshaphat begot Joram, then Joram begot Uzziah;

9 then Uzziah begot Jotham, then Jotham begot Ahaz, then Ahaz begot Hezekiah;

10 then Hezekiah begot Manasseh, then Manasseh begot Amon, then Amon begot Josiah;

11 then Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time of the Babylonian captivity.

12 After the Babylonian captivity Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, then Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel;

13 then Zerubbabel begot Abiud, then Abiud begot Eliakim, then Eliakim begot Azor;

14 then Azor begot Zadok, then Zadok begot Achim, then Achim begot Eliud;

15 then Eliud begot Eleazar, then Eleazar begot Matthan, then Matthan begot Jacob;

16 then Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom was begotten Jesus, who is called Christ. [‡]

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, and from David until the Babylonian captivity are fourteen generations, and from the Babylonian captivity until the Christ are fourteen generations. ^{‡†}

[†] There is no definite article. ^{††} Sins may be forgiven, but your curriculum remains—3,000 years later we still read about David's sin (Bathsheba is not named, she was Uriah's wife). The only women included in the genealogy (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth [Deuteronomy 23:13], Bathsheba) represent some violation—perhaps to emphasize the grace of God. [‡] Here the formula changes, because Jesus could not be the son of Joseph—see Jeremiah 22:30. ^{‡†} This is really Joseph's genealogy. As foster father he confers the legal right to the throne

Conception of Jesus—5 BC

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was like this: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they joined together, she was found to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit. ^{‡†19} Then Joseph her husband, ^{‡‡†} being a just man and not wanting to humiliate her publicly, decided to repudiate her secretly. ²⁰ But while he pondered these things, wow, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying: "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to receive Mary as your wife, because that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will give birth to a Son and you will call His name Jesus, because *HE* will save His people ^{‡‡†} from their sins." ²² Now all this happened so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet should be fulfilled, namely: ²³ "Behold, the virgin will become pregnant and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel", [§] which being translated is, 'God with us'. ^{§†24} Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as that angel of the Lord commanded him and received his wife, ^{§††25} but did not know her until ^{§†} she

of David on Jesus. Since the throne of David has to do with the covenant people, this genealogy only goes back to Abraham. In contrast, Mary's genealogy (Luke 3:23-38) goes back to Adam and God—Jesus was literally son of both Adam and God. It has been observed that from David to the captivity there were seventeen kings, but Ahaziah reigned only one year, Amon only two and Abijah only three, so they would not count as generations—Matthew is correct in saying there were fourteen 'generations'. For further discussion of perceived difficulties in this genealogy, please see the Appendix: Some related anomalies in Matthew's genealogy of the Christ.

^{‡‡} For more detail on this, see Luke 1:26-38. ^{‡††} The betrothal was legally binding, so the man was then called 'husband', even before the physical union. ^{‡‡‡} To whom does "His people" refer? To actually receive the salvation one must believe into Jesus, so the reference would appear to be to those who have identified with Him as their Savior. [§] The quote is from Isaiah 7:14. Matthew uses the Greek παρθενος, which unambiguously means 'virgin', to translate the Hebrew 'alma

lah

^{§†} 'God with us' is stronger than 'God is with us'; Jesus was literally God living among us. ^{§††} Apparently there was some urgency involved; it sounds like he did it that same night (Mary was at least three months pregnant)—at night there would not be any onlookers. ^{§‡} The use of this conjunction implies that they had normal relations after Jesus' birth, and in fact they had at least six children together. In the Bible the verb 'to know' is used

had given birth to her son, the firstborn. † And he called His name JESUS.

Jesus is born—4 BC

The 'wise men'

2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men [*magi*] from the East came into Jerusalem, ² saying: "Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw his star in the East and have come to worship him." ³ When Herod the king heard it he became agitated, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ And gathering all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ^{†5} So they said to him: "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it stands written by the prophet:

⁶ 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are not at all the least among the rulers of Judah, for out of you will come a Ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'" ‡

⁷ Then Herod, calling the wise men secretly, determined from them the time when the star appeared.

⁸ And directing them to Bethlehem he said, "When you get there, search carefully for the young child; and should you find him, bring back word to me, so that I also may go and worship him." ††

The Star!

⁹ So having heard the king they departed, and there was the star that they had seen in the East! It went before them until it arrived and stopped above where the young Child was. ¹⁰ Now when they saw the star they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy! ††† And coming into the house ††† they saw the young Child with

to refer to sexual intercourse. Matthew is said to have 'published' his Gospel in about 39 AD. By then Mary would be past the age when she could have children, even if she was still alive. So for Matthew to write 'firstborn' means there were others later; if Mary had had only one child Matthew would have written 'only born'.
 † Only 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "her" and "the firstborn" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). That is eight manuscripts against 1,454 that have been collated, but there are probably over 300 others yet to be collated that will swell the number against the eight. Why do so-called 'evangelical' scholars insist on damaging the Text based on such ridiculously inferior and inadequate 'evidence'? †† The magi said, "King of the Jews"; Herod said, "Messiah". Evidently he knew something about OT prophecy. ‡ See Micah 5:2. †† Presumably Herod was a good actor, so if they hadn't been warned in a dream, they would probably have reported back. †† It reappeared after two years. They had undertaken an expensive and dangerous journey in the dark, as it were. Now God confirms that they are on the right track. They are beside themselves with joy! It guided them to the very house. ††† Joseph probably used the stable (Luke 2:7) for only one night; the next day he would look for more adequate quarters. That Jesus was born at night is clear from Luke 2:8-12. The angels appeared at night (verse 8) and said "this day" (verse 11)—the shepherds were Jews, and the Jewish day began at 6:00 p.m. Since the shepherds

Mary His mother, ††† and falling down they worshiped Him; and opening their treasures they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense and myrrh. ^{§12} Then, having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their *own* country by a different road.

The flight to Egypt

¹³ Now when they had departed, again, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream saying: "Get up, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt and stay there until I tell you; because Herod is about to seek the young Child to destroy Him!" ¹⁴ So he got up and took the young Child and His mother by night ^{§†} and departed for Egypt. ¹⁵ And he was there until the death of Herod, so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet should be fulfilled, namely: "Out of Egypt I called my Son." †††

The massacre

¹⁶ Then Herod, when he saw that he had been deceived by the wise men, became very angry, and he sent out and killed all the boys who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. †††† Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled, namely:

¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children and not wanting to be comforted, because they are no more." †††

broadcasted the message delivered by the angel, any people in the town who loved God would want to help Joseph. The Text says 'young child', not 'baby'—the visit to Jerusalem (Luke 2:22-38) is now well behind them. ††† They may have arrived at night. All the events recorded in verses 1-8 presumably happened the same day. It is only some ten miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, but it may have been already dark when they started out. The Text says that they saw Jesus and Mary; Joseph is not mentioned. Perhaps he was sleeping in another room. If the magi took off immediately, as I suppose, then the angel roused Joseph as soon as they were out the door. § Because the gifts were three, some have assumed that the magi were three, but nowhere does the Text specify the number. Now, as then, those who are wise still seek Him. The gifts were providential to meet their financial needs in Egypt and beyond, quite apart from any symbolism. §† That same night, immediately. A suspicious man like Herod doubtless sent a spy to keep an eye on the magi. When they took off in the opposite direction Herod would have been informed within a few hours. If Joseph had waited until morning it would probably have been too late. §†† The time spent in Egypt was possibly only a month or two. The quote is from Hosea 11:1, which in that context refers to Israel, but Jesus was/is literally God's Son—OT prophecies often have a dual reference/application. §† Obviously it had been his intention to kill Jesus. §†† Ramah was a district of Bethlehem. The quote is from Jeremiah 31:15. The birth of the Savior resulted in the massacre of many infants; being the fulfillment of prophecy means it was part of the Plan. God's ways seem strange to us at times, but He is under no obligation to explain His actions. (However, based on Jeremiah 31:16 I wonder if God did not compensate the parents somehow.)

The return to Natsareth

¹⁹ Now Herod having died, there, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰ saying: "Get up, take the young Child and His mother and go into the land of Israel, for those [†] seeking the life of the young Child have died." ²¹ So he got up and took the young Child and His mother and went into the land of Israel. ²² But hearing that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned in a dream he proceeded into the region of Galilee. ²³ And upon arriving he settled in a city called Natsareth [Branch-town], ^{††} so that what was spoken through the prophets should be fulfilled, that He would be called a Natsorean [Branch-man]. [‡]

Ministry of John the Baptizer—26 AD

3 Now in those days John the Baptizer began preaching in the wilderness of Judea ² and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has come near!" ³ For this is he who was referred to by the prophet Isaiah, saying:

"A voice crying-out,

'Prepare in the wilderness the way of the LORD,

[†] *The Text is plainly plural here, so who else besides Herod had died? That massacre would not be a nice thing to have on the record, and it may be that Herod had ordered the execution of others who were involved. †† We know from Luke that Natsareth was Joseph's home—his house and business were waiting for him (although he had been gone for quite a while). The name of the town in Hebrew is based on the consonants נצר (resh, tsadde, nun), but since Hebrew is read from right to left, for us the order is reversed = n, ts, r. This word root means 'branch'. Greek has the equivalent for 'ps' and 'ks', but not for 'ts', so the transliteration used a ζ (zeta) 'dz', which is the voiced counterpart of 'ts'. But when the Greek was transliterated into English it came out as 'z'! But Hebrew has a 'z', י (zayin), so in transliterating back into Hebrew people assumed the consonants נר, replacing the correct tsadde with zayin. This technical information is necessary as background for the next footnote.*

[‡] *Neither 'Nazareth' nor 'Nazarene', spelled with a zayin, is to be found in the Old Testament, but there is a prophetic reference to Messiah as the Branch, netser—Isaiah 11:1—and several to the related word, tsemach—Isaiah 4:2; Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15; Zechariah 3:8; 6:12. So Matthew is quite right—the prophets (plural, being at least three) referred to Christ as the Branch. Since Jesus was a man, He would be the 'Branch-man', from 'Branch-town'. Which brings us to the word 'Natsorean'. The familiar 'Nazarene' (Ναζαρηνοϛ) [Natsarene] occurs in Mark 1:24; 14:67; 16:6 and Luke 4:34, but here in Matthew 2:23 and in fourteen other places, including Acts 22:8 where the glorified Jesus calls HIMSELF that, the word is 'Natsorean' (Ναζωραιοϛ), which is quite different. (Actually, in Acts 22:8 Jesus introduced Himself to Saul as 'THE Natsorean', which Saul would understand as a reference to the Messiah.) To my surprise, Pilate put "the Natsorean" in the accusation above the cross—John 19:19. I have been given to understand that the Nazareth of Jesus' day had been founded some 100 years before by a Branch family who called it Branch town; they were very much aware of the prophecies about the Branch and fully expected the Messiah to be born from among them—they called themselves Branch-people (Natsoreans). Of course everyone else thought it was a big joke and tended to look down on them. "Can anything good...?"*

make His paths straight.'" ^{‡†}

⁴ Now John actually used clothes *made* from camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist; while his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem, all Judea and all the region of the Jordan went out to him, ⁶ and were being baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

A bunch of snakes

⁷ But seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them: "Brood of vipers! Who tipped you off to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Therefore produce fruit worthy of repentance, ⁹ and don't even think to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham as father,' ^{‡†} for I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. ¹⁰ Indeed, already the ax is being laid to the root of the trees. ^{‡‡†} So every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ "I baptize you with water unto repentance, but the One coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. *HE* will baptize you with Holy Spirit. ^{‡‡‡12} His winnowing shovel is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." [‡]

Baptism of Jesus

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ But John tried to dissuade Him saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and You are coming to me?" ^{‡†15} But in answer Jesus said to

^{‡†} *The reference is to Isaiah 40:3. Hebrew poetry, and prose, makes heavy use of parallel or synonymous statements. From the context in Isaiah it seems clear that "in the wilderness" goes with the verb 'make straight', not 'call out'. But why a straight road in the wilderness? Any road facilitates the movement of people and goods, but a straight road through accidented terrain is a major asset. (Actually, Isaiah 40:3-4 describes the construction of a modern super-highway.) John was the voice, but it was the people who had to make the road. So how about us? Are we supposed to be making such a road, and if so, how? At the very least we should be proclaiming biblical values to the world by every available means. ‡‡ They had notions of spiritual privilege based on birth, but as someone has said, God has no grandchildren. Later on Jesus will make clear that they did in fact reject John's message—they were not baptized. ‡‡† The Messiah was already present, and He would condemn the Pharisees and Sadducees. ‡‡‡ There is no article with 'Holy Spirit', so I take the phrase as a proper name. The 'and fire' we are used to is read by only 20% of the Greek manuscripts. The 80% includes the best line of transmission. However, Luke 3:16 has the 'and fire'.*

[‡] *Can you have wheat without chaff? Isn't the chaff part of the wheat plant? What might the implications of this analogy be for the Church? What percentage of the plant is edible wheat? Wherever Christianity is the state or majority religion, or part of the prevailing culture, a large majority of the 'Christians' will be chaff. Where Christians are persecuted a high percentage will be wheat. Since Judaism was part of the prevailing culture, presumably most of John's hearers were chaff. The 'unquenchable' fire is presumably a reference to the Lake. ‡† John knew that Jesus was the Messiah.*

him, "Permit it now, because thus it is appropriate to us to fulfill all righteousness." † Then he permitted Him. ¹⁶ And having been baptized Jesus came up directly from the water, when *wow*, the heavens were opened to Him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and alighting upon Him. ††¹⁷ And *wow*, a Voice from the heavens saying, "This is my Son, the beloved, in whom I am *always* well pleased!" ‡

Jesus tested by Satan

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. ² And having fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. †³ And coming to Him the tempter said, "Since you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread." ††⁴ But in answer He said, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but by every word coming out of God's mouth.'" †††⁵ Then the devil takes Him into the holy city ††† and sets Him upon the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ and says to Him, "Since you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written:

'He will give orders to His angels about you, and they will lift you up on their hands, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" †

⁷ Jesus said to him, "It is *ALSO* written: 'You shall not test the *LORD* your God!'" †††⁸ Again the devil takes Him to a *VERY* high mountain and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. †††⁹ And he says to Him, "All these things I will give to you, if You will fall

† Our Lord's statement here seems difficult to us. Since Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:3 state that it was "a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins" but Jesus had no sins to repent of, in what sense was He "fulfilling all righteousness"? Perhaps as Messiah and Great High Priest He needed to identify Himself with those of His people who were truly repentant. †† The episode is presented from John's perspective, while in Mark 1:11 and Luke 3:22 it is presented from Jesus' perspective. Just as at Pentecost the Holy Spirit translated into the ears of the foreigners, I take it that here Jesus heard one thing and John another. ‡ The Trinity is clearly manifested: voice = Father, Jesus = Son, dove = Holy Spirit. This was an important confirmation for Jesus. †† This episode was ordained by the Holy Spirit. Jesus had to confront Satan when He was physically the weakest He would ever be (40 days without food!). When Satan failed to defeat this weakened Jesus he was probably filled with despair—he now knew that he could never defeat Him. (But he would still try to kill Him.) †† Satan was not so foolish as to question Jesus' identity, "if"; he was more subtle, "since". ††† See Deuteronomy 8:3. †††† 'The holy city' was evidently Jerusalem. One is tempted to ask, what was 'holy' about it? † This is literal; Satan has the power to transport things. Matthew has the correct sequence, whereas Luke inverts the order of tests 2 and 3 (Matthew uses adverbs of sequence, but Luke does not). †† See Psalm 91:11-12. Satan knows the Bible, and how to twist it. ††† See Deuteronomy 6:16. The point is to not put God to the test, to not deliberately do something irresponsible with the intention of obliging God to work a miracle to save you. †† This also is literal and obviously supernatural (since the world is a sphere, even from a satellite one can only see half of it). We have here a master stroke of Satan—Jehovah the Son took on human form in order to recover what the first Adam had lost, and Satan offers it to Him on a silver platter, with just one 'small' condition...

down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus says to him: "Get behind me, Satan! †† For it is written: 'You shall worship the *LORD* your God, and Him only shall you serve.'" †††¹¹ Then the devil leaves Him, and *THEN*, angels came and began ministering to Him. ††

Jesus chooses Capernaum as His base of operations—27 AD

¹² Now hearing that John had been put in prison, Jesus departed into Galilee. †††¹³ And leaving Natsareth behind, †† He went and took up residence in Capernaum by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali; ¹⁴ so that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet should be fulfilled, namely:

¹⁵ "Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations!

¹⁶ The people sitting in darkness saw a great light, and upon those sitting in the place and shadow of death

light has dawned." †††

Jesus calls four fishermen

¹⁷ From then on Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has come near." ¹⁸ And walking by the Sea of Galilee He saw two brothers, Simon (the one called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a circular net into the sea (for they were fishermen). ¹⁹ And He says to them, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." ²⁰ So leaving the nets immediately they followed Him. ²¹ And going on from there He saw two other brothers, James (the one of Zebedee) and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. And He called them. ²² So leaving the boat and their father immediately they followed Him. ²⁰

A tour of Galilee

²³ Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and every illness among the people. ²⁴ So His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were sick—suffering with

††† 88% of the Greek manuscripts have "Get behind me..."; in Luke 4:8 at least 97% have "Get behind me...". †† See Deuteronomy 6:13. Note that Jesus did not deny his right to make the offer. †† The impression one gets is that the angels were not allowed to help Jesus during His direct confrontation with Satan. ††† The early Judean ministry, as recorded in John 1, 2 and 3, ends here. ††† See Luke 4:16-30. Presumably Jesus moved His belongings out of Natsareth at this time. ††† See Isaiah 9:1-2. ¹⁸ Right! The King was walking among them. "Kingdom of the heavens" and "kingdom of God" are synonyms, as can be seen by comparing parallel passages in Mark and Luke. Jesus continues with John's message, since the herald is now out of action. ¹⁹ They had employees who could take care of the equipment. ²⁰ All four of these men had spent time with Jesus already, so this was not 'out of the blue'.

various diseases and torments, and being demonized and being moonstruck, and paralytics—and He healed them. ²⁵ So large crowds followed Him—from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and beyond the Jordan. †

The Sermon on the Mount

5 Now seeing the crowds He went up on the mountain, and upon His sitting down His disciples approached Him.

The Beatitudes

² And opening His mouth †† He started teaching them, saying:

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek, ‡
for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are those hungering and thirsting for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy. ††

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.

¹⁰ Blessed are those who have been persecuted on account of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. ††

† Luke 5:1 says that this same crowd was hungry to hear the Word of God, and they did indeed hear the Sermon on the Mount, but Jesus used healing and deliverance to attract the crowd.

†† This appears to be a Hebrew idiom indicating a formal or serious pronouncement. ‡ ‘Meek’ is not ‘weak’, it is power under control. It was said of Moses that he was the meekest man in his time, precisely because he was also the most powerful. Jesus said of Himself that He was ‘meek’, and He was also powerful. †† In James 2:12-13 we read: “Speak and act as being those who are about to be judged by a law of liberty (the judgment will be without mercy to the one not showing mercy). That law exalts mercy over judgment.” This accords with the description that Jehovah gave of Himself to Moses, on that rarest of occasions: “Jehovah, God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth; keeping mercy unto the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children unto the third and the fourth generation” (Exodus 34:6-7). He keeps mercy to the 1000th generation, He punishes to the 4th; the proportion is 250:1. That is why it is important that we show mercy.

‡‡ These ‘beatitudes’ are in the third person and so presumably of general application. From verse 11 on Jesus uses the second person and so the specific application is presumably to His disciples. The first and last of these ‘beatitudes’ say, “theirs is the kingdom of the heavens”. In Matthew 18:3 the Lord will say we have to become like little children to enter the Kingdom—that is being ‘poor in spirit’. To face persecution, you must be committed.

For disciples

¹¹ “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and speak all kinds of evil against you, lying, because of Me. ¹² Rejoice and exult, because your reward in the heavens is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. ¹³ You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt becomes insipid with what will it be salted? It is then good for nothing except to be thrown out and trampled down by the people. †††¹⁴ You are the light of the world. A city located upon a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and place it under the hamper, but on the lampstand, and it shines on everything in the house. ¹⁶ So also let your light shine before the people, so that they may see your good works and may glorify your Father, who is in the heavens. †††

Jesus interprets the Law

¹⁷ “Do not suppose that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For assuredly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, *NOT ONE* iota nor one tittle shall pass away from the Law until everything happens. ¹⁹ Therefore, whoever annuls one of the least of these commandments and teaches that to the people will be called least in the kingdom of the heavens; but whoever does and teaches *them*, *HE* will be called great in the kingdom of the heavens. ²⁰ For I say to you that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees you will absolutely not enter the kingdom of the heavens! ††

About respecting others, especially ‘brothers’

²¹ “You have heard that it was said to the ancients, ‘You shall not murder, so whoever murders will be liable to the judgment.’ †††²² But I say to you that whoever gets angry with his brother without cause will be liable to the judgment. †† And whoever says to his

††† ‘Christians’ who have caved in to the world’s values and life style are like insipid salt—good for nothing except to be thrown out. (Insipid salt was thrown on the road, where it helped to keep down the dust.) The implications of this have become increasingly serious in today’s world. ††† Nowadays if you stand up for Biblical values you will probably be persecuted, not praised; but the darker the night, the farther a light can be seen. § The Lord here makes an impressively strong statement about the preservation through time of the precise form of the Sacred Text. Since our only access to the meaning is through the form, any alteration in the form will alter the meaning. One of the most effective ways of annulling a commandment is to corrupt the Text—something Satan understands quite well. †† Did you get that? If you are like the scribes and Pharisees what are your chances? ††† The scribes had diluted the Text—the Law demands the death penalty (Exodus 21:12). †† God hates injustice and will judge it. Less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit “without cause” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). NIV, NASB and LB favor us with a footnote informing us that “some manuscripts” add “without cause”—by “some” they mean 98% of them!! More serious, the shorter text has the effect of forbid-

brother, 'Numbskull!' will be liable to the council. † But whoever says, 'You absolute idiot!' will be liable to hell fire. ††²³ Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ††²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled with your brother and then, returning, offer your gift. ††²⁵ Be agreeable to your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest the adversary hand you over to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. ††²⁶ Assuredly I say to you, you will by no means get out of there until you have paid the last penny. ††

About sexual sin

²⁷ "You have heard that it was said, ††† "You shall not commit adultery." ††²⁸ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. †††²⁹ So if your right eye is causing you to fall, tear it out and throw it away; because it is better for you that one of your members perish than that your whole body be thrown into hell. ††³⁰ And if your right hand is causing you to fall, cut it

ding anger, which would contradict other Scriptures (Ephesians 4:26, Psalm 4:4) and the Lord's own example (Mark 3:5). † The Greek text has a transliteration of the Aramaic term, raka. The idea seems to be that this was an offensive epithet that could lead to a court case, for defamation of character (or whatever). †† This presumably involves an offense against God, denigrating His image, disparaging His work. However, note that the Lord is talking about saying this to a BROTHER. He Himself applied this term to the scribes and Pharisees in chapter 23. Verses 22-24 deal with how we treat 'brothers'. Consider James 4:11-12: "Brothers, do not speak evil of one another. Because the one speaking against a brother and judging his brother speaks against a law and judges a law. So if you judge a law you are not a law-doer but a judge. The Lawgiver and Judge is One, the One who is able to save and to destroy. So who are you (sg) to be judging someone who is different?" I was surprised to find the Greek ετερος here, which usually refers to a different kind. I personally do not enjoy dealing with 'brothers' who are too different; I would rather question whether they are really 'brothers' at all! But James tells me not to do that. Each person is different (background, experiences, personality, training) and we must recognize that God can and will deal differently with different people. He uses one 'law' with me, another 'law' with you, and so on. A law is a set of rules or demands, so when I judge a brother I am questioning the way ('law') that God is working on him. As He is both Lawgiver and Judge, I will have to answer to Him for how I judged my 'brothers'. (For 'different one' the eclectic text currently in vogue has 'neighbor', following some 12% of the Greek manuscripts [as in NIV, TEV, LB, NASB, etc.].) † Verse 23 is linked to 22; insult or injury is involved—an overt action, an unpleasant scene that will presumably be alive in your memory. †† Verses 23-24 refer to moral debt, through abusive language. ††† Verses 25-26 refer to financial debt, through property damage, a loan, etc. There is no doubt about the fact of the debt, and the time limit has expired; and you are on the way to court—at that point the only way out is to humble yourself and throw yourself on the mercy of the creditor. ††† Perhaps 10% of the Greek manuscripts add 'to those of old' (as in AV and NKJV). ††† If he had the courage and the opportunity, he would do it. † This is literal, but mostly theoretical, since by the time people realize they are in trouble it is usually too late; they are already trapped. Perhaps this is why Hebrews 3:13 tells us to "exhort one another

off and throw it away; because it is better for you that one of your members perish than that your whole body be thrown into hell. ††³¹ It was said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' ††³² But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except for a case of fornication, †† causes her to commit adultery, ††† and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

About swearing

³³ "Again you have heard that it was said to the ancients: 'You shall not swear falsely, but you shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' ††³⁴ But I say to you not to swear at all: neither by heaven, because it is God's throne; ††³⁵ nor by the earth, because it is a stool for His feet; nor by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great King. ††³⁶ Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. ††³⁷ But let your word be 'yes yes', 'no no'; †† for whatever is more than these is from the malignant one. ††† [!]

About retaliation

³⁸ "You have heard that it was said: 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' ††³⁹ But I say to you not to resist the evildoer; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. ††

⁴⁰ "And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have the cloak as well. †††⁴¹ And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. †††⁴² Give to him who asks you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. †††

other daily... lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin". Sometimes others see that we are in trouble before we do. †† Presumably a reference to premarital sex, where a groom discovers that his bride is no longer a virgin (like the situation that Joseph faced in 1:18-19). See Matthew 19:3-12. ††† In that culture such a woman would look for another man as a matter of physical survival. †† Presumably this precludes any and all exaggeration, putting a 'spin' on things, etc. ††† Do we really believe this? If not, we had better go back to the drawing board. †† The reference is to Exodus 21:24, but verse 22 makes clear that it is "as the judges determine"—we are not to take the law into our own hands. †† Do not use physical violence to respond to physical violence—but we can use our spiritual authority. Animals must resort to force, but Adam was given dominion over the animals, which presumably was not exercised with physical force—we should not lower ourselves to the animal level; but Satan tries to trick us into doing so. If someone lashes out in anger, turning the other cheek should shame him. ††† Do not use legal action to respond to legal action—but we can use our spiritual authority. If they are resorting to legal action they presumably do not want to talk it over, they are trying to impose something on us; so turning the other cheek could shame them. ††† A Roman imposition on subjugated peoples—any Roman soldier could compel a local non-Roman citizen to carry his pack one mile. A cheerful response to this humiliating situation could at least deprive the soldier of sadistic satisfaction, and maybe even shame him into carrying his own pack. ††† Presumably this does not refer to professional beggars (2 Thessalonians 3:10), but to someone overtaken by adversity who needs temporary help, someone you know who is part of the community.

How to treat enemies

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said: ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ^{†44} But I say to you: love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you, ^{††45} that you may prove to be sons of your Father in the heavens; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and He sends rain on the just and the unjust. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your friends, [‡] what are you doing extra? Do not even the tax collectors do so? ^{††48} Therefore, you be perfect just as your Father in the heavens is perfect. ^{‡‡}

Jesus warns against religious ostentation

6 “Be careful not to do your charitable giving before the people so as to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father who is in the heavens. ^{‡‡2} Therefore, whenever you do charitable giving do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by the people. Assuredly I say to you, they *already* have their reward. ³ But when you do charitable giving do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ^{‡‡‡4} so that your charitable giving may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will *HIMSELF* repay you openly. ⁵⁵ And whenever you pray do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that they may be seen by the people. Assuredly I say to you that they *already* have their reward. ⁶ But you, whenever you pray, go into your

[†] Leviticus 19:18 says to “love your neighbor”, but not “hate your enemy”. The scribes had added an unwarranted inference. ^{††} Less than 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, offer a truncated form of this verse (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). [‡] Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘brothers’, as in many versions. ^{††} The reference to “reward” and “extra” suggests that the procedures previously enjoined are demonstrations of practical righteousness—we are to be examples, rise above the level of the surrounding society. Tax collectors were Jews, part of the community, but despised as traitors. ^{‡‡} “Perfect”—the Father is our point of reference; we are to be like He is. A standard is a standard; it is not invalidated just because we may feel that it is unattainable. Comparing this passage with texts like Deuteronomy 7:10, “He repays those who hate Him to their face”, and Psalm 5:5-6, “You hate all workers of iniquity”, I take it that we must distinguish between personal enemies (those who oppose us for personal reasons) and enemies of God and His truth. To be like the Father we also must hate workers of iniquity (because of the consequences to others). ^{†††} Note that the reward has more to do with the person’s motive than the charitable act itself. ^{†††} Since hands do not think (so far as I know), I suppose that not even the recipient should know where the gift came from, although there may be times when the recipient needs to know. [§] This is amazing; the Father *Himself* will repay = a good investment! (“Himself” is omitted by 24% of the Greek manuscripts; “openly” is omitted by 6%.)

room, and having shut the door pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you openly. ^{§†}

How to pray

⁷ “But when you pray do not babble like the heathen; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸ So do not be like them, because your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. ^{§††9} Therefore, *YOU* pray like this:

‘Our Father who is in the heavens,
let Your name be revered;
¹⁰ let Your kingdom come,
let Your will be done, on the earth just as in heaven.
¹¹ Give us today our daily bread;
¹² and forgive us our debts,
as we also forgive our debtors.
¹³ And do not bring us into testing,
but rescue us from the evil one; ^{§†}
because *YOURS* is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.’ ^{§††}

¹⁴ For if you forgive people their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive people their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. ^{§†}

How to fast

¹⁶ “Also, whenever you fast do not become gloomy like the hypocrites, because they disfigure their faces so that people will notice that they are fasting. Assuredly I say to you that they *already* have their reward. ¹⁷ But when *YOU* fast anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that you do not appear to the people to be fasting, but to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. ^{§†}

The right attitude toward material supply

¹⁹ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on the earth, where moth and rust ruin and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust ruins and where thieves neither break in nor steal; ²¹ because where your treasure is there your heart will be also. ^{§§†}

^{§†} About 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit “openly”. ^{§††} We do need to ask, but we should do it simply, and without undue repetition (God is not deaf). Further, we should ask with confidence. ^{§‡} The Father can rescue us from the evil one because He is far greater. ^{§††} About 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit the last clause (as in NIV, [NASB], LB, TEV, etc.). ^{§†} Forgiveness is a VERY serious matter! ^{§‡} Some 10% of the Greek manuscripts add ‘openly’ (as in AV and NKJV). ^{§§†} That is the crucial question: where is your heart? It should be obvious that the best place to have your savings account is in the Bank of Heaven. So how does one make deposits up there? You do it by investing in the Kingdom.

About worldview

²² “The lamp of the body is the eye. So if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light. ^{†23} But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. ^{††} So if the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

“You cannot serve God and money”

²⁴ “No one is able to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. ^{‡25} Therefore, I say to you not to worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air, that they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not superior to them? ²⁷ And which of you can add one cubit to his stature by worrying? ²⁸ And why do you worry about clothes? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither labor nor spin, ²⁹ and yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which exists today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, you little-faiths? ³¹ Therefore do not worry saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need each of these things. ³³ Rather, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. ^{‡‡34} Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own affairs. Each day has enough trouble of its own. [‡]

The right attitude toward others

7 “Do not judge, so that you be not judged. ^{‡‡2} Because with what judgment you judge, you will be

[†] Of course we have two eyes, but the Text has “eye” in the singular. I take it that the reference is to the way we interpret what we see (which is our real ‘eye’)—two people, one pure and one vile, observing the same scene will give very different interpretations to it. ^{††} “Evil” here has the idea of malignant—aggressively evil. Someone with a malignant mind will give an evil interpretation to EVERYTHING he sees, and in consequence his being will be filled with unremitting darkness. Compare Titus 1:15. [‡] The Text has “mammon”, which presumably includes more than just money; anyone who has materialistic values is serving mammon. But I fear that comparatively few speakers of English today know the word, so I put ‘money’. ^{‡†} “These things” refers to food, drink and clothes—the basics. Jesus does not promise luxury. Just how seeking first the Kingdom works out in practice will differ from person to person. It should be obvious that we are not being told to sit around doing nothing. ^{‡‡} The implication would appear to be that each day will present us with some challenges. ^{‡‡†} By whom? Perhaps both God and man.

judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. ^{‡‡3} So why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye but do not consider the plank in your own eye? ⁴ Or how will you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye,’ when hey, there is a plank in yours? ⁵ Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. ⁵

Analyze your audience

⁶ “A Do not give what is holy to the dogs, B nor cast your pearls before the pigs; B nor cast they trample them with their feet, and A turning around they tear you to pieces. ^{5†}

Be persistent, yet considerate

⁷ “Keep asking, and it will be given to you; keep seeking, and you will find; keep knocking, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For each one asking, receives; and the one seeking, finds; and to the one knocking it will be opened. ⁹ Or which man is among you who, if his son asks for bread will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in the heavens give good things to those who ask Him! ^{5††12} So then, whatever you want people to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. ^{5†}

Eternal destiny

¹³ “Go in through the narrow gate; because wide is the gate and broad is the way which leads away into perdition, and those who are going in through it are many. ¹⁴ How narrow is the gate and confined the way which leads away into life, and those who are finding it are few! ^{5††}

^{‡‡†} The use of the future tense probably points toward God. If we call for judgment, not mercy, on others, by so much we are calling for judgment, not mercy, on ourselves. ⁵ Can you have a ‘plank’ in your eye without knowing it? (The tiniest bit of grit is an unbearable irritant.) When a person does not want to admit or correct his own failures, it is standard defensive procedure to call attention to the failures of others. ^{5†} This verse may be a chiasmus, AB,BA. But just who are ‘the dogs’ and ‘the pigs’? A pig will sniff the pearl and perhaps think it a stone—it not being edible the pig will ignore it and it will get trampled into the mud. So a ‘pig’ is someone who is incapable of recognizing or appreciating the ‘pearl’—the reaction will be one of total indifference. So do not waste your time. In contrast a ‘dog’ reacts in an aggressively hostile manner against what is ‘holy’. So a ‘dog’ is presumably someone who is committed to evil and will therefore attack what is holy. In general our media today are controlled by ‘dogs’. So do not innocently offer what is holy to a ‘dog’—you will get chewed up! We need to try to convert the ‘dogs’, but you need to understand what you are about. Anyone who has sold out to Satan will almost certainly have a resident demon, and we have the authority to bind such. ^{5††} I take it that we are authorized to ask! ^{5‡} This is the so-called ‘golden rule’—if everyone did this the world would be a better place. ^{5‡†} Observe that the Lord Jesus Christ affirms that “FEW” find the way of life. He Himself makes

A tree is known by its fruit

¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do people gather grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Just so, every good tree produces good fruits, but the rotten tree produces evil fruits. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot produce evil fruits, nor can a rotten tree produce good fruits. ¹⁹ So every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore, you will know them by their fruits.

We have to *DO* the Father’s will

²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will go into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of my Father who is in the heavens. ²² Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and perform many mighty works in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me you practitioners of lawlessness!’ ²⁴

All face adversity—foundation determines outcome

²⁴ “Therefore whoever hears these words of mine and does them, I will compare him to a prudent man who built his house on the bedrock; ²⁵ and the rain fell, and the rivers rose, and the winds blew and attacked that house; and it did not fall, because it was founded on the bedrock. ²⁶ But every one who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be compared to a foolish man who built his house on the sand; ²⁷ and the rain fell, and the rivers rose, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall!” ²⁸

clear that to travel the way of life requires commitment to the Owner of that ‘way’. Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts have the weaker “Because narrow...”, as in KJV and NKJV. † Probably demonized; demonic prophecies are always destructive. †† The Lord uses ‘rotten’ and ‘evil’ (or ‘malignant’) because He is really talking about people, not trees. ‡ The Lord is very clear about the eternal destiny of people who do not produce good fruit. Remember Ephesians 2:8-10—we are not saved BY good works, but we are indeed saved FOR good works; if we do not produce, we are not saved. †† If we do not DO the will of the Father, we will not enter the Kingdom. †† Evidently they did indeed cast out demons and perform mighty works—so if it was not by God’s power, by whose power was it? Could it be that Satan works with those who think they are serving the Lord but are really ‘lawless’, to confirm them in their error? When we do not do things God’s way we are being ‘lawless’. †† Here again, we have to DO the words. Note that both houses had to face the same circumstances, but the verbs are different. Everyone faces adversity in this life—your foundation determines the outcome. Why do the adverse circumstances ‘attack’ one house, but only ‘beat on’ the other? The verb ‘attack’ implies an intelligence ordering the circumstances.

Editorial comment

²⁸ And so it was, when Jesus had ended these words, that the crowds were astonished at His teaching, ²⁹ for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not like the scribes. ³⁰

The Messiah demonstrates His power

Jesus heals a leper

8 So when He came down from the mountain large crowds followed Him. ² And then, a leper came and worshiped Him saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” ³ So reaching out His hand Jesus touched ⁴ him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed!” ⁵ And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. ⁶ And Jesus says to him: “See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a *proof* to them.” ⁷

Jesus heals at a distance ⁸

⁵ As He entered Capernaum a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him ⁶ and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, being terribly tormented.” ⁷ And Jesus says to him, “I will go and heal him.” ⁸ But in answer the centurion said: “Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof; but only speak a word and my servant will be healed. ⁹ For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my slave, ‘Do this,’ and he does.” ¹⁰ Upon hearing *him* Jesus marveled, and said to those who were following: “Assuredly I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith! ¹¹ And I say to you that many will come from east and west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens; ¹² but the sons of the kingdom will be thrown out into the darkness farthest away. *THERE*, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” ¹³ Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go; and let it be done for you just as you believed.” And his servant was healed in that very hour. ¹⁴

¹⁵ *The scribes would not dare to say, “I tell you”; they would quote a variety of scholars and leave the question up in the air. § To touch a leper was unheard of, because of the contamination; this was a powerful demonstration of authority. §† Beautiful! §†† A proof that the Messiah had arrived—who else could cure leprosy? §† It has often been assumed that this account is parallel to that in Luke 7:1-10, but I believe they were different occasions. For a detailed discussion, please see the Appendix: Did the centurion leave his house? §†† “Sons of the kingdom”—those who knew the truth and rejected it will have the severest judgment, “farthest away”. (Dante’s view of hell is perhaps not entirely mistaken.) §† Jesus healed a serious case at a distance.*

Peter's mother-in-law †

¹⁴ Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his mother-in-law laid up and burning with fever.

¹⁵ So He touched her hand and the fever left her; and she got up and began to serve Him. ^{††16} And when evening came they brought to Him many who were demonized. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, ^{†17} so that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet should be fulfilled, namely:

"He Himself took our infirmities and bore our diseases." ^{††}

¹⁸ Seeing large crowds around Him Jesus gave an order to depart for the opposite shore. ¹⁹ Then a certain scribe approaching said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you may go." ²⁰ So Jesus says to him, "The foxes have dens and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of the Man does not have where He may lay His head." ^{††21} Then a different one of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." ²² But Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead." ^{†††}

Jesus controls wind and wave

²³ Now when He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. ²⁴ And then—a great tempest ^{†††} arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered by the waves. But He was sleeping. ²⁵ So the disciples came and awakened Him saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" ²⁶ And He says to them, "Why are you cowardly, you little-faiths?" Then rising He rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. ^{§27} So the

† It has often been assumed that Matthew's account here is parallel to those in Mark 1:29-31 and Luke 4:38-39, but close attention to the contexts has convinced me that Matthew's account took place some time after that in Mark and Luke. In that event, Jesus healed the woman twice, which means that just because God heals you one time, it does not mean that you will never get sick again. †† Jesus healed the consequences as well—normally a high fever leaves you weak. ‡ Jesus did not touch the demonized, nor did He argue with them; He expelled the demons with a word. †† See Isaiah 53:4. If the main fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy took place on the cross, this would be an application. †† That is what the Text says, "the Son of the Man", which appears to be a phrase coined by the Lord Jesus to refer to Himself; the phrase doesn't make very good sense in English, at first glance, but if "THE man" refers to pristine Adam and "THE son" to an only pristine descendant, it makes great sense. It seems to indicate a perfect human prototype, like Adam was before the fall—the human side of the God-man. ††† When it comes to discipleship, Jesus is very demanding—ordinary physical comfort and normal human relationships must be held in abeyance. Since a physically dead person can't do anything, it is the spiritually dead who are to do the burying. To wait for a father to die before doing God's will could mean never doing it. ††† The word rendered 'tempest' usually means 'earthquake'; one could render, "there was a big earthquake in the sea"—which would produce sudden, unexpected waves. Maybe that is what happened (that lake is right on a major fault line). § The implication is that THEY should have solved the

men marveled, saying, "What sort of being is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" ^{§†}

Jesus controls any number of demons

²⁸ Upon His coming to the other side, to the region of the Gergesenes, ^{§††} two demonized men ^{§†} met Him, coming out from the tombs, **very** dangerous, so that no one could pass that way. ²⁹ And then—they cried out saying: "What do you have to do with us, Jesus, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" ^{§††30} Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many pigs feeding. ³¹ So the demons kept imploring Him saying, "Since you are going to cast us out, permit us to go into the herd of pigs." ³² So He said to them, "Go!" And coming out they went off into the herd of pigs. And then—the whole herd of pigs rushed down the steep bank into the sea and died in the water! ^{§†33} So the swineherds ran away, and going into the town they told everything, including about the demonized men. ³⁴ And then, the whole town went out to meet with Jesus; and upon seeing Him they begged Him to depart from their borders. ^{§†}

Jesus forgives sins

9 So getting into the boat He crossed over and came into His own city. ² And then, they came to Him carrying a paralytic lying on a pallet. And seeing their faith Jesus said to the paralytic, "Courage, son; your sins are forgiven you!" ³ But then, some of the scribes said within themselves, "This man blasphemes!" ⁴ So Jesus, knowing their thoughts, ^{§§†} said: "Why do you think evil in your hearts? ⁵ So which is easier, to say

problem. Again Jesus undoes the consequences, as well as the cause. §† Well, what were the options? Jesus obviously had supernatural power. §†† Some 98% of the Greek manuscripts read 'Gergesenes', rather than 'Gadarenes'. Gadara was the Roman capital of the province of Perara, located some six miles from the Sea of Galilee. For the swineherds to run six miles to the city to report the incident and then walk back with the people would take quite a while. It seems more likely that there was a village named 'Gergesa' nearby, whose people came and asked Jesus to leave. For a more detailed discussion, please see the Appendix: The 'Legion' and the pigs; where was it? §‡ As a tax collector, numerical precision was important to Matthew. Where other Gospels may select an individual as sufficient for the narrative, Matthew specifies that there were actually two (also blind men and donkeys). §†† The demons knew who Jesus really was, and also about their own destiny. The parallel accounts in Mark 5 and Luke 8 give added detail—their name was 'Legion', and there were about 2,000 pigs. In Luke 8:31 they kept imploring Him not to send them to THE Abyss—they were really worried; they knew something we do not. §† I really doubt that the demons did it—why would they want to destroy their new 'house'? Perhaps the pigs preferred death to demons (animals often show more common sense than people do). It is also possible that Jesus commanded the action. §‡ Apparently Jesus never went back there; they did not want Him and that was that (I doubt that the inhabitants were Jews). The dead pigs represented a big economic loss; the pigs were more important to them than the two men—what Jesus represented threatened their way of life. §§† Jesus could read people's minds.

'Your sins are forgiven', or to say 'Get up and walk'?
^{†6} But so that you may know that the Son of the Man has authority on the earth to forgive sins"—then He says to the paralytic, "On your feet, pick up your pallet and go to your house!" ⁷ So he got up and went off to his house. ⁸ And seeing it the crowds marveled and glorified God, the one giving such authority to the people. ^{††}

Matthew called

⁹ And going on from there Jesus saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office, and He says to him, "Follow me." So getting up he followed Him. ¹⁰ Now it happened, as He was reclining *at the table* in the house, [‡] that many tax collectors and sinners had also come and were reclining *at the table* with Jesus and His disciples! ¹¹ Upon seeing this the Pharisees said to His disciples, "Why does your teacher eat and drink ^{‡†} with the tax collectors and sinners?" ¹² But Jesus heard it, so He said to them: "Those who are strong do not need a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³ But go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." ^{‡†}

Fasting

¹⁴ Then the disciples of John come to Him saying, "Why is it that we and the Pharisees fast *about* many things, but your disciples do not fast?" ¹⁵ So Jesus said to them: "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast."

Old wineskins

¹⁶ "And no one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment and the tear becomes worse. ¹⁷ Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst and the wine spills out, and the wineskins will be ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved." ^{‡††}

[†] Obviously it is easier to say "your sins are forgiven" because no one can see if it happened or not; but "get up and walk"—if he doesn't, you look silly! ^{††} This way of putting it intrigues me. The people were getting the benefit from just one person who was using God's authority. How many people do you know who use God's authority on a regular basis? What would happen if a few appeared on the scene? [‡] Matthew's; see Luke 5:27-29. Matthew prepared a special meal and invited all his colleagues. He would have to turn his responsibilities as tax collector over to them. ^{‡†} I follow the best line of transmission that has 'and drink', although 70% of the Greek manuscripts omit the words. ^{‡†} Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit "to repentance" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{‡††} What are the implications here for established ecclesiastical structures? How many churches have been split by 'new wine'? But, so, how should we go about trying to renew a dead church? Or should we just pull out and 'leave the dead to bury their dead'?

Jesus raises the dead

¹⁸ While He was saying these things to them, there he was; a certain ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her and she will live." ¹⁹ So Jesus got up and followed him, with His disciples. ²⁰ And then—a woman who had been hemorrhaging for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. ²¹ For she kept saying to herself, "If only I may touch His garment I will be healed." ^{‡††22} But Jesus, turning around and seeing her, said, "Take courage, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was healed from that very hour. ²³ When Jesus came into the ruler's house and saw the flutists and the crowd making a commotion, ²⁴ He says to them, "Go away, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping." So they began to ridicule Him. ²⁵ But when the crowd had been put outside, He went in and grasped her hand, and the girl got up. ²⁶ And the report of this went out into all that land.

Jesus restores sight and speech

²⁷ As Jesus went on from there two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" ²⁸ And arriving in the house, the blind men approached Him; so He says to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They say to Him, "Yes, Lord." ²⁹ Then He touched their eyes saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." ³⁰ And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them saying, "See to it that no one knows!" ³¹ But going out they spread the news about Him in all that country.

³² As they were going out, well, they brought to Him a mute man, demonized. ³³ And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the crowds marveled saying, "Never was it seen like this in Israel!" ^{‡†34} But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." ^{‡††}

The harvest needs workers

³⁵ Then Jesus went around to all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every illness among the people. ³⁶ Seeing the crowds He was moved with compassion for them, because they were harassed and prostrated, like sheep without

^{‡††} It is clear from Mark 5:27-30 that the woman was healed before Jesus turned around. At other times contact with the shadow or a handkerchief brought healing. There is a principle at work here that we no longer understand, but satanists use all the time. [§] They knew that the girl was dead. ^{§†} I take it that the events recorded in verses 10-33 happened one right after the other, probably within two or three hours—the Lord had very little time to Himself; someone was clamoring for attention constantly. To be alone with the Father He had to slip away at night. ^{§††} At this point the Pharisees committed the unpardonable sin; see Mark 3:29-30.

a shepherd. ^{†37} Then He says to His disciples: “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the workers are few. ³⁸ Therefore pray to the Lord of the harvest that He may send out workers into His harvest.” ^{††}

Jesus commissions and orients the twelve disciples—28 AD

10 So summoning His twelve disciples He gave them authority over unclean spirits so as to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every illness. ² Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first Simon (the one called Peter) and Andrew his brother, James (the son of Zebedee) and John his brother, ³ Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew (the tax collector), [‡] James (the son of Alphaeus) and Lebbaeus (who was surnamed ^{††} Thaddeus), ⁴ Simon (the Canaanite) and Judas Iscariot (who also betrayed Him).

Orientation with immediate effect

⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out, [‡] and commanded them saying: “Do not go off into the road of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. ⁶ But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ^{†††7} And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of the heavens has come near.’ ⁸ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. ^{†††} You have received free of charge, give free of charge. ⁹ Do not provide gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, ¹⁰ nor a knapsack for the road, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; ^{‡†} because the worker is worthy of his food.

¹¹ “In whatever city or village you may enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there until you go out. ¹² Upon entering the house, greet it; ¹³ and should the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it; but should it not be worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴ And whoever will not receive you nor hear your

† Who or what did the harassing? Sheep without a shepherd have no protection. †† Not everyone is supposed to go, and not everyone can give, but we can all pray—or can we? To pray that prayer honestly, we have to be prepared to be one of the workers He will send! ‡ Matthew insists on recording the fact that he was a tax collector—perhaps to underscore God’s grace in choosing someone from a despised occupation. †† Less than half of one percent of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “Lebbaeus who was surnamed” (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). †† The Lord gives the example; He sends out the twelve (9:38). ††† See Matthew 15:24; the emphasis of the Lord’s earthly ministry was upon “the house of Israel”. ††† Some 94% of the Greek manuscripts do NOT have “raise the dead”. KJV, NKJV, NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. (most versions in English) follow 6%. § What would happen if the Church started following this instruction? §† They were to travel ‘light’—a spare staff would just be extra weight (they went everywhere on foot); with no knapsack a spare tunic and pair of sandals would just get in the way. However, this was a temporary instruction for a specific occasion. Later, in the upper room, He revoked this instruction (Luke 22:35-36). Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘neither a staff’ (singular), that sets up a contradiction with Mark 6:8, to be duly followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.

words, as you go out from that house or city shake off the dust from your feet. ^{‡††15} Assuredly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of judgment than for that city!

Orientation with prophetic effect

¹⁶ “Now then, I am sending you out like sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be prudent like snakes and innocent like doves. ¹⁷ But beware of the people, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues. ¹⁸ And you will be brought before governors and even kings for my sake, as a testimony to them and to the nations. ¹⁹ But whenever they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you will speak, for it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; ^{‡†20} for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. ^{‡††}

Like master, like slave

²¹ “Furthermore, brother will hand over brother to death, and a father a child, and children will rise up against parents and put them to death. ²² And you will be hated by all for my name’s sake; ^{‡†} but the one enduring to the end, HE will be delivered. ²³ But whenever they persecute you in this city, flee to another. ^{‡†} For assuredly I say to you, you will certainly not go through all the cities of Israel before the Son of the Man comes. ^{‡††24} A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. ²⁵ It is enough for a disciple that he become like his teacher, and a slave like his master. ^{‡††} Since they have stigmatized ^{‡†††} the master of the house as Beelzebul, ¹⁸ how much more those of his household! ²⁶ So do not fear them; because there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, and secret that will not be known.

“Do not be afraid”

²⁷ “What I tell you in the dark, say in the light; and what you hear in the ear, proclaim on the housetops. ¹⁹²⁸ And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but

§†† This is an instruction, an order. Paul did it at least once—Acts 13:51 (as have I). Jesus Himself declares this judgment upon Capernaum (Matthew 11:23-24), thereby setting the example. §† As one of my seminary professors once said, this instruction is for martyrs, not preachers. But would it not it be nice if more preachers got their messages from the Holy Spirit? §†† God still speaks in and to the world today, using our mouths. §† This is already happening in North America and elsewhere. Anyone who stands up for Biblical values—speaks out against homosexuality, for instance—is ridiculed, and more physical forms of persecution have already started. §† This sounds like the life of a refugee. §†† Beginning with verse 18, but especially in verses 21-23, Jesus is probably referring to the end times, more than to their immediate future. §†† This should be our goal: be like Jesus, do like Jesus. §†† I here follow the best line of transmission, with 30% of the Greek manuscripts. ‘To stigmatize’ is the appropriate verb here, rather than ‘to call’. ¹⁸ All Greek manuscripts have ‘Beelzebul’, rather than the familiar ‘Beelzebub’, that is a carryover from the Latin. ¹⁹ This one

cannot kill the soul. But rather fear the One who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell. ^{†29} Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father's will.³⁰ Why even the hairs of your head are all numbered! ³¹ Therefore do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

Jesus demands total commitment

³² "Now then, everyone who will confess me before the people, I will also confess him before my Father who is in the heavens. ³³ But whoever should deny me before the people, I will also deny him before my Father who is in the heavens. ^{††}

³⁴ "Do not suppose that I came to bring peace on the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

³⁵ For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; ³⁶ and a man's enemies will be those of his *own* household.

³⁷ "The one who is more devoted to father or mother than to me is not worthy of me, and the one who is more devoted to son or daughter than to me is not worthy of me; ³⁸ and he who does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ The one 'finding' his life will lose it, and the one 'losing' his life for my sake will find it. ^{††}

⁴⁰ "The one receiving you receives me, and the one receiving me receives the One who sent me. ⁴¹ The one receiving a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, [‡] and the one receiving a righteous man in the name of a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. ⁴² And whoever should give so much as a cup of cold *water* to one of these little ones, in the name of a disciple, assuredly I say to you, he will certainly not lose his reward." ^{‡‡}

bothers me; to do this is like painting a target on your back. But He goes on to say that it is better to fear God more than man, and that nothing can happen to you apart from the Father's will. But how many of us really trust God that much? How many of us can say with Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" (Job 13:15)?

[†] *The Greek Text has 'Gehenna', a euphemism for the Lake of Fire.*
^{††} *If Jesus denies us in front of the Father, what are our chances? Maybe this is why the Text says that a coward does not enter the Kingdom (Revelation 21:8).* [‡] *Notice that it is Jesus who sets the parameters, not we. Rather than people 'accepting' Jesus, the question is whether He will accept us.* ^{††} *I take it that the reference is to the potential that your life represents, potential in the interests of God's Kingdom. To the extent that your life revolves around God's will and Kingdom you will both find and save it—of course from the world's perspective you will be throwing it away.* ^{‡‡} *I assume that the point here is identification: you are identifying with the prophet whose name you invoke; and if that prophet is in prison, you are taking a risk.* ^{‡‡†} *Presumably the rewards mentioned here are received in this life, since the good deeds mentioned could be performed by an unbeliever. I suggest that God blesses anyone who takes sides with what is right, good, decent, honorable, just—but if that person does not belong to Christ the blessing is limited to this life.*

The Pharisees reject Jesus as Messiah

11 And so it was, when Jesus finished directing His twelve disciples, that He moved on from there to teach and preach in their towns.

John needs reassuring

² But John, hearing in prison *about* the works of the Messiah, sent two of his disciples ³ to say to Him, "Are you the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

^{‡‡‡4} By way of answer Jesus said to them: "Go and report to John the things that you hear and see: ⁵ blind regain sight and lame walk, lepers are cleansed and deaf hear, dead are raised and the poor are evangelized. ⁶ And, blessed be whoever is not offended at *ME!*" [§]

Jesus commends John the Baptizer

⁷ So as they departed Jesus began to say to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see, a reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ But what did you go out to see, a man clothed in soft garments? Actually, those who wear soft material are in kings' houses. ⁹ But *really*, what did you go out to see, a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and far more than a prophet. ¹⁰ For this is he of whom it is written:

'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way ahead of you.' ^{§†}

¹¹ Assuredly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen a greater than John the Baptizer; but he who is least in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he. ^{§††12} But from the days of John the Baptizer until now the kingdom of the heavens is being aggressive and aggressive people are seizing upon it. ^{§†13} For all the prophets and the Law prophesied un-

^{‡‡‡} *John was in prison, which was contrary to his expectations; like all the others he expected Jesus to set up the Kingdom right then. In answer the Lord says, in effect, that the Kingdom is not based on our expectations.* [§] *Verse 6 was directed specifically at John. When Jesus went to John to be baptized, John knew perfectly well that he was looking at the Messiah, but now, because of his circumstances, he is in doubt. In effect, Jesus is saying, "Whatever you do, do not rebel!" And He is still saying so to us: when your circumstances are painful and unexplained, do not rebel!* ^{§†} *See Malachi 3:1.* ^{§††} *Evidently, as forerunner of the Kingdom John was not part of it—the Kingdom was rejected at that time; both forerunner and King were killed—those who participate in the actual future Kingdom will be more privileged. "Born of women" excludes Adam. Men like Noah, Abraham, Moses, Daniel would be of equal standing, just not "greater". But those who live during the Messianic Kingdom (Millennium) will be more privileged than all except Adam, because the earth will return to conditions similar to Eden.* ^{§‡} *Note that Jesus is referring to a period of about two years. With the King physically present and giving a living demonstration of the Kingdom, the Kingdom was being more aggressive in this world than it had been since the time of Moses. In the present tense of a Greek verb a single form serves for both the middle and passive voices—the verb βαζεται has usually been translated as passive in our versions, 'suffers violence', but I think it makes much better sense to translate it*

til John, ¹⁴ and if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come. ¹⁵ He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

¹⁶ “But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in a marketplace and calling to their friends ¹⁷ and saying,

‘We played the flute for you and you did not dance; we mourned for you and you did not lament.’

¹⁸ For John came neither eating nor drinking and they say, ‘He has a demon’; ¹⁹ the Son of the Man came eating and drinking and they say, ‘Just look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Indeed, wisdom is vindicated by her children.” ^{††}

Jesus denounces three cities

²⁰ Then He began to reproach the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. ²¹ “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! Because if the mighty works that were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²² So I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the Day of judgment than for you! ²³ And you, Capernaum, ‘the one having been exalted to heaven’, you will be brought down to Hades! Because if the mighty works that were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. ²⁴ So I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the Day of judgment than for you.” [‡]

“I praise You, Father”

²⁵ At that time Jesus reacted and said: “‘I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to ‘babes’. ²⁶ Yes, Father, because thus it was good to You.’ ^{††}

²⁷ “All things have been delivered to me by my Father, and no one really knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone really know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son may will to reveal *Him*. ²⁸ Come to me all you who are laboring and are loaded down, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls; ³⁰ for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” ^{‡‡}

as middle, as I have done. Given the hostility of the religious leaders, it would take someone with plenty of backbone to openly side with Jesus. † Jesus declares that the real Elijah is still going to come. John fulfilled the role for Messiah's first advent that Elijah will fill for the second. †† Instead of “her children”, just 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality (objectively so), have “her works” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡ Evidently there are degrees of judgment, based on the amount of ‘light’ received. To be worse off than Sodom—help! (See Matthew 10:14-15.) ‡† I take it that this was said out loud, so those around could hear. ‡‡ To be without a yoke is not an option in this world. It is either Jesus' yoke or Satan's—if you refuse Jesus' yoke you remain under Satan's yoke,

Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath

12 At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. ^{‡‡} But His disciples became hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. ² And upon seeing it the Pharisees ^{‡‡} said to Him, “Hey, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath!” ³ But He said to them: “Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and those who were with him, ⁴ how he entered the house of God and ate the loaves of presentation, which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those with him, but only for the priests? ⁵ Or have you not read in the Law that on the Sabbaths the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? ⁶ Yet I say to you that a greater than the temple is here. ⁷ If you had but known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ ⁸ you would not have condemned the innocent. ⁸ Furthermore, the Son of the Man is Lord of the Sabbath!” ^{††}

Jesus heals on the Sabbath

⁹ Now moving on from there He went into their synagogue. ¹⁰ And *THERE* was a man with a withered hand! And they asked Him saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”—so that they might accuse Him. ¹¹ So He said to them: “What man will there be among you who has one sheep, and should this *one* fall into a ditch on the Sabbath, will he not lay hold of it and lift it out? ¹² Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” ¹³ Then He says to the man, “Stretch out your hand!” And he stretched it out, and it was restored whole like the other. ¹⁴ But going out the Pharisees plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him. ^{†††}

A tactical withdrawal

¹⁵ So being aware, Jesus withdrew from there. And large crowds followed Him, and He healed them all. ^{†††16} Yet He warned them not to make Him known, ¹⁷ so that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, namely:

¹⁸ “Behold my Servant whom I chose,
my Beloved in whom my soul is well pleased!

which is always heavy. Being born with an inclination to sin, we are soon under Satan's yoke—Jesus offers us a way out. ‡†† The Text actually has ‘THE Sabbaths’; the parallel passage in Luke 6:1 has ‘a second-first Sabbath’. This was evidently a special day, but we have lost the relevant cultural information. ‡‡‡ Most probably the Pharisees had ‘observers’ tagging along everywhere Jesus went. § The quote is from Hosea 6:6. §† Who but the Messiah, or God Himself, could be Lord of the Sabbath? Jesus was hitting the Pharisees where they lived (they used the Sabbath as an instrument of domination). He had also just said that He was greater than the temple. §†† They could not answer Him, but did not want to submit to Him either; He threatened all that they held dear. §‡ He did not go looking for sick people to cure, but He healed all who came to Him.

I will put my Spirit upon Him,
and He will declare justice to the nations.
¹⁹ He will not quarrel nor cry-out,
nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.
²⁰ A bruised reed He will not break,
and a smoldering wick He will not quench,
until He sends justice forth to victory. †
²¹ And in His name Gentiles will trust.”

The Pharisees blaspheme the Holy Spirit

²² Then a demonized man was brought to Him, blind and mute, and He healed him, so that the Ablind and Bmute Bspoke and Asaw. ††²³ And all the crowds were amazed and said, “Might this not be the Christ, ‡ the Son of David?” ²⁴ But upon hearing it the Pharisees said, “This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebul, ruler of the demons.” ²⁵ But knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them: “Every kingdom divided against itself becomes desolate, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. ²⁶ So if Satan casts out Satan he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷ And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. ††²⁸ But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹ Or how can anyone go into the house of the strong man and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? THEN he can plunder the house. ††

The unforgivable sin

³⁰ “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. ††³¹ Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven people. ³² And whoever speaks a word against the Son of the Man, it will be forgiven him; †† but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not

† The quote in verses 18-21 (see Isaiah 42:1-4) is tied to verse 16. Since after His resurrection the Lord commanded them to go to the whole world and preach the Gospel to every person, I take it that the “UNTIL He sends justice forth to victory” was fulfilled at His death and resurrection. So the description in verses 19-20 is limited to His earthly ministry and is not an example for us to follow now—see Matthew 10:27, etc. †† A chiasmus—AB,BA † I follow the best line of transmission [20%] in reading ‘the Christ’, although it is alone against the rest. †† Jesus seems to be affirming that their sons did indeed cast out demons; the implication is that they were doing so by Satan’s power. Further, if they did not protest when their sons did it, why did they protest when He did it? †† The use of the definite article with “strong man” (its first occurrence) means that the entity has already been introduced in the previous context—the reference is to Satan. Here is biblical basis for binding him. ††† There is no ‘neutrality’; you are either for or against. There are only two teams, two sides, two kingdoms in this world. Either God or Satan, light or darkness, truth or falsehood. Whose side are you on? Really. ††† Statements like this need to be interpreted against the background of all other Scriptures that bear on the subject. Forgiveness depends on confession (1 John 1:9).

be forgiven him, neither in the present age nor in the next. [§]

Jesus denounces the Pharisees

³³ “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree rotten and its fruit rotten; for the tree is known by the fruit. ³⁴ Brood of vipers! †† How can you, being malignant, speak good things? ††† For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good man out of the good reservoir brings forth good things, and the malignant man out of the malignant reservoir brings forth malignant things. ³⁶ Furthermore, I say to you that for every useless word whatever that people may speak, they will give account of it in the Day of judgment. ³⁷ For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” ††

The sign of the prophet Jonah

³⁸ Then some of the scribes and Pharisees reacted saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.” ††³⁹ But in answer He said to them: “A malignant and adulterous generation seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the stomach of the sea monster, so will the Son of the Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ††⁴¹ Ninevite men will arise with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and really, a greater than Jonah is here. ⁴² The queen of the South will be raised with this generation at the judgment and she will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and really, a greater than Solomon is here. ††

An empty ‘house’ is bad

⁴³ “Now when an unclean spirit [demon] goes out from a man, it goes through arid places looking for rest, but finds none. ⁴⁴ Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from where I came.’ And coming it finds it unoccupied, swept and put in order. ⁴⁵ Then it goes and

§ Mark 3:30 makes clear that “the blasphemy against the Spirit” is to ascribe His working to Satan. †† At no time did the Lord make any effort to conciliate the Pharisees. They are ‘serpents’ because their father is a serpent (Revelation 12:10). ††† Jesus appears to be saying that a malignant person is incapable of speaking good. †† “Every useless word whatever”—do we really believe that? This may be why certain orders of monks took an oath of silence (but how can you be ‘justified’ by your words if you never say anything?). ††† Jesus had already performed hundreds of signs, and doubtless they had seen some of them. Their request was not honest. †† “In the heart of the earth”—here we seem to have instruction from the Lord on the location of Hades—it is inside the earth, somehow. Compare 1 Samuel 28:13 where Samuel (literally), returning from Hades/Sheol, comes up from inside the earth. ††† Jonah, and the sea monster, are just as historical as Solomon, the queen of Sheba, Nineveh—we have it on the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

takes along with itself seven different spirits, more malignant than itself, and going in it dwells there; and the last *state* of that man becomes worse than the first. Just so it will be for this malignant generation also." †

New relationships

⁴⁶ But then, while He was still speaking to the crowds, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. ⁴⁷ So someone said to Him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with you." ⁴⁸ But in answer He said to the one who told Him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹ And stretching out His hand toward His disciples He said: "*HERE* are my mother and my brothers! ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in the heavens, *HE* is my brother and sister and mother." ††

Parables of the Kingdom

13 On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. ² And large crowds were gathered together to Him, so He got into a boat to sit down; and the whole crowd stood on the shore.

Parable of the soils

³ Then He spoke many things to them in parables saying: "Listen, a sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some *seeds* fell alongside the road, and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵ Others fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; so they sprouted quickly because they had no depth of earth. ⁶ But when the sun came up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. ⁷ And others fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up and smothered them. ⁸ But others fell on the good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹ He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

The reason for parables

¹⁰ And the disciples approached and said to Him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" ¹¹ So in answer He said to them: "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but to them it has not been given. ¹² For whoever has, to him more will be given and he will have abundance;

† Jesus does not say why the demon left, but obviously a vacuum is dangerous. Jesus seems to be implying that the Pharisees are already demonized, but will become worse! Actually, in verse 34 He said they were malignant, poisonous snakes; to be malignant is to be aggressively evil, the term is regularly used of Satan. In fact, later on Jesus says they are sons of Satan. †† Notice again that the key is *DOING* the Father's will. ‡ From Mark 4:10 it appears that this occurred later, probably after verse 33. Mark has two parables that Matthew does not—Mark 4:21-29.

‡ but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ¹³ Therefore I speak to them in parables, that seeing they not see and hearing they not hear nor understand. ¹⁴ And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

'By hearing you (ye) will hear and *NOT* understand, and seeing you will see and *NOT* perceive.

¹⁵ Because the Ahearts of this people have grown dull,

and their *Bears* hard of hearing,
and their *Ceyes* they have closed;
lest they should see with their *Ceyes*
and hear with their *Bears*
and understand with their *Ahearts*,
and turn around; and I would heal them.' ‡‡

¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear; ¹⁷ for assuredly I say to you that many prophets and righteous ones desired to see what you see and did not see it, and to hear what you hear and did not hear it.

Parable of the soils explained

¹⁸ "Therefore hear the parable of the sower: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand, the malignant one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart—this is the seed sown alongside the road. ²⁰ But the seed sown on stony places—this is he who hears the word and directly receives it with joy, ²¹ but he has no root in himself and is short-lived; for when trial or persecution comes because of the word, directly he is offended. ²² But the seed sown among the thorns—this is he who hears the word, but the care of this age and the deceitfulness of riches choke out the word, and it becomes fruitless. ²³ Now the seed sown on the good ground—this is he who hears the word and understands, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." §†

‡† But he will have to give an accounting for it all. ‡‡ Spiritual growth is like going up an incline on a bicycle without brakes; if you stop pedaling you go backwards. We must keep learning and growing; if we stop, we start losing. ‡‡† This is in response to *THEIR* choice, as verses 14-15 make clear. But Jesus only started using parables after the Pharisees blasphemed the Holy Spirit—they formally rejected Jesus as Messiah. Notice that the declared purpose of the parables is that the people *NOT* understand. It follows that doctrine should never be based on a parable, unless Jesus interprets it—the interpretation may be used, but not the parable itself. ‡‡‡ A triple chiasmus—ABC,CBA. The Text is clear to the effect that if they turn around He will heal. § In sowing, the seed is scattered on top of the soil, not planted, and is therefore vulnerable—maybe that is why the great commission is to *DISCIPLE*. Observe that Jesus is teaching that the devil can invade a person's mind. §† This is typical of the 'prosperity gospel'. §†† Both the seed on stony places and among thorns sprouted—there was life. §‡ Not all saved persons serve the Lord at the same level of intensity; some are more committed, others less.

Wheat and tares

²⁴ He put another parable to them, saying: "The kingdom of the heavens is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while the people were sleeping his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went away. ²⁶ But when the stalk sprouted and produced fruit, then the tares also appeared. ^{†27} So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your field? How then does it have tares?' ²⁸ He said to them, 'An enemy did it.' The servants said to him, 'So do you want us to go and gather them up?' ²⁹ But he said: 'No, lest gathering up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them into bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."'"

Mustard seed

³¹ He put another parable to them, saying: "The kingdom of the heavens is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field; ³² which indeed is smaller than all the seeds, ^{††} but when it is grown it is greater than all the vegetables and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and rest [‡] in its branches."

Yeast

³³ He spoke another parable to them: "The kingdom of the heavens is like yeast, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until it was all leavened."

³⁴ All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and without a parable He did not speak to them, ³⁵ so that what was spoken through the prophet should be fulfilled, namely:

"I will open my mouth in parables;
I will utter things kept secret
from the foundation of the world." ^{‡†}

"Wheat and tares" explained

³⁶ Then Jesus dismissed the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples approached Him saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." ³⁷ So

[†] It is only when the 'fruit' appears that you can tell the difference. "By their fruits you shall know them." ^{††} That is, seeds normally planted in gardens. [‡] The verb I have rendered 'to rest' is a compound form. The noun root refers to a temporary shelter, like a tent or a hut. The verbal form means to make use of such a shelter. Here the preposition *kata* is prefixed to the verb, emphasizing, as I suppose, the temporariness. In Mark 4:32 the Text says that the birds can use the SHADE, not the branches. But shade moves with the sun, and with the wind—how can you build a nest in something that keeps moving around (the Text actually says 'under its shade')?

^{‡†} The quote is from Psalm 72:2—Matthew calls Asaph a prophet.

He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of the Man. ³⁸ The field is the world; as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom, while the tares are the sons of the malignant one. ³⁹ The enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ Therefore just as the tares are gathered and burned with fire, so it will be at the end of this age. ⁴¹ The Son of the Man will send out His angels, ^{‡†} and they will collect out of His kingdom everything that is offensive, and those who perpetrate lawlessness; ^{‡‡‡42} and they will throw them into the furnace of fire. *THERE* there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Treasure and pearl

⁴⁴ "Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure hidden in a field, ^{‡‡‡} which a man found and hid, and in his joy he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like a man, a merchant, seeking beautiful pearls, ⁴⁶ who upon finding one very valuable pearl went and sold everything he had and bought it. [§]

A seine

⁴⁷ "Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like a seine that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind, ⁴⁸ which, when it was full, they pulled upon the shore; and sitting down they collected the good into vessels, but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth and will separate the malignant out from among the righteous, ⁵⁰ and they will throw them into the furnace of fire. *THERE* there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

⁵¹ Jesus says to them, "Did you understand all these things?" They say to Him, "Yes, Lord." ^{§†52} So He said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been disciplined into the kingdom of the heavens is like a man, a householder, who brings out of his reservoir things new and old." ^{§††}

^{‡‡} The angels are going to be busy. ^{‡‡†} I take it that the "kingdom" here is physical (not merely 'spiritual') and includes the whole planet, because it contains "offensive" things and "lawless" people. ^{‡‡‡} Although 70% of the Greek manuscripts have 'the' field, the best line of transmission has 'a' field, which is correct. [§] Both of these parables are to the same point, and in Philippians 3:7-9 Paul illustrates that point. ^{§†} Perhaps 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit 'Lord', to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. ^{§††} A 'scribe' was instructed in the Law and the prevailing interpretations of it (the 'old'), but if he had also been disciplined into the Kingdom, his thinking would be reoriented about many things (the 'new').

A visit to Natsareth

⁵³ Now it happened, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there. ⁵⁴ And coming into His hometown He began to teach them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said: "Where did this man get this wisdom, and the mighty works? ⁵⁵ Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers James and Joses and Simon and Jude? ⁵⁶ And his sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" ⁵⁷ So they were offended at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own house." ⁵⁸ And He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

The death of John the Baptizer

14 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus ² and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptizer; he has been raised from the dead, and therefore the powers are at work in him." ³ For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. ⁴ For John would say to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." ⁵ And although he wanted to kill him, he feared the crowd, because they counted him as a prophet. ⁶ But while Herod's birthday was being celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and she pleased Herod. ⁷ So he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. ⁸ So she, having been prompted by her mother, she says, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptizer!" ⁹ And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and those who were reclining *at the table* with him, he commanded it to be given. ¹⁰ So he sent and had John beheaded in prison. ¹¹ And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. ¹² Then his disciples came forward and took the body and buried it, ¹³ and they went and told Jesus.

Food for 15,000

¹³ Upon hearing it, Jesus departed from there by boat to a deserted place privately. ¹⁴ But when the crowds heard it, they followed Him on foot from the towns. ¹⁵ So when Jesus disembarked He saw a large crowd,

† Here we have the names of Jesus' four half-brothers, and the plural 'sisters' means there were at least two of them (the use of 'all' probably indicates more than two). Joseph and Mary had a normal family. †† The impression one gets is that John took Herod to task several times—a coward he was not. ‡ What would seeing that head do to your appetite? ‡† The body was buried without the head—one wonders what became of it. ‡‡ From Mark we learn that Jesus and the disciples were under heavy pressure from the crowds—no time even to eat. So when He hears of John's death, and under such ignominious circumstances, Jesus wants to get away so He can grieve and assimilate the news.

and He had compassion on them and healed their sick. ‡‡

¹⁵ Now with evening coming on His disciples approached Him saying: "The place is uninhabited and the hour is already late. Dismiss the crowds, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." ¹⁶ But Jesus said to them: "They do not need to go away. You give them to eat." ‡‡¹⁷ But they say to Him, "We have nothing here except five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸ So He said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹ Then He commanded the crowds to recline on the grass. And taking the five loaves and two fish and looking up to heaven, He blessed; and breaking the loaves He gave to the disciples, and the disciples to the crowds. ²⁰ So they all ate and were filled; and they took up the fragments that remained, twelve baskets full. ²¹ Now those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children. §

Peter walks on water

²² Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowds. ²³ And having dismissed the crowds He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. So when night came He was alone there. ²⁴ But the boat was already in the middle of the sea, ²⁵ being harassed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. ²⁶ So in the fourth watch of the night ²⁷ Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. ²⁸ And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they became agitated saying, "It's a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. ²⁹ But immediately Jesus spoke to them saying: "Courage! It is I; don't be afraid!" ³⁰ So in answer Peter said, "Lord, since it's you, command me to come to you on the water." ³¹ So He said to him, "Come!" And stepping down from the boat Peter walked on the water to go to Jesus. ³² But seeing the strong wind he became afraid, and beginning to sink ³³ he cried out saying, "Lord, save me!" ³⁴ And immediately Jesus reached out His hand and caught him and says to him: "You little-faith! Why did

‡‡† In Mark it is even clearer that the people ran along the shore and got to the destination first, before the boat (please see the note at Mark 6:34). Naturally the faster runners were there first, but others kept arriving so that in the end there were thousands of people. In the town there was not space for everybody to get to Jesus, but out in the open—so when the news got around people came from all over. ‡‡‡ Really now, with what? Although Jesus had to take the initiative, the disciples did participate in the miracle. § Since any large crowd is likely to have more women and children than men, there were probably at least 15,000 people there. "They were filled"—how much food does it take to 'fill' 15,000 hungry people? Notice the care not to waste anything—the fragments were collected. §† Finally, Jesus manages to be alone, to think and pray. §†† Perhaps 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, read "many furlongs away from the land" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §‡ The fourth watch, using Roman time, was from 3 to 6 a.m.—the disciples had had a rough night! §‡† Peter knew how to swim (John 21:7), but he was walking on top of the water (a totally new experience) and then he was wading; and the storm was scary.

you doubt?" ³² And when they got into the boat the wind ceased. ³³ Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him saying, "Truly you are the Son of God!" ††

At Genesaret

³⁴ When they had crossed over they came to the land of Genesaret. ³⁵ And when the men of that place recognized Him they sent *messengers* into all that surrounding region and they brought to Him all who were sick. ³⁶ And they would beg Him that if only they might at least touch the hem of His garment; and as many as touched were completely healed.

Jesus antagonizes the Pharisees—29 AD

15 Then the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem approached Jesus saying: ² "Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands whenever they eat bread." ³ So in answer He said to them: "Why do you even transgress the commandment of God through your tradition?

⁴ For God commanded saying, †† 'Honor your father and your mother,' and 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' ⁵ But you say: 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever you might be profited by me is a gift to God"—⁶ then he must not honor his father or mother.' †† Thus you have nullified the commandment of God through your tradition.

⁷ Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you saying:

⁸ 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, ††† but their heart is far away from Me.

⁹ But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'" †††

That which defiles

¹⁰ Then summoning the crowd He said to them: "Hear and understand. ¹¹ Not what goes into the mouth defiles the man, but what comes out of the

† Why did the wind cease? Was it a supernatural wind? If so, who caused it? †† They took a lot of convincing, but are we not the same way? † The best line of transmission, along with the Targum, spells the place with one 'n'; 70% of the Greek manuscripts follow the LXX in using two. †† Instead of "commanded saying", perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, have 'said' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). †† Perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "or mother" (as in NIV, LB, TEV, etc.). NASB informs us that "many" manuscripts omit "or his mother"—by 'many' they mean three, against some 1700! That is a dishonest use of language. ††† Perhaps 2% of the Greek manuscripts omit "draw near to me with their mouth and" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ††† See Isaiah 29:13. Are there no such 'doctrines' in our churches? The Lord Jesus declares that such worship is in vain

mouth—this defiles the man." ¹² Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do you know that upon hearing this saying the Pharisees were offended?" ¹³ But in answer He said: "Every plant that my heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted. ¹⁴ Leave them alone. ⁵ They are blind guides of the blind; and if the blind guides the blind, both will fall into a ditch."

¹⁵ Then Peter answered and said to Him, "Explain this parable to us." ¹⁶ So Jesus said: "Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷ Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is expelled into the sewer? ¹⁸ But the things coming out of the mouth *actually* come from the heart; *THOSE* are the things that defile the man. ¹⁹ Because out of the heart proceed malignant thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, †† thefts, false witness, blasphemies. ²⁰ These are the things that defile the man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."

A crumb for a little dog

²¹ Going out from there Jesus withdrew into the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²² And then, a Canaanite woman coming from those parts cried out to Him saying: "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demonized." ²³ But He answered her not a word. ††† So His disciples came and urged Him saying, "Send her away, because she is crying out after us." ²⁴ But in answer He said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." †††²⁵ So she came and worshiped Him saying, "Lord, help me!" †††²⁶ But in answer He said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." ²⁷ So she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." †††²⁸ Then Jesus answered and said to her: "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Food for 4,000 men

²⁹ Moving on from there, Jesus went alongside the Sea of Galilee, and going up on the mountain He sat down there. ³⁰ And large crowds approached Him, hav-

§ Jesus makes no effort to conciliate or to convert the Pharisees. For all that, some did convert. †† This is one of a number of places where 'adultery' and 'fornication' both occur in a list of sins—it is clear that they are distinct in meaning, and so 'fornication' does not include 'adultery'; and so to render 'fornication' as 'sexual sin/immorality' is misleading. ††† "Son of David"—as a Canaanite she appealed to the Jewish Messiah, upon whom she had no claim. But how did she know that? I suspect there is more to this story than meets the eye. †† Although His ultimate mission included the whole world (see the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20), His earthly ministry was directed to the "house of Israel". ††† Here she drops the appeal to the Messiah—evidently the Lord spoke loudly enough for her to hear. †† We may feel that Jesus was harsh with her, but in this way He put into bold relief her faith and humility—and she got her crumb!

ing with them lame, blind, mute, maimed and many others, and they placed them at Jesus' feet, and He healed them. ³¹ So the crowds marveled—seeing mutes speaking, maimed made whole, lame walking, and blind seeing—and they kept glorifying the God of Israel.

³² Then Jesus summoned His disciples and said: "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have already remained with me three days, and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way." ³³ So His disciples say to Him, "Where could we get, in an uninhabited place, enough bread so as to satisfy such a great crowd?"

³⁴ Jesus says to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few small fish." ³⁵ So He commanded the crowds to recline on the ground.

³⁶ And taking the seven loaves and the fish, He gave thanks, broke and gave to His disciples, and the disciples to the crowd. ³⁷ So they all ate and were filled; and they took up seven hampers full of the fragments that remained. ³⁸ Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. ³⁹ And having dismissed the crowds He got into the boat and went to the region of Magdala. ‡

The sign of the prophet Jonah

16 The Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. ¹ But in answer He said to them: "When it is evening you say, 'Fair weather, for the sky is red'; ² and in the morning, 'Today will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but cannot *discern* the signs of the times. ³ A malignant and adulterous generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." And leaving them behind He went away. ††

"Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees"

⁴ Upon arriving at the other side His disciples had forgotten to take bread. ⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." ⁶ So they reasoned among themselves saying, "It's because we didn't bring any bread." ⁷ But Jesus, being aware, said to them: "You little-faiths! Why

† Where did the "hampers" come from? Probably from fishing boats that stopped by. †† Again, the crowd was much larger than just the 4,000 men; probably at least 10,000 people. ‡ Magdala was Mary Magdalene's hometown; perhaps this was when Jesus delivered her from the demons (Mark 16:9). Less than 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read "Magadan" instead of Magdala (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The parallel passage in Mark 8:10 has 'the region of Dalmanutha'—I assume that Magdala was in that region. †† Pharisees and Sadducees were theological enemies, but they join forces against Jesus. †† He left by boat—He did not want to waste time with them. Jesus calls them "malignant"—they are aggressively evil.

are you reasoning among yourselves because you didn't bring any bread? ⁸ Do you not yet perceive nor remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? ⁹ Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many hampers you took up? ¹⁰ How come you don't perceive that it wasn't about bread that I told you to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees?" ¹¹ Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the *DOCTRINE* of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Jesus openly declares His death and ministers on that basis

¹² When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi He questioned His disciples saying, "Who do people say that I, the Son of the Man, am?" ¹³ So they said, "Some say John the Baptizer, others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁴ He says to them, "But you, who do *YOU* say that I am?" ¹⁵ So in answer Simon Peter said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!" ¹⁶ And in answer Jesus said to him: "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in the heavens. ¹⁷ And I further say to you that you are a stone, but on this bedrock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not withstand her. ¹⁸ And I will give you (sg) the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in the heavens." ¹⁹ Then He ordered His disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Messiah. ²⁰ From then on Jesus began to show to His disciples that He had to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised on the third day. ²¹ So taking Him aside Peter began to rebuke Him saying: "Mercy to you, Lord! This shall *NOT* happen to you!" ²² But turning He said to Peter: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, because you are not mindful of God's values, but of men's values." †††

††† Instead of "I, the Son of the Man, am", perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have 'the Son of the Man is' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The change is significant. ††† There is a play on words here, *πετρος* VS *πετρα*—the bedrock was obviously not Peter. The bedrock presumably has to do with the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. 'Gates' do not attack, but are the last line of defense—it is the Church that is attacking Hades. Hades is not hell. Hell is the Lake of fire, the second death; Hades is the halfway 'house' where departed spirits await the judgment. § Please see the note at Matthew 18:18. §† As is clear from Luke 9:20-22, verses 21-23 here form part of the same conversation. At this point Jesus changes the game plan—He declares that He is going to die and orders the disciples to stop presenting Him as the Messiah. Some 65% of the Greek manuscripts have 'Jesus, the Messiah' (as in AV and NKJV); I follow the best line of transmission. §†† Satan put those words in Peter's mouth, but he

How to save your life

²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples: "If anyone desires to come after me, let him really deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will waste it, but whoever 'wastes' his life on my account will find it. ^{†26} For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world but forfeits his life? Or what will a man give in exchange for his life? ²⁷ For the Son of the Man will certainly come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will recompense each according to his performance. ^{††28} Assuredly I say to you, there are some standing here who will *NOT* taste death until they see the Son of the Man coming in His kingdom." ‡

Jesus meets with Moses and Elijah

17 Now after six days Jesus takes Peter, James and his brother John and leads them up on a high mountain, in private. ² And He was transfigured before them and his face shone like the sun, while His clothes became as white as the light. ³ When wow, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with Him. ⁴ Then Peter reacted and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, let us †† make three booths: one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." ^{‡‡5} While he was still speaking a brilliant cloud overshadowed them, and then, a **Voice**^{‡‡‡} came out of the cloud saying: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am *always* well pleased. Hear *HIM!*" ⁶ As the disciples heard it they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. ⁷ Then Jesus came and touched them and said, "Get up, don't be afraid." ⁸ So lifting up their eyes they saw no one but Jesus only.

agreed with them. Note that within 3-5 minutes Peter spoke twice, under inspiration; the first time inspired by God (verses 16-17) and the second by Satan (verses 22-23). It is God the Son who tells us what really happened. Since Sovereign Jesus said it was Satan, it was Satan, and if he could do it to Peter, he can do it to us. The almost total ignorance on the subject of biblical spiritual warfare that prevails in North America is having serious consequences. † What is in view here is the POTENTIAL your life represents. †† We will be judged on the basis of what we did with our potential. ‡ Presumably this was fulfilled at the transfiguration—a manifestation, in miniature, of the Kingdom (Jesus the King, Moses and Elijah representing glorified saints [who will participate in the administration] and the three disciples representing the normal inhabitants of the earth at that time). ‡† Instead of "let us", perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have "I will" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡‡ So how did Peter know who they were? Photography had not yet been invented. Luke 9:37 makes clear that they spent the night on the mountain. Evidently what has been recorded here (and in Mark and Luke) gives but a thumbnail sketch of all that took place. ‡‡† Peter never forgot that Voice

Elijah and 'Elijah'

⁹ As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them saying, "Tell no one the vision until the Son of the Man is risen from the dead." ¹⁰ So His disciples questioned Him saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" ¹¹ In answer Jesus said to them: "Elijah is indeed coming first, and he will restore all things. ¹² But I say to you that 'Elijah' has come already, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. Thus also the Son of the Man is about to suffer at their hands." ¹³ Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptizer. ‡‡

A tough kind of demon

¹⁴ As they came to the crowd a man approached Him and kneeling to Him said: ¹⁵ "Lord, have mercy on my son, because he is moonstruck and suffers badly! For he often falls into the fire and often into the water. ¹⁶ So I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him." ¹⁷ Then in answer Jesus said: "O faithless and perverse generation, [§] how long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him here to me." ¹⁸ And Jesus rebuked the demon and it came out of him, and the boy was healed from that very hour.

¹⁹ Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why were we not able to cast it out?" ²⁰ So Jesus said to them: "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly I say to you, if you have faith like a mustard seed *has*, you (ye) will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. ^{§†21} However, this class does not go out except by prayer and fasting." ^{§††}

‡‡‡ At this point John is already dead, but in verse 11 the Lord declares that Elijah is still going to come—John performed the function for Christ's first advent that Elijah (literally) will perform for the second advent. § Why "perverse"? To reject the truth and the evidence is to be perverse. This word was presumably directed to the disciples, who should have known better by now. So how about us—are we living on the basis of the truth and the evidence? Really? §† What kind of 'faith' might a mustard seed have? Albeit so small, it reacts without question to the climactic circumstances, and grows to remarkable proportions. If we reacted similarly, without question, to the Holy Spirit's promptings, our spiritual 'climactic circumstances', we should indeed move mountains, literally. Or to put it another way, a seed has the faith to die, like the Lord said in John 12:24: "unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone". In 1 Corinthians 15:31 Paul said that he died daily. How so? Obviously he did not die physically; he died to himself, his own ideas and ambitions, so as to embrace God's will. Dying to self is a prerequisite for moving mountains. §†† Less than 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit this whole verse (as in NIV, [NASB], LB, [TEV], etc.). I take it that this was true up until the Lord's victory on the cross and the resurrection. Now we are in Christ at the Father's right hand, far above ALL principality and power, etc., which includes Satan and all classes below him in rank—Ephesians 1:19-21, 2:6. (There is nothing wrong with Christ's

²² While they were staying [†] in Galilee Jesus said to them, “The Son of the Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, ²³ and they will kill Him, and on the third day He will be raised.” And they were seriously grieved.

Money from a fish

²⁴ When they entered Capernaum those who collected the temple tax approached Peter and said, “Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax?” ²⁵ He says, “Yes.” So when they entered the house Jesus anticipated him saying: “Simon, what do you think? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or poll tax, from their sons or from strangers?” ²⁶ Peter says to Him, “From the strangers.” Jesus said to him: “Well then, the sons are free. ²⁷ But, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And opening its mouth you will find a ‘stater’ [a coin]; take that and give it to them for me and you.” ^{††}

How to be ‘big’ in the Kingdom

18 At that time the disciples approached Jesus saying, “Who then is greater in the kingdom of the heavens?” ² So Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, ³ and said: “Assuredly I say to you, unless you change and become like little children, you will *NOT* enter the kingdom of the heavens. ⁴ Therefore whoever will humble himself like this little child, *HE* is the greater in the kingdom of the heavens.

About offenses

⁵ “Whoever receives one little child like this in my name, receives me; ⁶ but whoever should cause one of these little ones who believe into me [‡] to fall, it would be better for him if a large millstone were hung on his neck and he were drowned in the depth of the sea! ^{‡‡7} Woe to the world because of offenses! Now it is necessary that offenses come, but woe to that person by whom the offense comes!

victory and authority, but our spiritual condition does not always permit us to make full use of that victory.) [†] Instead of “staying”, perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have ‘gathering together’ (as in NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.). ^{††} The stater

[‡] ‘Into’ not ‘in’. The Lord Jesus always said “believe INTO [Greek εἰς] Me”, never “believe IN [Greek ἐν] Me”. (In John 3:15 a very few Greek manuscripts of inferior quality have “in”, against 99.5% that have “into”.) People believe in Santa Claus, the Easter bunny, the goodness of man, or whatever, but it does not change their lives. Similarly there are many who say they believe in Jesus, but it makes no difference in their lives. You have to believe into

^{‡†} It is preferable to suffer an ignominious physical death than to destroy the faith of a child who believes into Jesus. What is worse than an ignominious physical death? Spiritual death—in verses 8-9 Jesus refers overtly to hell fire. If you send a child to hell, you go too! What about all the teachers who have dedicated themselves to destroying the faith of their students?

⁸ “If your hand or your foot is causing you to fall, cut them off and throw them away! It is better for you to enter into the life lame or maimed than to be thrown into the everlasting fire, having two hands or two feet. ⁹ And if your eye is causing you to fall, tear it out and throw it away! It is better for you to enter into the life one eyed than to be thrown into the fiery Hell, having two eyes. ^{‡‡}

God loves children

¹⁰ “See to it that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father, who is in the heavens. ^{‡‡11} For the Son of the Man came to save the lost. ^{‡‡12} What do you think? If some man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine in the mountains [§] to go and search for the stray? ¹³ And if he happens to find it, assuredly I say to you, he rejoices more over it than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. ¹⁴ Likewise it is not a desire, in the view of your Father in heaven, that one of these little ones should be wasted. ^{§†}

Handling a recalcitrant brother

¹⁵ “Now if your brother sins against you, go, confront him between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have won your brother. ¹⁶ But should he not hear, take along with you one or two more, so that every word may be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ And should he refuse to hear them, tell it to the congregation. But should he refuse to hear even the congregation, let him be to you just like the heathen and the tax collector. ^{§††}

Agreeing in prayer

¹⁸ “Assuredly I say to you, whatever (pl.) you (pl.) may bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you may loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven. ^{§†19} Assuredly again, I say to you that

^{‡‡} I believe this is literal, but largely hypothetical—by the time someone realizes what is happening, it is usually too late. Maybe that is why we are supposed to exhort one another daily (Hebrews 3:13). ^{‡‡†} “These little ones” refers to the literal children who were in the room. In verse 2 Jesus called one over, so it was obviously in the room, but the playmates would naturally stop to see what was going to happen, so there were several in the room. This verse suggests the existence of guardian angels. ^{‡‡‡} Just 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit verse 11 (as in NIV, [NASB], LB, [TEV], etc.). [§] “In the mountains”—note that the 99 were not left in a safe fold somewhere; they were left unprotected. The shepherd takes a calculated risk. ^{§†} The Lord’s statement here is round about, not direct—I tried to reflect that ‘round-aboutness’. ^{§††} In other words, such a person is to be excommunicated, ostracized. ^{§‡} The tense of the Greek verb phrase here is a periphrastic future perfect, passive voice (so also in 16:18). Thus, “will have been bound/loosed” not “will be bound/loosed”. We are not telling God what to do; we are to apply down here that which He has already done in heaven. What had been just for Peter is now given to all the

if two of you should agree on earth about any subject whatever that they may ask, it will be done for them by my Father who is in heaven. ¹²⁰ Because where there are two or three gathered together into my name, there I am in their midst!" ^{††}

About forgiveness

²¹ Then Peter approached Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him; up to seven times?" ²² Jesus says to him: "Not, I tell you, up to seven, but up to seventy-seven times! [‡]

²³ "Therefore the kingdom of the heavens is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ And as he began to settle up, one debtor of ten thousand talents was brought to him. ²⁵ But since he had nothing with which to repay, his lord commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and everything he had, so as to be repaid. ²⁶ So then the servant fell down and did obeisance to him saying, 'Lord, be patient with me and I will repay you all.' ²⁷ So the lord of that servant, having compassion, released him and forgave him the loan.

²⁸ "But when that servant went out he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and grabbing him he started choking him saying, 'Pay me back what you owe!' ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and kept begging him saying, 'Be patient with me and I will pay you back.' ^{‡‡30} But he would not; instead he went and threw him into prison until he should pay back what was owed. ³¹ But when his fellow servants saw what had happened they were really grieved, and they went and reported to their lord everything that had happened. ³² Then summoning him the lord says to him: 'Malignant servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. ³³ Were you also not obligated ^{‡‡} to have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ So in anger the lord handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed to him.

³⁵ "My heavenly Father will handle you just like that, if each of you does not forgive his brother his trespasses, from the heart." ^{‡‡‡}

disciples. For more discussion, please see the Appendix: Do we command God? Matthew 18:18. † If you are like I am, you have probably tried this, and it didn't work! Why not? I suppose because verses 19 and 20 must be taken together. The 'because' that begins verse 20 gives the clue—if Jesus is part of the group that is asking, then His will limits the asking. †† The Greek text has "INTO my name", not "in"—commitment is involved. ‡ Why 77 and not 490? Well, actually the Greek phrase is ambiguous—it could be either. In either case Jesus is saying that forgiveness should not be limited by number. ‡‡ The picture is that he kept begging all the way to the prison. ‡‡ Notice the verb 'obligated'; verse 35 makes clear that this is the way God looks at it—His having forgiven me OBLIGATES me to forgive others. Observe that the king reversed his pardon—what might the implications of THAT be? "My heavenly Father will handle you just like that!" ‡‡‡ This is a very strong statement! Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "his

Jesus ministers in Perea—29/30 AD

19 Now it happened, when Jesus had finished these words, that He departed from Galilee and went to the borders of Judea beyond the Jordan. ² And large crowds followed Him and there He healed them.

Jesus denies divorce

³ The Pharisees also came to Him to test Him, saying to Him, "Is it permissible for a man to divorce his wife for *just* any cause?" ⁴ So in answer He said to them: "Have you never read that the Creator at the beginning made them a male and a female? ⁵ And He said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall be turned into one flesh.' ^{‡‡‡6} So then, they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God joined together let not man separate!" ⁷ They say to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce and to dismiss her?" ⁸ He says to them: "Because of your hard-heartedness Moses *PERMITTED* you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it has not been so. ⁹ And *I* say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except for fornication, and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries a divorcee commits adultery." ^{§10} His disciples say to Him, "If that's the situation of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry!" ^{§‡‡11} So He said to them: "Not all *can* assimilate this word, but those to whom it has been given. ^{§‡‡12} For there are eunuchs who were born that way, from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were castrated by men; and there are eunuchs who castrated themselves for the sake of the kingdom of the heavens. He who is able to assimilate it, let him assimilate." ^{§‡‡}

trespasses" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). Note the 'fellow servant' and 'his brother'—presumably declared enemies of Sovereign Jesus are not in view. ‡‡‡ "Two"—not three, four, five, etc. "The two" refers to one man and one woman—not two men, a man and an animal, a woman and a demon, or whatever. The 'one flesh' is not just poetic language, it refers to a chemical reality. § They distorted the Text: Moses did not command divorce. The Lord corrects their distortion. §† "Fornication" is distinct from "adultery" and does not include it. Here, it is presumably a reference to premarital sex, where a groom discovers that his bride is no longer a virgin (like the situation that Joseph faced in Matthew 1:18-19). Perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit the last clause of verse 9 (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §‡‡ Why the strong reaction from the disciples? Obviously Jesus did NOT give the expected answer, namely that infidelity justifies divorce. §‡ The demonstrative pronoun 'this' is probably cataphoric, referring forward to the content of verse 12. §‡‡ What in the world do 'eunuchs' have to do with divorce and remarriage? Well, do eunuchs have sexual relations? A eunuch castrated by others was a victim of the actions of others. We also may be victimized by others, and be obliged to take the consequences.

Jesus blesses children

¹³ Then little children were brought to Him, that He might lay hands on them and pray; but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ So Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of the heavens." ¹⁵ And after laying hands on them He moved on from there.

It is difficult for a rich person to enter the Kingdom

¹⁶ And then, a certain one came and said to Him, "Good teacher, what good thing must I do so that I may have eternal life?" ¹⁷ But He said to him: "Why do you call me good? No one is *GOOD* except One, God. † But if you want to enter into the life, keep the commandments." ¹⁸ He says to Him, "Which ones?" †† So Jesus said: "'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not give false witness,' ¹⁹ 'Honor your father and your mother,' *AND* 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" ²⁰ The young man says to Him: "I have kept all these things since my youth. ‡ What do I still lack?" ²¹ Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow me." ²² So upon hearing that word the young man went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. ††

²³ Then Jesus said to His disciples: "Assuredly I say to you that *only* with difficulty will a rich person enter into the kingdom of the heavens. ²⁴ And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter into the kingdom of God." ††† Upon hearing it His disciples were really flabbergasted saying, "Who then can be saved?" ²⁶ So looking at them Jesus said, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

† Jesus is not denying that He is good. He is challenging the man's opinion about Himself. The man was not recognizing Jesus to be God—if he had, Jesus would not have objected. Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "Good" before "teacher" in verse 16 and have Jesus saying, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is One who is good" here in verse 17 (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The minority reading makes Matthew contradict Mark 10:18 and Luke 18:9; it probably originated in Egypt, that was dominated by Gnosticism. †† Did he think that some were not necessary? ‡ "Since my youth" is omitted by 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). †† Jesus emphasized the commandment about loving one's neighbor because that was precisely the one that the young man was not keeping. He went away sorrowful because Jesus made him see that he was not keeping it, and worse yet, was not prepared to keep it. †† This seemingly difficult statement has given rise to several attempts to avoid the literal meaning. However, since in verse 26 Jesus says it is "impossible" we may stay with the literal meaning. Jesus had already said that one cannot serve God and money, so someone who "trusts in riches" (Mark 10:24, as in 99.5% of the Greek manuscripts) simply cannot be saved (unless he abandons that trust).

It pays to serve Jesus

²⁷ Then Peter answered and said to Him: "See, we have left all and followed you. So what will *WE* have?" ²⁸ So Jesus said to them: "Assuredly I say to you that in the Regeneration, ††† when the Son of the Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. †††²⁹ And, everyone who left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife § or children or fields for my name's sake will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit life eternal. ³⁰ But many 'first' will be last, and 'last' first.

The desperate landowner

20 "For the kingdom of the heavens is like a certain landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ² And agreeing with the workers for a denarius a day he sent them into his vineyard. ³ And going out about the third hour [9 a.m.] he saw others standing idle in the marketplace. ⁴ And he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard and I will give you whatever is right.' So off they went. ⁵ He went out again about the sixth hour, and the ninth, and did the same. ⁶ Now about the *ELEVENTH* hour he went out and found others standing idle, and he says to them, 'Why have you stood here idle all day?' ^{§†7} They say to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He says to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and you will receive whatever is right.' ^{§††8} So when evening had come the owner of the vineyard says to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wage, beginning at the last to the first.' ^{§†9} The eleventh hour ones came and

††† I take it that Jesus is referring to His millennial reign, the Messianic Kingdom, when the earth will be 'regenerated', being restored to conditions reminiscent of Eden. For instance, if He does not regenerate the magnetic field that surrounds it pretty soon, life on this planet will become less and less viable. ††† I wonder who will occupy the Iscariot's throne? I see no reason to doubt that the Lord is being literal here. § Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit "or wife" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.)—the idea of having 100 wives was no doubt objectionable. Actually, the 'hundredfold' should presumably not be taken in a strictly literal sense. I take it that the Lord is saying that we will be abundantly recompensed, if not down here, certainly in heaven. In my own experience, in the absence of my real mother, whenever I needed one God provided one. If you only have one brother, that is all you can leave, obviously, so the plural nouns are also contingent on the facts in the case. 'Eternal' life is a quality of life, and it begins down here. §† How did he know they had been there all day? He had seen them, and had himself refused to hire them until the end. As his desperation level increased, he became less and less choosy about the quality of the workers [I take it that for some reason the grapes had to be collected *THAT* day; any that were left until later would be lost]. As the Church is in its eleventh hour, or later, it seems to me that we see God doing just like the landowner—He is using some rather 'unusual' workers. §†† Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit the last clause (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §† Presumably the usual procedure would be to pay the first ones first, so they could head for home; by inverting

each received a denarius. ¹⁰ So when the first ones came they supposed that they would receive more; yet each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ When they received it they began grumbling against the landowner ¹² saying, 'These last worked *only* one hour, and you made them equal to us who bore the burden and the heat of the day!' ¹³ But in answer he said to one of them: 'Friend, I am not wronging you. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?' ¹⁴ Take what is yours and go. I wish to give to this last one just as to you. ¹⁵ Or is it not permissible for me to do what I want with what is mine? Is your eye evil because I am good?' ¹⁶ Just so the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few are chosen." †

Jesus alerts the disciples, again

¹⁷ As Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem He took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them privately: ¹⁸ "Listen! We are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of the Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, ¹⁹ and they will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock, to scourge and to crucify. And on the third day He will rise!"

Selfish ambition rebuked

²⁰ Then the mother of Zebedee's sons approached Him, with her sons, and kneeling down she asked something from Him. ²¹ So He said to her, "What do you wish?" She says to Him, "State that these my two sons may sit one on Your right and one on Your left in Your kingdom." ²² But in answer Jesus said: "You (pl.) do not know what you are asking. † Are you able to drink the cup which I am about to drink, or to be baptized with the baptism that I am being baptized with?" ‡ They say to Him, "We are able." ²³ And He says to them: "You will indeed drink my cup, and you will be baptized with the baptism that I am being baptized with, but to sit on my right and on my left is not mine to give; rather it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." ††

²⁴ Now when the ten heard it they were indignant at the two brothers. ††²⁵ But summoning them Jesus said: "You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over

the order the owner provoked the confrontation. What about our own notions of 'fairness'? People who trust in Christ at the end of a misspent life get to go to Heaven, just like those who have served God all their lives. Of course there is the matter of rewards, but they scarcely compare with the fact of spending eternity in Heaven, rather than Hell. † Just 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit the last sentence (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). †† Jesus sees that the sons had put their mother up to it and answers them, not her. ‡ Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "or be baptized with the baptism that I am being baptized with" and also the corresponding clause in verse 23 (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). †† We may well be surprised at the Father's choices. †† Why were they indignant, unless they had similar ideas?

them, and the great exercise authority over them; ²⁶ but it must not be so among you. Rather, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave; ²⁸ just like the Son of the Man—He did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

Two blind men †††

²⁹ Now as they went on from Jericho a large crowd followed Him. ³⁰ And then, two blind men sitting alongside the road and hearing, "Jesus is passing by!" cried out saying, "Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!" ³¹ So the crowd threatened them to be quiet, but they cried out all the more saying, "Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!!" ³² Jesus stopped, called them and said, "What do you want me to do for you?" †††³³ They say to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened!" ³⁴ So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes, and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

The last week

The triumphal entry—Sunday, 03/31/30AD

21 Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, opposite the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them: "Go into the village opposite you and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose *her* and bring *them* to me. ³ And if anyone says anything to you, *just* say, 'The Lord needs them,' and immediately he will send them." ⁴ Now all this happened so that what was spoken through the prophet should be fulfilled, namely:

⁵ "Say to the daughter of Zion,
'Look, your King is coming to you,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
in fact, a young donkey,
foal of a beast of burden.'" §

⁶ So going and doing just as Jesus had commanded them, ⁷ the disciples brought the *female* donkey and the young donkey. And they placed their clothes on them and He sat down on them [the clothes]. ^{§†8} And

††† *Comparing this account with the parallels in Mark and Luke, there appear to be several discrepancies. For a detailed discussion, please see the Appendix: Entering or leaving Jericho? ††† The question may seem unnecessary, but Jesus obliged them to state plainly what they wanted. § The quote is from Zechariah 9:9. Unfortunately the KJV (corrected by the NKJV) mistranslates both the Hebrew and the Greek, making it appear that Jesus rode both animals, which was not the case; He rode only the colt. For a more complete discussion, please see the Appendix: How many animals? §† It must have been a curious sight—no one had ever seen anything like it. Mark 11:2 and Luke 19:30 make clear that no one had ever ridden the colt. It was so young it was still staying close to 'mother', so if she was tied he was too. Jesus was going to expose the colt to a fright-*

the very large crowd spread their clothes on the road, while others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them on the road.⁹ Then the crowds who went in front and those who followed kept crying out, saying:

“Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the *LORD!* †
Hosanna in the highest *heaven!*”

¹⁰ So when He came into Jerusalem the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?” ††¹¹ And the crowds kept saying, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Natsareth of Galilee.”

The second cleansing of the temple ‡

¹² Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold the doves.¹³ And He says to them, “It is written, ‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’ but you have made it ‘a cave of bandits.’”

††¹⁴ And the lame and the blind came to Him in the temple, and He healed them.

¹⁵ But seeing the wonders that He did, and the children calling out in the temple and saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” the chief priests and the scribes became indignant¹⁶ and said to Him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” So Jesus says to them: “Yes. Have you never read that

‘Out of the mouth of babies and nursing infants

You have prepared praise *for Yourself?*” ‡

¹⁷ Leaving them behind He went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.

“If you have faith”—Monday, 04/01/30 AD

¹⁸ Now in the early morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry.¹⁹ And seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He went up to it and found nothing on it, just leaves. ‡† And He says to it, “May you never again produce fruit!” And forthwith the fig tree started to wither. ‡††²⁰ And seeing it the disciples marveled saying, “How

ening experience—be ridden for the first time, by a stranger, someone perhaps heavier than the colt, and in the middle of a noisy crowd! So He has them bring the mother along as moral support. The disciples put clothes on both animals (the clothes would be very strange to the young donkey, but seeing his mother take it patiently would help his peace of mind), but Jesus rode only the colt—maybe He had to lift His feet so they didn’t drag! It was probably comical, a strange way for a King to present Himself. † See Psalm 118:26.

†† *Really and truly: can’t you just see the hubbub! The crowd with Jesus was not from Jerusalem (John 12:12), so the locals were taken by surprise. ‡ Mark and Luke have the correct sequence of events for that Sunday, Monday and Tuesday—Matthew rearranges the material for stylistic reasons (presumably). For the correct sequence of events, read Matthew 21:1-11, 18-19, 12-17, 20-22, 23-46. Chapters 22-26 are in sequence. †† See Isaiah 56:7 (Jeremiah 7:11).*

‡† *See Psalm 8:2. ‡†† As Mark points out (Mark 11:13), it was not fig season, but a tree with leaves might have some dried figs. Since dried figs are very good eating, any visible figs would have been eat-*

quickly the fig tree became withered!”^{§21} So in answer Jesus said to them: “Assuredly I say to you, if you (pl.) have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you should say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and be thrown into the sea,’ it will happen.²² And anything whatever you may ask in the believing prayer, you will receive.”

About John's baptism—Tuesday, 04/02/30 AD

²³ So He came into the temple, and as He was teaching the chief priests and the elders of the people approached Him saying, “By what kind of authority are you doing these *things?*” and “Who gave you this authority?”²⁴ But in answer Jesus said to them: “I also will ask you one question, which if you tell me, I also will tell you by what authority I do these *things:*”²⁵ The baptism of John—where was it from; from heaven or from men?” So they reasoned among themselves saying: “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’”²⁶ But if we say, ‘From men,’ we fear the crowd, for all consider John as a prophet.”²⁷ So in answer to Jesus they said, “We do not know.” So He said to them: “Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these *things.*”

Two parables against the Pharisees

²⁸ “But what do you think? A certain man had two sons, and going to the first he said, ‘Son, go work today in my vineyard.’²⁹ But in answer he said, ‘I don’t want to’ (but later he changed his mind and went).

³⁰ And going to the other he said likewise. And in answer he said, ‘I go, Sir’; yet he did not go.³¹ Which of the two did the will of the father?” They say to Him, “The first.” Jesus says to them: “Assuredly I say to you that the tax collectors and the prostitutes will go into the kingdom of God before you do.^{§†32} For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, yet when you saw it you did not afterward repent, so as to believe him.

³³ “Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to farmers and went on a journey.³⁴ When vintage-time drew near he sent his servants to the farmers to receive his fruits.³⁵ But the farmers took his servants—one they beat, one they killed, one they stoned.³⁶ Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did to them likewise.³⁷ So finally he sent his son to them saying, ‘They will respect my son.’

en long since (the tree was near the road). ‡†† The Text has ‘the sap was cut off’; the result would not be visible immediately. § According to Mark this was 24 hours later. §† The Lord’s words were definitely not designed to make them happy! In effect, He goes on to show that their refusal to answer His question was duplicitous. They knew good and well that John’s baptism was from heaven.

³⁸ But when the farmers saw the son they said among themselves: 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and take possession of his inheritance.' ³⁹ And taking him they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

⁴⁰ Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those farmers?" ⁴¹ They say to Him: "He will miserably destroy those miserable men! And he will lease the vineyard to other farmers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons." ⁴² Jesus says to them: "Did you never read in the Scriptures:

'A stone which the builders rejected,
THIS one became the cornerstone.
This was the LORD's doing,
and it is marvelous in our eyes?' †

⁴³ Therefore I say to you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it. †⁴⁴ Also, whoever falls upon this stone will be broken to pieces; but upon whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." ‡

⁴⁵ As the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables they knew that He was speaking about them. †⁴⁶ And although they wanted to seize Him, they were afraid of the crowds, because they considered Him as a prophet.

Parable of the wedding feast

22 Jesus answered and spoke to them again in parables saying: ² "The kingdom of the heavens is like a certain king who prepared a wedding feast for his son. ³ And he sent out his servants to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, but they did not want to come. ⁴ Again he sent out other servants saying: 'Say to those who have been invited: "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast!"' ⁵ Now the indifferent ones *just* took off—one to his own field, another to his business. ⁶ But the rest, seizing his servants mistreated and killed them! ⁷ So when that king heard *about it* he was

furiously; and sending his troops he destroyed those murderers and burned up their city. ††

⁸ "Then he says to his servants: 'The wedding is *READY*, but those who were invited were not worthy. ⁹ So go on the roads leading out *of town*, and as many as you may find invite to the wedding feast.' ¹⁰ And going out on the roads those servants gathered together everyone they found, both evil and good; and the wedding *hall* was filled with guests. ¹¹ But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had not been clothed with a wedding garment. ††¹² So he says to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the servants, 'Tie him up hand and foot, take him away and throw him out into the darkness farthest away.' †††*THERE* there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ¹⁴ For many are called, but few chosen."

Jesus bests the Herodians

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might trap Him in *some* word. ¹⁶ So they send their disciples to Him, with the Herodians, [§] saying: "Teacher, we know that you are truthful and teach the way of God in truth; and you are not impressed by anyone, for you do not look at people's faces. ††¹⁷ So tell us, what do you think: is it lawful to pay tax to Caesar, or not?" ¹⁸ But perceiving their malignancy Jesus said: "Hypocrites! Why do you test me? ¹⁹ Show me the tax coin." So they brought Him a denarius. ²⁰ And He says to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" ²¹ They say to Him, "Caesar's." Then He says to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to *GOD* the things that are *GOD'S!*" ²² And hearing it they marveled, and leaving Him they went away.

Jesus bests the Sadducees

²³ The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him ²⁴ saying: "Teacher, Moses said that if someone dies having no children his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁵ Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and

† See Psalm 118:22-23. †† That is what the Text says, 'a nation', which makes me wonder which 'nation' that might be. Since at any given time a nation is made up of the people alive at the moment, an Israel in the distant future would be a different 'nation'. However, in 1 Peter 2:9 the Church is called "a holy nation", so perhaps the reference is to the Church. ‡ Two Greek manuscripts (of inferior quality: D and 33—Codex D is possibly the worst copy in existence), against some 1700, omit verse 44. In consequence the so-called 'critical' text, UBS4/N-A27 (which reproduces the text of UBS3/N-A26), places the verse within brackets, thereby affirming that in their opinion the verse is not genuine. NIV informs us that "Some manuscripts do not have verse 44." By "some" they mean two against 1700—is that not a dishonest use of the English language? To join Jesus means you have to be broken (so you can be remade), but to reject Him... †† They understood, so they were warned; but they did not pay attention to the warning. They went to hell with their eyes open. They would rather go to hell than acknowledge Jesus as Messiah. Today it is the same way—many would rather go to hell than acknowledge Jesus as Creator and Savior.

†† There is a contrast between the indifferent (verse 5) and the malignant (verse 6)—the indifferent missed out on the feast, but the malignant were destroyed. In the kingdom of the heavens there is only one wedding feast for the King's Son, so far as I know, called "the marriage supper of the Lamb" in Revelation 19:9. So who might the 'indifferent' be? ††† Obviously people grabbed off the street would not have appropriate attire—the wedding garment must have been issued to each one as he went in. ††† Someone tried to 'crash the party' and had even taken a place at a table, but it did not work. I suppose there may be those who think they can crash "the marriage supper of the Lamb", but if you are not dressed in the righteousness of the Bridegroom you will not make it. § The Pharisees and the Herodians were political enemies, but in their desperation they joined forces against Jesus. †† They really tried to butter Him up.

having no offspring he left his widow to his brother.
²⁶ So also the second, and the third, up to the seventh.
²⁷ Last of all, the woman died too. ²⁸ Therefore in the resurrection whose wife, of the seven, will she be? For they all had her." ^{†29} So in answer Jesus said to them: "You are deceived, ^{††} not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God! ^{‡30} For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. ^{‡‡31} But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God saying, ^{‡‡32} 'I AM the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?' ^{‡‡‡} God is not God of dead *people* but of living." ^{‡‡‡‡33} Now as the crowds heard *Him* they were astonished at His teaching.

Jesus bests the Pharisees

³⁴ Now when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they got together. ³⁵ And one of them, a lawyer, testing Him, questioned and said, ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ So Jesus said to him: ^{‡‡‡} "You must love the *LORD* your God with your whole heart, and with your whole soul, and with your whole mind.' ^{‡‡‡‡38} This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it, 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.' ^{‡‡‡‡‡40} On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets."

David's Son and Lord

⁴¹ While the Pharisees were assembled, Jesus asked them ⁴² saying, "What do you think about the Christ; whose Son is He?" They say to Him, "David's." ⁴³ He says to them: "How then does David in *the Spirit* call Him 'Lord' saying,

⁴⁴ 'The *LORD* said to my Lord,
 "Sit at my right until I place your enemies
 as a footstool for your feet"?' ^{‡‡‡}

† To dream up hypothetical situations is typical of those who really do not want to acknowledge or obey the truth. No doubt they thought they were being clever. †† I started out putting 'self-deceived', but the verb is passive Indicative and not inherently reflexive—it could be Satan deceiving them. ‡ Alas! Is this not true of large segments of so-called evangelical Christianity? The Lord puts His finger on the Sadducees' real problem—they were spiritually bankrupt. ‡† Jesus does not say that angels do not have sex/gender. Evidently no baby angels (good or fallen) are born, but if angels are of only one gender they cannot reproduce in kind. Whenever an angel takes on human form in the Bible, it is always the form of a man. Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit "of God" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡‡ See Exodus 3:6, 15, 16—Jesus attributes this text to God! ‡‡† Jesus argues on the basis of the present tense of the verb—if Abraham was simply eradicated it would have to be "was". Jesus implies that they should have figured it out for themselves. ‡‡‡ Evidently Jesus answered without hesitation; this one was easy! § See Deuteronomy 6:5, 10:12. §† See Leviticus 19:18. Jesus gave him more than he asked for. §†† See Psalm 110:1—note that Jesus affirms that David was inspired.

⁴⁵ Really now, if David calls Him 'Lord', how can He be his son?" ⁴⁶ And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare to question Him anymore.

Jesus excoriates the scribes and Pharisees

23 Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples ² saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees are seated upon Moses' chair; ³ so whatever they may tell you to observe, you should observe and do; but do not do according to their deeds, for they say and do not do. ⁴ For they package loads *that are* heavy and hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of the people; but they *themselves* do not want to move them with one of their fingers.

⁵ "Rather, they do all their works in order to be seen by people. They make their phylacteries broad and the tassels on their garments large; ^{‡‡‡6} they love the place of honor at dinners and the first seats in the synagogues, ⁷ and the greetings in the marketplaces, namely to be called 'Rabbi, Rabbi' by the people.

We have only one Teacher and one Father

⁸ "But you (pl.), do not be called 'Rabbi'; because your Teacher is *ONE*, the Christ, ^{‡‡†} and you are all brothers. ⁹ And do not call anyone on earth your 'father'; because your Father is *ONE*, He who is in the heavens. ^{‡‡†‡10} Neither be called leaders/guides; because your Leader is *ONE*, the Christ. ^{‡‡†‡‡11} On the contrary, the greatest among you must be your servant. ¹² And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

A series of 'Woes'

¹³ "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you devour the houses of the widows, ^{‡‡†} while making long prayers as a pretense. Therefore you will receive a greater condemnation. ^{‡‡‡‡14} Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!! Because you bar

§‡ They were big on ostentation. §‡† Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit "the Christ" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).
 §† Since the second person here is plural, the Lord is evidently referring to calling someone your spiritual father; He is not saying not to acknowledge your physical father. "Your (pl.) Father is *ONE*"—obviously they did not all have the same physical father. §‡ This may be why we have no record in Scripture of a Christian calling someone his disciple; even in 1 Corinthians 3:4 Paul evidently avoids using the term. I take it that our Lord is forbidding any effort by one Christian to control the spiritual life of another. He had already told the Samaritan woman that the Father must be worshiped "in spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24). Therefore, that worship may not be forced or imposed, or controlled by someone else. §‡† How did that work? I suppose that if the widow was in debt, they would just foreclose and put her out on the street. §‡‡ They are already condemned, but are making it worse. Perhaps 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit this verse (as in NIV, [NASB], LB, [TEV], etc.). A very small minority, perhaps another 1%, reverse the order of verses 13 and 14 (as in KJV and NKJV).

the entrance to the kingdom of the heavens in the face of the people; for you neither go in yourselves nor do you allow those who are trying to enter to go in. ¹⁵ Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!!! Because you travel all over, land and sea, to make one convert, and when he joins up you make him twice as much a son of Hell ¹⁶ as yourselves.

¹⁶ "Woe to you blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.'¹⁷ Stupid and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? ¹⁸ And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it is obligated.'¹⁹ Stupid and blind!! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? ²⁰ Therefore he who swears by the altar swears by it and by all the things on it. ²¹ And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by Him who used to dwell in it. ²² And he who swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.

²³ "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you pay a tithe of mint and dill and cummin, but have neglected the weightier items of the law: justice and mercy and faith. *THESE* it was obligatory to do, while not neglecting those. ²⁴ Blind guides, who strain out a gnat but gulp down a camel!

²⁵ "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!! Because you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside they are full of plunder and injustice. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First cleanse the inside of the cup and the dish, so that their outside may also be clean.

²⁷ "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!!! Because you resemble whitewashed tombs, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly but inside are full of dead bones and of all uncleanness. ²⁸ Just so, you also outwardly appear *to be* righteous to the people, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

²⁹ "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!!!! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous; ³⁰ yet you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.'³¹ Therefore you testify against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the

† Those guys were really perverse! If you don't want to go in yourself, that's your problem; but to try to keep others from going in is satanic, really and truly satanic. †† Where do you suppose a 'son of hell' is going to spend eternity? ‡ Wow, they really were stupid and blind! which raises the obvious question: How did they get that way? According to Ephesians 2:2, 'sons of the disobedience' suffer direct satanic influence. †† Some 10% of the Greek manuscripts have "dwell" in the present tense (as in most versions), rather than the past. I take it that Jesus was telling them that God had left their temple (see verse 38). Thus verse 22 is in contrast with verse 21, with reference to God's presence. †† Instead of "injustice", perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts have 'self-indulgence' (as in most versions).

prophets. ³² So fill up the measure of your fathers' *guilt!*

Snakes!

³³ "Snakes! Brood of vipers! How can you escape from the condemnation of Hell? ³⁴ So take note: I will send you prophets and wise men and Biblical scholars; ³⁵ some of them you will kill, even crucify; some of them you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from city to city —so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel up to the blood of Zechariah son of Berechiah, ³⁶ whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. ³⁷ Assuredly I say to you that all these things will come upon this generation.

Jesus laments over Jerusalem

³⁷ "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, she who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children, just like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you did not want to. ³⁸ Look, your house is left to you abandoned! ³⁹ For I say to you, you will *NOT* see me again until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the *LORD!*' ⁴⁰

The Olivet Discourse

24 So as Jesus was going out, departing from the temple, His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. ² But Jesus said to them: "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly I say to you, absolutely not a single stone here will be left upon another, that will not be thrown down." ³

"A beginning of birth pains"

³ Now as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately saying: "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your

††† Would you say that Jesus is trying real hard not to hurt their poor little feelings? So are we supposed to avoid hurting people's feelings? When and why? ††† Jesus makes this statement knowing that He will die within a few days. Obviously He also knows that He will rise from the dead and return to the Father's right hand—it is from that position that He will do the sending. § The only 'Zechariah son of Berechiah' recorded in the OT was the author of the book of prophecy that bears his name. The temple was rebuilt during his time, so it would be possible for him to have been killed there, but his death is not recorded. The Lord may have known something we do not, or He may have been referring to someone else. §† A terrible statement! But Jesus is addressing persons who will condemn the Messiah to death with total premeditated malice. §†† See Psalm 118:26. Apparently He did not return to the temple anymore; He had declared judgment upon it: "your house is left to you abandoned". §‡ This was literally fulfilled in 70 AD. The Jews used the temple buildings as their last bastion of defense. They themselves set fire to some buildings and the Roman soldiers finished the job. Apparently the gold on the dome melted and ran down the cracks between the stones. So the looters literally tore stone from stone to make sure they got all the gold.

coming and of the completion of the age?"¹⁴ So in answer Jesus said to them: "Watch out, so that no one deceives you.⁵ Because many will come in my name saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will deceive many.⁶ You will be concerned when you hear^{††} of wars and rumors of wars; see to it that you not get worked up; for all of it has to happen, but the end is not yet.⁷ For nation will be raised up against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in various places;⁸ but all these things are *only* a beginning of birth pains.[‡]

The increase of lawlessness

⁹"Then they will hand you over to oppression and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.¹⁰ And then many will be offended, and they will betray one another and will hate one another.¹¹ And many false prophets will be raised up and they will deceive many.^{††12} And because of the increase of the lawlessness the love of the majority will grow cold.¹³ So the one who perseveres to the end, *HE* will be saved.^{‡‡14} And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in the whole inhabited earth as a witness to all the ethnic nations, and then the end will come.^{‡‡}

The Great Tribulation

¹⁵"So then, when you (ye) see the 'abomination of desolation', spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place"^{‡‡‡} (let the reader understand),¹⁶ "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.¹⁷ Anyone on the housetop should not go down to take things out of his house,¹⁸ and anyone in the field should not go back to get his cloak.^{§19} But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing

[†] There are two questions: "When these things?" and "What the sign?" The answer to the first is given in Luke 21:20-24. The answer to the second begins here in verse 5. ^{††} I follow the best line of transmission, with 25% of the Greek manuscripts, in reading "You will be concerned when you hear"; instead of 'you will be about to hear' (more or less followed by most versions). [‡] The Text has 'birth pains'; so what is the 'baby'? I suppose the 'baby' is the Messianic Kingdom. ^{‡†} The verb is in the passive voice, 'will be raised up': the obvious question is, by whom? Here we have a clear hint of supernatural activity behind the scenes. ^{‡‡} The Greek text is emphatic here—it is the one who perseveres who will be saved. ^{‡‡†} The 'end' of what? There are at least four possible relevant ends here—of the world, of the Millennium, of the Great Tribulation, of the Church Age. Just as this day, this week, this month, this year, etc. all have ends, but those ends are rarely coincidental, so the four ends above are not coincidental. So which 'end' is it? The immediately following context points to the Great Tribulation. In that event, any unreached ethnic nations in our day cannot impede the Rapture, since the angel in Revelation 14:6 will finish the job. ^{‡‡‡} "Standing"—presumably a person, therefore. See Daniel 11:31 and 12:11. [§] Wait a minute! If you are on the housetop or in the field, how can you "see" the 'abomination' so you know it's time to run? Well, how about wrist TVs, hand held computers, cell phones with Internet access, etc.? So how did Jesus know about these gadgets 2,000 years ago? If you are still around when that happens, and if you do not want the 'mark', you had better disappear in a hurry.

a baby in those days!²⁰ And pray that your flight may not happen in winter or on a Sabbath.^{§†21} Because then there will be a *GREAT* tribulation, such as has never been since the beginning of the world until now, and never again will be.^{§††22} And unless those days were cut short no flesh would be saved;^{§‡} but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.^{§††23} *THEN* if anyone says to you, 'Look, the Messiah is here!' or 'there!' do not believe him.²⁴ Because false christs and false prophets will be raised up,^{§†} and they will give great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect.²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand.²⁶ So if they should say to you, 'Look, He is in the wilderness!' do not go out; 'Look, in the secret rooms!' do not believe it.²⁷ Because just as the lightning comes from east and shines to west, so also will be the coming of the Son of the Man;²⁸ for wherever the carcass may be there will be a gathering of vultures.^{§‡}

The King's return to earth

²⁹"Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.^{§§†30} And then the sign of the Son of the Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn^{§§†}—they will see the Son of the Man coming on the clouds of the heaven with power and great glory.³¹ And He will send out His angels with a great sound of a trumpet and they will collect His elect from the four winds, from one extreme of the heavens to the other.

^{§†} Well now, any such praying needs to be done before the fact to do any good. Do you know anyone who is praying like this? ^{§††} There has always been tribulation and distress in the world, and continues to be, but nothing to compare with the Great Tribulation, which has not yet happened. ^{§‡} Adding up the percentages of destruction in Revelation, it appears that only one sixth of those who are alive at the beginning of the Great Tribulation will still be alive at its end. If six billion go in, only one billion will come out. So much for the overpopulation problem! ^{§††} Just who are the "elect" here (and in verse 31), if the Rapture has already taken place? I believe there will be many millions of conversions immediately after the Rapture—unsaved church members who are left behind. And if the Rapture is partial (Matthew 25:1-13), all the lukewarm Christians will all of a sudden get serious. ^{§†} Here is the passive voice again, 'will be raised up'. In this context it seems clear that they are Satan's servants. ^{§‡} The point of verses 26-28 seems to be that the Lord's return will be very obvious, like the lightning or the circle of buzzards above a carcass—so if someone says He has returned secretly, don't believe it (see verse 30). The word "then" in verse 23 makes clear that what is being described here is the Lord's return to the earth after the Great Tribulation, to set up the Millennial Kingdom. ^{§§†} "Stars" often refer to angels, in the Scriptures, and "the powers of the heavens" most probably refers to high ranking fallen angels. It is at this time that Satan will be confined in the Abyss (Revelation 20:1-3). (Just one literal star hitting the earth would reduce it to dust, so the reference cannot be to them.) ^{§§‡} Literally, 'beat the breast'—in Semitic cultures this action expresses strong emotion, involving some combination of grief, fear and despair. This will be the attitude of everyone who is wearing the 'mark'.

Learn from the fig tree

³² “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and it puts forth leaves, you know that the summer is near. ³³ So you also, whenever you see all these things, know that it is near, at the doors! ³⁴ Assuredly I say to you, this generation will *NOT* pass away until all these things happen. ^{†35} The heaven and the earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. ^{††}

The Rapture

³⁶ “But no one knows concerning that day and hour, [‡] not even the angels of the heavens, except my Father alone. ^{‡37} But just as were the days of Noah, so also will be the coming of the Son of the Man. ³⁸ For just as they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, in the days before the flood until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and were not aware until the flood came and took all away, so also will be the coming of the Son of the Man. ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and the other will be left. ⁴² So be watchful, because you (pl) do not know in what hour ^{‡‡} your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, because the Son of the Man is coming at an hour that you do not suppose. ^{‡‡†}

⁴⁵ “Who then is the faithful and prudent servant whom his lord placed over his corps of servants to give them food on schedule? ⁴⁶ Blessed be that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find doing so. ⁴⁷ Assuredly I say to you that he will place him over all

[†] “This generation” could refer to the Jewish race (render ‘this race’), but I think it more probable that it refers to the generation that “sees all these things”. To be more precise, I think that those who were alive on the planet in 1967 (when the city of Jerusalem returned to the political control of the nation Israel) are the generation in question. ^{††} The Lord Jesus declares the eternal authority of His own word. [‡] It is typical of Hebrew prose (Jesus is a Jew) to retell a sequence of events from different perspectives. He is still answering “What is the sign?” but here He starts over and comments upon something that will happen before the ‘abomination’ (see the second footnote after this one). ^{‡‡} While walking this earth as Jesus, the Son was not omniscient. ^{‡‡} Instead of “hour”, perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘day’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{‡‡†} I take it that for there to be the element of surprise the Rapture of the Church must occur before the “abomination of desolation”. When the Antichrist takes his place in the Holy of Holies and declares himself to be god there will be precisely 1,290 days until the return of Christ to the earth. “An hour that you do not suppose” presumably requires a pre-‘abomination’ rapture—if the rapture is pre-wrath but post-abomination, only a fool will be taken by surprise, unless the Rapture happens immediately after the ‘abomination’ (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). For a fuller discussion of this question, please see the Appendix: Before or after?

his possessions. ⁴⁸ But if that bad servant should say in his heart, ‘My lord is delaying his return,’ ⁴⁹ and should begin to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰ the lord of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour when he is not aware, ⁵¹ and will cut him in two and appoint his portion with the hypocrites. ^{‡‡‡} *THERE*, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. [§]

Parable of the ten virgins

25 “Then ^{§†} the kingdom of the heavens will be like ten virgins who, taking their lamps, went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Now five of them were prudent and five foolish. ³ Those who were foolish, taking their lamps, did not take [extra] oil with them, ⁴ but the prudent ones took oil in their vessels along with their lamps. ^{§††5} Now while the bridegroom delayed they all dozed and slept, ⁶ but at midnight there was a shout: ‘Attention! The bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him.’ ⁷ Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish ones said to the prudent, ‘Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.’ ⁹ But the prudent ones answered saying, ‘No, in case there not be enough for you and us; instead, go to those who sell and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰ But while they went to buy, the bridegroom arrived, and the ones who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast—and the door was shut! ¹¹ Later the other virgins arrived too saying, ‘Lord, lord, open for us!’ ¹² But in answer he said, ‘Assuredly I say to you, I do not know you.’ ¹³ Therefore, keep alert, because you do not know the day nor the hour in which the Son of the Man is coming. ^{§‡}

Parable of the talents

¹⁴ “Because *the kingdom is also* like a man about to go on a long journey, who called his own servants and entrusted his possessions to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on the journey. ¹⁶ So the one who received the

^{‡‡‡} Notice that the Lord consigns hypocrites to hell. That servant pretended to be faithful while the owner was around, but as soon as he turned his back... [§] This is a SERVANT who had gained his master’s confidence, but then betrayed it—he winds up in hell. He was director of food services, and if he had been faithful there he would have been promoted to general director (verse 47), but... ^{§†} “Then”—this temporal adverb links the parable to the prior context, which is dealing with the Rapture (I think). Since the foolish ones are virgins, not prostitutes, and since they also had some oil (does the oil represent the Holy Spirit?), this parable may point to a partial rapture; only those who are ready are taken. ^{§††} From verse 8 it is clear that they all had oil in the lamp, but even with the wick down low their lamps were lit (they wouldn’t wait in total darkness) and were burning oil (4-5 hours). So the delay of the bridegroom meant that the oil in the lamps was used up—the wise ones had extra oil. ^{§‡} About 11% of the Greek manuscripts omit “in which the Son of the Man is coming” (as in NIV, NASB, [LB], TEV, etc.).

five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. ¹⁷ So also the *one who received* the two gained another two as well. ¹⁸ But he who received the one went off and dug in the ground and hid his lord's silver.

¹⁹ "Then, after a long time, the lord of those servants comes and settles accounts with them.

²⁰ "So the one who had received the five talents approached and brought five more talents saying, 'Lord, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I gained five more talents besides them!' ²¹ His lord said to him: 'Super, you good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things, I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' ²² So the one who had received the two talents also approached and said, 'Lord, you entrusted two talents to me; see, I gained two more talents besides them!' ²³ His lord said to him: 'Super, you good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things, I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' †

²⁴ "Then he who had received the one talent also approached and said: 'Lord, I knew that you are a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not scatter. ²⁵ And being afraid I went off and hid your talent in the ground; here, take what is yours.' ††²⁶ So in answer his lord said to him: 'You wicked and lazy servant! You knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter. ††²⁷ Therefore you were obligated to deposit my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received what is mine with interest. ²⁸ Therefore, take the talent away from him and give it to the one having the ten talents. ²⁹ For to everyone who has, *more* will be given, and he will have abundance; but the one who does not have, even what he thinks that he has †† will be taken away from him. ††³⁰ And throw out the useless servant, ††† into the darkness farthest out!' *THERE*, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Judgment in preparation for the Millennium

³¹ "When the Son of the Man comes in His glory, †† and all the holy angels with Him, [§] then He will sit on

† The two-talent man was just as faithful as the first one—he also doubled the principal—so he gets the same commendation. We are judged on the basis of what we do with our potential. †† Evidently the third man did not identify with his lord's interests. He served out of fear or necessity, but his heart wasn't in it. He has a negative opinion of his lord and is unrepentant: "here, take what is yours". He winds up in hell. Are there not many 'Christians' today who have a low opinion of God? Who feel that He is hard, unfair, unjust—and who 'serve' out of fear or a sense of obligation? If you believe INTO Jesus you identify with Him. † Observe that the owner did not deny the description. The first two servants identified with the owner's interests anyway. †† I follow the best line of transmission, with 30% of the Greek manuscripts, in reading "he thinks that he has", rather than 'he has' (as in most versions). †† Use it or lose it! ††† To be "useless" is not a valid option. We are here for a purpose, to serve, to be useful. ††† The Lord Jesus uses "the coming of

His throne of glory. ³² And all the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, ^{§†} just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And the sheep He will place on His right, but the goats on His left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right: 'Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom that was prepared for you at the foundation of the world. ^{§††35} For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me.' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer Him saying: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and take you in, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹ Or when did we see you sick or in prison and come to you?' ⁴⁰ And in answer the King will say to them, 'Assuredly I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' ^{§†}

⁴¹ "Then He will also say to those on His left: 'Go away from me, you accursed ones, into the eternal fire that was prepared for the devil and his angels. ^{§††42} For I was hungry and you did not give me food; I was thirsty and you did not give me drink; ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not take me in; I was naked and you did not clothe me; I was sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister to you?' ⁴⁵ Then He will answer them saying, 'Assuredly I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, ^{§†} neither did you do it to me.' ^{§†46} And they will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

26 Now it happened, when Jesus had finished all these words, that He said to His disciples, ² "You know that after two days the Passover takes place, and the Son of the Man will be handed over to be crucified." ^{§§†}

the Son of the Man" to refer to both the Rapture and the Second Advent. [§] Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit "holy" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). From Revelation 5:11 it appears that the holy angels are well over 100 million. ^{§†} It is clear that the King is dealing with individuals here; nations are made up of people, and each person will be evaluated individually. ^{§††} Wow! ^{§†} The King demands PRACTICAL demonstrations of righteousness. As James says, a 'faith' that does not produce will not save anyone. "These my brothers" refers to those on the King's right. ^{§††} The Lake of fire was prepared for Lucifer (now Satan) and those angels that joined his rebellion (about a third of the angelic beings—Revelation 12:4). Human beings who side with Satan (there are various ways of doing that) will also share his destiny. The basic meaning of the word translated 'angel' is 'messenger'; many human beings are Satan's messengers. ^{§†} "These" presumably refers to those on His right, the righteous. The wicked will be judged for how they treated the righteous (among other things). ^{§†} These people are basically selfish and self-centered, and self-centeredness is the essence of sin. That is why Lucifer rebelled against God, etc. ^{§§†} Jesus knew just

The Sanhedrin conspires—04/03/30

³ Then the chief priests, the scribes and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, the one called Caiaphas, ¹⁴ and they plotted to seize Jesus by trickery and kill Him. ⁵ But they said, “Not during the feast, in order not to have an uproar among the people.”

Someone anoints Jesus' head

⁶ Now when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, ⁷ a woman approached Him, ^{††} having an alabaster *flask* of very expensive perfume, and she began to pour it on His head as He reclined *at the table*. ⁸ But upon seeing it His disciples were indignant saying: “Why this waste? ⁹ For this perfume could have been sold for a good deal and given to the poor.”

¹⁰ But being aware Jesus said to them: “Why are you bothering the woman? She has done something beautiful to me. ¹¹ You will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have *ME*. ^{†12} In putting this perfume on my body she did it with a view to my burial.

¹³ Assuredly I say to you, wherever this gospel may be proclaimed in the whole world, what this woman did will also be told in her memory.” ^{††}

Judas offers to betray Jesus

¹⁴ Then one of the twelve, the one called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and said, “What are you willing to give me so that I deliver Him to you?” ^{††} So

how He was going to die. I take it that our Lord's statement here settles the question of the exact day of the crucifixion. It was late Tuesday afternoon, probably about 6:00 p.m.—adding two days takes us to 6:00 p.m. on THURSDAY, but the proceedings in the upper room began after 6:00 p.m. on that Thursday, which to the Jews was already Friday. Therefore Jesus died on a Friday [not Thursday]. Our Lord's own statements have given rise to some confusion: referring to the time period between His death and resurrection He said—“on the third day”, “after three days” and “three days and three nights”. So some have argued that Jesus died on a Thursday, or even a Wednesday. Well, Wednesday won't work because that would make 3 days and 4 nights; but Thursday gives 3 nights and 2 full days, plus a part of a third day; while Friday gives 2 nights and 1 full day, plus a part of a second day. We take it that “3 days and 3 nights” was an idiomatic expression that could refer to three 24 hour days represented by some part of each, but in sequence—in this case: Friday, Saturday and Sunday. (See also Luke 23:54-24:1—Jesus was buried on Friday afternoon; then the women rested during the Sabbath [singular = just one day]; then early the first day of the week they went to the tomb.) † The real high priest was Annas, but in an effort to diminish the political power of the high priest the Romans obliged the Jews to name a different one every year, and that year it was Caiaphas. †† This incident must not be confused with the one in John 12:1-11. In John, Mary anoints His FEET on Saturday (03/30/30), while in Matthew and Mark an unidentified woman anoints His HEAD on Wednesday (04/03/30). The houses are also different. In the earlier incident only Judas ventured to criticize the hostess, but here a number of them chime in—He had already been anointed once, so why do it again? ‡ Jesus is referring here to His physical presence (see Matthew 28:20). †† So it has been, to this day. ‡‡ Apparently the ‘wasted’ perfume was the last straw for Judas. (If he also finally

they counted out to him thirty silver *coins*. ¹⁶ From then on he kept looking for an opportunity to betray Him.

The last night—begins Thursday evening, 04/04/30, and ends the next morning

¹⁷ Now on the first *day* of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus saying to Him, “Where do you want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?” ¹⁸ So He said: “Go into the city to ‘you know who’ and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, “My time is near, I will do the Passover with my disciples at your *place*.”’” ¹⁹ And the disciples did as Jesus directed them and prepared the Passover. ^{†††}

The traitor identified

²⁰ When it was evening He was reclining *at the table* with the twelve. ²¹ And as they were eating He said, “Assuredly I say to you that one of you will betray me.” ²² This really upset them and they each ^{†††} began to say to Him, “It isn't me, is it, Lord?” ²³ In answer He said: “It is the one who dipped his hand in the bowl with me, *HE* will betray me. ²⁴ The Son of the Man is really going just as it is written about Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of the Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man not to have been born.”

²⁵ Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, “It isn't me, is it, Rabbi?” He says to him, “You said it!” ^{††}

Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper

²⁶ Now as they were eating, ^{†††} after taking the bread and blessing it, Jesus broke it, gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” ²⁷ And taking the cup and giving thanks He gave it to them saying: “Drink of it, all of you; ²⁸ for this is my blood, that of

got the message that Jesus was about to be killed instead of setting up the Kingdom, he may have rebelled.) ††† Clearly the use of the upper room had been arranged beforehand. ††† Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, have “one after another” (as in NIV, LB, TEV, etc.), as if it were an orderly proceeding, each one politely waiting for his turn. Not really—they were shocked; what Jesus had just said couldn't be true! As a gut reaction each one started saying, “It cannot be me, can it?”, all at once. Apparently none of them suspected Judas. § In John 17:12 the Lord calls him “the son of perdition” and declares him to be “lost”. §† Judas phrases his question just like the others, only saying ‘Rabbi’ instead of ‘Lord’. The Lord's answer confirms that it is Judas. Mark and Luke also record this incident, but the one recorded in John 13:21-30 happened later. §†† In John 13:1 we read, “before the feast of the Passover”, and in 13:2, “supper being ended” [less than 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have ‘during supper’—as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.]. They ate an ordinary meal before the Passover ritual. In John 13:4-11 Jesus washes their feet because they could not proceed with the ritual while ceremonially unclean. In Matthew 26:21 they were eating the ordinary meal. Here in verse 26 they are now into the ritual (I think)—the foot washing happened between verse 25 and verse 26.

the new covenant, † that which is being shed on behalf of many for forgiveness of sins.²⁹ Furthermore, I tell you that I will *NOT* drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."^{†30} And after hymn-singing they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus predicts Peter's denials ‡

³¹ Then Jesus says to them: "All of you will be caused to stumble because of me this night, for it is written:

'I will strike the Shepherd
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'^{††}

³² But after I am raised I will go before you to Galilee."[†]

³³ Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if everyone *else* is caused to stumble because of you, I will never be caused to stumble."[†] ³⁴ Jesus said to him, "Assuredly I say to you that this night, before *any* rooster crows, you will deny me *THREE* times."^{†35} Peter says to Him, "Even if I have to die with you, I will *NOT* deny you!" And all the *other* disciples said the same.

Gethsemane—Jesus almost dies!

³⁶ Then Jesus comes with them to a place called Gethsemane, and He says to the disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray."[†] ³⁷ And taking Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along He began to be troubled and distressed.[†] ³⁸ Then Jesus says to them: "My soul is in anguish, to the point of death. †† Stay here and watch with me."[†] ³⁹ And going a little farther He fell on His face and prayed saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by; nevertheless not as I wish, but as you do."^{†††40} Then He comes to the disciples and finds them sleeping, and He says to Peter: "So, you (pl.) were not able to watch with me one

† Here, and in Mark 14:24, perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit 'new' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The original reading, as also in Luke 22:20 and 1 Corinthians 11:25, is *new covenant*. †† "With you"—presumably at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb? The vinegar in John 19:29 would not qualify as "this fruit". ‡ For a detailed discussion of Peter's denials, please see the Appendix: How many times did Jesus say that Peter would deny Him? †† See Zachariah 13:7. ††† The emphasis here is on the silence of all roosters until Peter denies at least three times. This is actually the *THIRD* prediction—the first is in John 13:36-38 and the second is in Luke 22:31-34. ††† I take it that Jesus faced the full implications of the cross at this point—that He would be made sin, be separated from the Father—and the anguish of soul was so terrible that He almost died. Luke 22:44 records that Jesus sweat blood, "great drops" of it—a rare condition that is usually fatal. Verse 43 records that an angel from heaven strengthened Him. I believe Hebrews 5:7 refers to this moment; Jesus cried out to be delivered from a premature death in the Garden, He had to get to the cross, and the Father sent an angel to strengthen Him. [Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit Luke 22:43-44.] ††† How did Matthew know what Jesus prayed? It is not clear whether the "stone's throw" (Luke 22:41) refers to the nine, or the three, but even if the three were within earshot how much would they hear asleep? Did Jesus tell them after His resurrection? Or did the Holy Spirit simply reveal it? And how did they know about the blood if they were asleep?

hour!⁴¹ Watch and pray, so that you do not enter into temptation. The spirit on its part is willing, but the flesh is weak."⁴² And going away a second time He prayed saying, "My Father, if this cup cannot pass from me unless I drink it, let your will be done."^{†43} And coming He finds them sleeping *AGAIN*, because their eyes had been weighed down.^{†44} So leaving them He went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing.⁴⁵ Then He comes to His disciples and says to them: "Sleep some more and take your rest!^{††} Actually, the hour is here and the Son of the Man is being betrayed into sinners' hands.⁴⁶ Get up, let's go; see, the one who is betraying me has come!"

Jesus is betrayed

⁴⁷ And while He was still speaking, there was Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a large crowd with swords and clubs, †sent from the chief priests and elders of the people.⁴⁸ (Now His betrayer had given them a sign saying, "Whomever I kiss, it is He; take Him!")⁴⁹ And he went right up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.⁵⁰ So Jesus said to him, "Friend, what brings you here?"^{††} Then approaching they laid hands on Jesus and took Him.⁵¹ And then, one of those with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, and striking the servant of the high priest he cut off his ear!^{†52} But Jesus says to him: "Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword will die by the sword."⁵³ Do you actually suppose that I cannot call upon my Father right now and He will place beside me more than twelve legions of angels?^{†54} But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that it has to happen this way?"⁵⁵ At that time Jesus said to the crowd: "Have you come out with swords and clubs, as against a bandit, to arrest me? I used to sit daily with you in the temple, teaching, and you did not seize me."⁵⁶ But all this has happened so

§ Notice that the second prayer is less 'desperate'—Jesus is getting the victory over His anguish. I believe the real battle was won in Gethsemane—the cross was just the mopping-up. † The Greek verb phrase here is a periphrastic pluperfect, passive voice = 'had been'. The clear implication is that there was supernatural involvement. Just as Jesus had to face the devil alone in the desert, without angelic help (Matthew 4:11), so here He faced His trial alone, without human help. †† I take it that Jesus is reproving them with a bit of gentle sarcasm, since He goes on to say, "Get up"—although there could have been an interval between verses 45 and 46. †† Jesus had repeatedly demonstrated unusual power, and they were probably expecting some resistance—hence the crowd. ††† Jesus knew perfectly well why Judas was there, so why did He call him "friend"? Perhaps to show that He held no personal animosity against him. Here read John 18:4-9. Jesus is clearly in control. They finally laid hands on Him only because He allowed it—it had to be; it was the Father's will. † From John 18:10 we know that it was Peter, and that the servant was Malchus. The Text has 'the servant', so the high priest had probably put him in charge of the operation. Obviously Peter is not used to wielding a sword. † That would be a minimum of 36,000—probably enough to handle the situation, don't you think?

that the Scriptures of the prophets should be fulfilled." Then all the disciples forsook Him and ran away.

⁵⁷ So those who had seized Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. ⁵⁸ Now Peter was following Him at a distance, up to the high priest's courtyard. And going inside he sat down with the attendants, to see the end.

Jesus tried by the Council

⁵⁹ The chief priests and the elders, in fact the whole Council, kept looking for false witnesses against Jesus so that they could put Him to death, ⁶⁰ but did not find any. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they did not find any. But at last two false witnesses came forward ⁶¹ and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.'" ⁶² And standing up the high priest said to Him: "Do you answer nothing? ^{††} What is it that these men are testifying against you?" ⁶³ But Jesus kept silent. So reacting the high priest said to Him, "I put you under oath by the Living God so that you tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God!" ⁶⁴ Jesus says to him: "You said it. Furthermore, I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of the Man sitting at the Power's right, and coming on the clouds of heaven." ^{††65} Then the high priest tore his clothes saying: "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? See, now you have heard His blasphemy! ⁶⁶ What do you think?" So in answer they said, "He deserves death!" ⁶⁷ Then they spat in His face and punched Him, while others slapped Him ⁶⁸ saying, "Messiah, prophesy to us! Who is the one who hit you?" [‡]

Peter denies Jesus

⁶⁹ Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a certain servant girl approached him saying, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." ⁷⁰ But he denied before them all saying, "I don't know what you are saying." ⁷¹ And having gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and says to those who were there, "This fellow also was with Jesus the Natsorean." ⁷² And he denied again,

[†] Of course, Jesus had said nothing of the kind, but even if He had, it would just be stupid, not criminal. ^{††} A freer rendering would be, "Aren't you going to answer?"—the priest was frustrated, getting desperate. He had to get results. [‡] What the priest did was cowardly and illegal. He had to come up with two witnesses on his own. Of course, under oath to the Living God Jesus had to answer, and of course He would tell the truth. And if He told the truth it wasn't blasphemy. During His ministry He had given more than enough evidence in support of His claim. They simply refused to acknowledge it. From the way Caiaphas framed the oath, I think he knew in his heart that Jesus was indeed the Messiah (just as Satan knows it) but had determined to rebel against Him. ^{††} Jesus made it easy for him, gave him more than he asked. According to the Plan, He had to be condemned. ^{‡‡} Just like Satan entered Judas (John 13:27), the gang here was probably under satanic influence (which would help to explain their perversity).

with an oath, "I do not know the man!" ⁷³ But a little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Really, you too are one of them, because your very accent gives you away!" ⁷⁴ Then he began to curse and to swear, "I do not know the man!" And immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ And Peter remembered ^{‡‡†} the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before any rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And going out he cried bitterly.

Crucifixion Day—Friday, 04/05/30

27 When early morning came, all the chief priests and elders plotted against Jesus to kill Him. ² And having bound Him they went and handed Him over to Pontius ^{‡‡†} Pilate, the governor.

The end of Judas—parenthetical

³ (Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, felt regret and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and elders ⁴ saying, "I sinned, by betraying innocent blood." But they said: "What do we care? It's your problem!" ⁵ So throwing the silver down in the sanctuary he left, and went and hanged himself! ⁵⁶ Then the chief priests took the coins and said, "It isn't lawful to put them into the treasury, being blood money." ⁵⁷ So after consultation they bought the potter's field with them, as a burial ground for strangers. ⁸ Therefore that field has been called 'field of blood' to this day. ⁹ Then was fulfilled what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, ^{57††} namely: "And they took the thirty silver coins, the value of the one who was priced, whom some of the children of Israel priced, ¹⁰ and they gave them for the potter's field, just as the LORD directed me.")

Jesus before Pilate

¹¹ So Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him saying, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus said to him, "As you say." ¹² But although the chief priests and elders kept accusing Him, He answered nothing. ¹³ Then Pilate says to Him, "Don't you hear all that they are saying against you?" ¹⁴ But He did

^{‡‡†} Yes, but only after Jesus looked at him (Luke 22:61) and broke the satanic spell (Luke 22:31). ^{‡‡‡} Perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "Pontius" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). [§] For a discussion of the seeming discrepancy with Acts 1:18-19, please see the Appendix: How did Judas die? ^{§†} Having gulped down a camel they now strain out a gnat. When you put on legalistic blinders you lose moral perspective. ^{§††} The quote resembles Zechariah 11:12-13 (not a perfect fit) but really has no counterpart in the canonical Jeremiah. However, Daniel (9:2) refers to "the books" (plural) in connection with Jeremiah the prophet. Just as Jude (verse 14) had access to a prophecy by Enoch, of which no copy survives, Matthew may have had access to other writings of Jeremiah (Daniel 9:2), of which no copy survives. For further discussion of this, please see the Appendix: Jeremiah? Matthew 27:9-10.

not answer him, not even one word, so that the governor was really amazed.

"We want Barabbas!"

¹⁵ Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release one prisoner to the crowd, whomever they wanted. ¹⁶ Just then they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. ¹⁷ So while they were assembled Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release to you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called Messiah?" ¹⁸ For he knew that they had handed Him over through envy.

¹⁹ Now as he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him saying, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, because I suffered a great deal in a dream today because of Him."

²⁰ But the chief priests and elders had persuaded the crowds that they should ask for Barabbas, but destroy Jesus. ²¹ So the governor spoke up and said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" And they said, "Barabbas!" ²² Pilate says to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Messiah?" They all say to him, "Let Him be crucified!" ²³ So the governor said, "But, what evil did He do?" But they kept yelling all the more saying, "Let Him be crucified!" ²⁴ When Pilate saw that nothing was being gained but rather a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd saying: "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man. † It's your problem!" ²⁵ So in answer all the people said, "His blood be upon us and upon our children!" ††²⁶ Then he released Barabbas to them, but Jesus, after flogging Him, ‡ he delivered to be crucified.

Soldiers make fun of Jesus

²⁷ Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. ²⁸ They stripped Him and put a scarlet cloak on Him. ²⁹ They plaited a crown out of thorns and put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and kneeling before Him they would mock Him saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ††³⁰ Spitting on Him they took the reed and hit Him repeatedly on the head. ††³¹ After

† Perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "righteous" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). Notice that Pilate declares Jesus to be righteous. †† Terrible, terrible, terrible! This may well be the worst curse that any parents ever placed upon their descendants. Just terrible!! ‡ Apparently flogging was considered to be a necessary part of the ritual/procedure—you had to flog first, and then crucify! †† They were really having fun! The soldiers were not Jews and presumably did not know anything about Jesus. They probably held a low opinion of Jews in general, and some 'peasant' who thought he was a king, well... †† Here they get nasty. The thorns were probably poisonous and the blows drove the points into His scalp down to the bone. His face began to swell from the poison; the blood oozing from the wounds was mixed with the spit. We assume from Isaiah 50:6 that the soldiers also yanked out parts of His beard, which would have torn away the skin as well. The total

they had mocked Him they took the cloak off Him and put His own clothes back on; and they led Him away to be crucified.

The crucifixion

³² Now as they went out they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon; they compelled HIM to carry His cross. ³³ Upon arriving at a place called Golgotha, which means 'place of a skull', ³⁴ they gave Him sour wine mixed with gall to drink; ††† but having tasted it He would not drink. ³⁵ Having crucified Him they divided up His clothes by casting lots. †††³⁶ And sitting down there they guarded Him. ††³⁷ And they put the charge against Him over His head in writing:

THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. ††

³⁸ Then they crucified two bandits with Him, one on His right and one on His left. ³⁹ And the passers-by kept blaspheming Him, wagging their heads ⁴⁰ and saying: "You who destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself!" "If you are 'Son of God', come down from the cross!" ⁴¹ Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders and Pharisees, said: ⁴² "He saved others; himself he cannot save!" "If he is 'King of Israel' let him come down from the cross now and we will believe him!" †††⁴³ "He trusted in God; let Him rescue him now, IF He wants him; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" ⁴⁴ Even the bandits who were crucified with Him were reviling Him in the same way. ††

Jesus takes the 'wages' for our sin

⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour a darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a LOUD voice saying, "Eli, Eli, lima sabachtani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have You abandoned me?" †††⁴⁷ So upon

effect must have been horrible, leaving Jesus unrecognizable—Isaiah 52:14 was literally fulfilled. ††† This was a small humanitarian gesture—gall is a crude anesthetic, and would deaden the pain. But Jesus refused it, so He remained fully alert on the cross and felt it all. For a discussion of the seeming discrepancy with Mark, please see the Appendix: 'Gall', or 'myrrh'? ††† If they divided up His clothes it means they were no longer on Him—one last bit of humiliation. Perhaps 95% of the Greek manuscripts do NOT have the rest of verse 35 as found in the KJV and NKJV, although it would make a nice addition. § The Lord was alive on the cross for some six hours, and the soldiers had to stay there to make sure no one tried to interfere with 'justice'. So naturally they sat down. †† The board must have been of fair size, because the full Accusation, in three languages (John 19:20), was: "This is Jesus the Natsorean, the king of the Jews". ††† This was a lie; they already knew that Jesus was the Messiah but had deliberately rejected Him. However, if Jesus HAD descended from the cross (as presumably He had the power to do) we would be without hope. The people were being satanically nasty, but Jesus was totally committed to the Father's will and thus the redemptive program was not aborted. †† Evidently they both started out by reviling Him, but later one of them repented—they were on the cross about three hours before the supernatural darkness, so there was time to think. ††† I take it that the Father turned His back on the Son during those three hours—to be separated

hearing it some of the bystanders said, "This *man* is calling Elijah." ⁴⁸ Right then one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a reed and started to give Him a drink; ⁴⁹ but the rest said: "Don't! Let's see if Elijah comes to save Him." †

The shout of *victory*

⁵⁰ Then Jesus called out again with a great shout and dismissed His spirit. ^{†51} And *THEN*, the veil of the temple was ripped in two from top to bottom! ‡ And the earth was shaken, and the rocks were split, ⁵² and the graves were opened. (And many bodies, of the saints who had fallen asleep, were raised; ⁵³ and coming forth out of the graves *AFTER* His resurrection, they entered the holy city and were made visible to many. †) ⁵⁴ Now when the centurion and those with him guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that happened they were scared stiff and said, "This *Man* really was the Son of God!" ‡

⁵⁵ Many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were also there looking on from a distance; ^{††56} among whom were Mary Magdalene,

from the Father is spiritual death. For Jesus to pay for my sin and yours He had to take our wages: "The wages of sin is death"—both physical and spiritual. † Comparing this verse with Mark 15:36 we have an apparent discrepancy: Matthew records that others told the man to stop, while Mark records that the man told them to stop! So which is it? What I imagine is this: as both accounts state, a certain man [could it possibly have been John Mark himself?] decides to offer Jesus a drink of wine vinegar; several others, supposing that Jesus had just called on Elijah, tell him to stop; to which he retorts, "You (pl) stop!" and repeats their statement with sarcasm [anyone who really understood the language would have known that Jesus wasn't calling Elijah at all]. However, it does appear that the man stopped his action before Jesus could drink, since a bit later Jesus says, "I'm thirsty" (John 19:28). †† Oh praise God! Jesus dismissed His spirit (see also John 19:30)—it was not the cross that killed Him (for details see the note at 27:54 below). As He said in John 10:18, "no one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself". I take it that John 19:30 gives the content of the shout—Τετέλεστα!

‡ God Himself ripped the veil (or ordered it done). Access to God's presence is no longer limited to one man once a year. See Hebrews 10:19-22. †† Wow! How would you like a departed saint to knock at your door?! It would be tremendous confirmatory evidence for Christ's resurrection. The Text does not say what happened to these resurrected saints, but to be sent back into the ground would be a real drag. It is more likely that they went with the risen Christ to heaven. ‡‡ "All that happened" is better explained in Mark 15:39—the loud shout followed immediately by death convinced the centurion. He had seen many crucifixions and was doubtless hardened to it. He knew that a person on a cross dies from asphyxiation. The weight of the body pushes the diaphragm against the lungs and you cannot breathe. Nailing the feet was a sadistic procedure that prolonged the agony—rather than die they would push against the nail to get a breath. Finally, when too weak to do that they would die for lack of air. (That is why they broke the legs of the two thieves; they then died within a few minutes.) Obviously, if you are dying without air you cannot shout! The centurion knew that the cross had not killed Jesus. But what mere human can just tell his spirit to leave? 2 + 2 = 4. Jesus had to be the Son of God. ‡‡‡ "Ministering to Him"—here we may have a clue as to how Jesus was maintained financially during His ministry, since He presumably did not have time for carpentry.

Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

The burial

⁵⁷ Now at evening there appeared a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. ^{†††58} This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered that the body be given. ⁵⁹ So taking the body Joseph wrapped it in clean linen cloth ⁶⁰ and placed it in his *own* new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. Then he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb and left. ⁶¹ And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the grave.

The tomb is guarded

⁶² The next day, which is after the Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees went together to Pilate ⁶³ saying: "Sir, we remember that that deceiver, while still alive, said, 'After three days I am going to rise.' ⁶⁴ Therefore command that the grave be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him and say to the people, 'He was raised from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵ So Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go make it as secure as you can!" ⁶⁶ So they went and secured the grave with the guard, having sealed the stone. †

Resurrection Day—Sunday, 04/07/30

28 Now after the Sabbath, at the dawning of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, came to see the tomb. ² Now then, a big earthquake had occurred, because an angel of the Lord, descending out of heaven, had come and rolled back the stone from the door, ^{††} and sat on it! ^{†††3} And his appearance was like lightning and his clothing as white

††† He "appeared"—he had been waiting in the wings. Just as with the owner of the donkey, and the owner of the upper room, who were doubtless advised in advance that their services would be needed, Joseph was prepared. He didn't just "happen" to have a tomb he didn't know what to do with, complete with a large stone just right for sealing. According to Isaiah 53:9 He was to have a rich man's grave, not whatever the common criminals got (the Father did not allow the Son's body to suffer that humiliation). † Was Pilate happy? No he was not! And maybe, just maybe, he was not as stupid as some might like to think. From Mark 15:44-45 we know that he debriefed the centurion, who had to explain why Jesus died sooner than expected! "Make it as sure as you can." Right. For a detailed analysis concerning Pilate, please see the Appendix: Poor Pilate—wrong place, wrong time. †† Ironically those great champions of the Sabbath had to violate the Sabbath to secure the tomb. They thought they were being shrewd, but only played into God's hand. Their effort only made the evidence for the resurrection all the stronger. ††† Perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "from the door" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). †† The stone was not removed to let Jesus out, but to let the witnesses in.

as snow. ⁴ So the guards were shaken for fear of him, and became like dead men.

The angel does his duty

⁵ Now the angel spoke up and said to the women: † “Do not be afraid! I know that you are looking for the Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, because He is risen, just like He said! Come, see the place where the Lord was lying. ††⁷ Now go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead; and get this, He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. There, I have told you!” ††⁸ So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to report to His disciples.

Jesus' second appearance

⁹ But as they were going to report to His disciples, ††⁹ wow, Jesus met them saying, “Rejoice!” So approaching, they held His feet and worshiped Him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus says to them: “Do not be afraid! Go report to my brothers †† that they must go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

Guards are bribed

¹¹ Now while they were going, get this, some of the guard went into the city and reported to the chief

† Comparing this account with Mark 16:5-7 we conclude that the women did not see the angel outside on the stone—he only appeared to them inside the tomb. And if a shining angel had been on the stone Magdalene would not have assumed that the body had been stolen (John 20:2). If I had been one of those guards I think I would have converted on the spot—surely some of them believed and later they gave their eyewitness account to the Christian community. †† Perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “the Lord” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). † It almost sounds like he was glad to get it off his chest. I wonder why. †† Some 12% of the Greek manuscripts omit this first clause (as in NIV, NASB, [LB], TEV, etc.). Mark 16:9 makes clear that the first appearance was to Magdalene. †† The angel said “disciples”, but Jesus said “brothers”. It may be that He was referring precisely to His half-brothers James, Jude, etc. They would not have been in the upper room with the Eleven, and so did not see Him at that time.

priests all that had happened. ††¹² When they had met with the elders and consulted together, they gave plenty of money to the soldiers ¹³ saying: “Say that his disciples came at night and stole him while you were sleeping. ¹⁴ And should this get to the governor, we will persuade him and make you safe.” ¹⁵ So taking the money they did as they were instructed. Their tale is widely spread among the Jews until this day.

The Great Commission

¹⁶ The eleven disciples went into Galilee to the mountain that Jesus had indicated to them. ¹⁷ When they saw Him they worshiped Him; but some doubted. ††¹⁸ And approaching Jesus asserted to them saying: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ As you go, [§] make disciples in all ethnic nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; ††²⁰ teaching them to obey everything that I commanded *you*; ††† and take note, I am with you every day, until the end of the age!” ††

Amen.

††† “Some”—so where were the rest? Those who were converted, as I suppose, would not want to be part of the cover-up. ††† The Text actually says “they doubted”—it seems improbable that all of them would doubt (after all, they had seen Him at least twice already), so most translations render “some”. Although verse 16 refers specifically to the eleven, there may have been others (like His half-brothers, verse 10) along who had not seen Him yet. § The familiar ‘therefore’ is found in perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts. †† Our Lord defines the Trinity here. According to Greek grammar the use of ‘and’ plus the definite article with items in a series makes clear that the items are distinct entities. So “the Father” is different from “the Son” is different from “the Holy Spirit”. So we have three persons. But He also said, “in *THE* name”, singular, not ‘names’. So we have only one name. God is one ‘name’ or essence subsisting in three persons. ††† The ‘you’ here refers to the eleven (see verse 16), so they were to pass down all the commands that Jesus had given them. To be a disciple of Jesus you have to do everything that Jesus had commanded the eleven to do—this includes healing and casting out demons, as well as preaching the Gospel. †† Since the age has not ended, Jesus is still with us. Praise God!

Mark

1 A beginning [†] of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God! ^{††}

John the Baptizer

² As it is written in the prophets [‡]
—“Take note, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way before you.” ^{††}

³ “A voice calling out:

‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the *LORD*,
make His paths straight!’” ^{††}—

⁴ John started baptizing in the wilderness ^{†††} and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins. ^{†††5} Well, the whole Judean countryside and the Jerusalemites started going out to him, and were all being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

⁶ Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist; and he was eating locusts and wild honey. ⁵⁷ And he was proclaiming: “After me my Superior is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loosen. ⁸ I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with Holy Spirit.” ^{5†}

[†] *There is no definite article with 'beginning'; and of course the other three Gospels have different 'beginnings'.* ^{††} *There is no definite article with 'Son', which in this case emphasizes the inherent quality of the noun.* [‡] *Around 3.3% of the Greek manuscripts have 'Isaiah the prophet' instead of 'the prophets' (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The 96.7% are correct.* ^{††} *See Malachi 3:1.*
^{††} *See Isaiah 40:3. My rendering follows that of the translation of the Jewish Publication Society, which reflects normal Hebrew parallelism.* ^{†††} *He was 'preparing the way of the Lord', and doing so in the wilderness.* ^{†††} *There are those who squirm at the plain meaning of the Text—John was offering forgiveness of sins. Well, throughout the Old Testament, if you brought an animal offering you were confessing to being a sinner, and expecting to be forgiven. As forerunner to the Lamb of God, who would provide the ultimate payment for sin, John represented a transition, from the old to the new.*
[§] *Honey is an excellent food; his locusts were probably considerably larger than our grasshoppers.* ^{5†} *There is no definite article with Holy Spirit, so I take it that we should consider the phrase as a proper name. Two baptisms are here contrasted: 1) John the agent with water as the vehicle; 2) Jesus the agent with the Holy Spirit as the vehicle. A baptism where the Holy Spirit is the agent is distinct from these. But how and when does Jesus baptize us with the Holy Spirit? He does so from His position at the Father's right hand, when we believe into Him. From then on the Spirit indwells us, and is closely associated with our 'new man'.*

Jesus is baptized

⁹ Well it happened in those days that Jesus came from Natsareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And immediately upon coming up from ^{5††} the water He saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon Him. ¹¹ And a *Voice* came from the heavens: “You are my Son, the beloved, in whom I am well pleased!” ^{5†}

Jesus is tested

¹² Immediately the Spirit impelled Him into the wilderness. ¹³ And He was there in the wilderness forty days being tested ^{5††} by Satan, and was with the wild animals; ^{5†} and the angels were ministering to Him. ^{5†}

Jesus ministers in Galilee

¹⁴ Now after John was put in prison, ^{5††} Jesus went into Galilee proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom ^{5††} of God, ¹⁵ and saying: “The time has been fulfilled and the Kingdom of God has approached. Repent and believe in the Gospel.” ^{5††}

Peter, Andrew, James, John

¹⁶ Then, as He was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother, of Simon, ¹⁸ casting a circular net onto the water, ¹⁹ for they were

^{5††} *Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts have 'out of' instead of 'from' (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).* ^{5†} *Here we have the three persons of the Godhead clearly represented: the Father by the Voice, the Holy Spirit by the dove, and Jesus was the Son. This was doubtless an important affirmation for Jesus.* ^{5††} *Our 'test' and 'tempt' are translations of a single Greek word, the context determining the choice. To tempt is to test in the area of morals. In this context I consider that 'tempt' is too limited, but it is included in the wider meaning of 'test'. Note that the Spirit impelled Him, which means that this was a necessary part of the Plan. The three specific tests recorded by Matthew and Luke presumably happened near the end of the forty days.* ^{5†} *The Creator had nothing to fear from the animals.* ^{5†} *The parallel passage in Matthew 4:11 gives the impression that the angels waited until the devil left. In that event, Jesus bested Satan without angelic help.* ^{5††} *This was probably around a year after His baptism, during the second half of 27 AD.* ^{5††} *Some 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit 'of the Kingdom' (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).* ^{5††} *John, His herald, is in prison—his ministry and function have ended. So Jesus takes up John's message and continues with it.* ¹⁸ *Some 90% of the Greek manuscripts have 'his brother, of Simon'—presumably a*

fishermen. ¹⁷ So Jesus said to them: “Come, follow me and I will turn you into fishers of men.” ^{†18} At once they left their nets ^{††} and followed Him. ¹⁹ And going on from there a little ways He saw James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John; they were in their boat mending their nets. ²⁰ Right away He called them, and leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men they followed Him.

A demonized man

²¹ Then they went into Capernaum. [‡] The very next Sabbath He entered the synagogue and began to teach. ²² And they kept on being amazed at His teaching, because He was teaching them as one having authority, and not like the scribes. ^{‡†}

²³ Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, ²⁴ saying: “Hey, what do you want with us, Jesus Natsarene?! ^{‡‡} Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” ²⁵ So Jesus rebuked him saying: “Shut up and get out of him!” ^{‡‡26} The unclean spirit, convulsing

reference to their father. If Peter was the eldest son, he would have been named for his father. 19 Fishing with a circular net is very common here in Brazil. You have to throw it with a circular motion so it spreads out and lands on the water as a full circle. The lead weights around the edges then start sinking and hopefully some fish will be caught in the middle. † They had already spent time with Jesus—at the wedding in Cana, in Judea, in Samaria—so their reaction is not surprising. †† They had an assortment. They probably also had hired men (verse 20), so their equipment would be cared for. ‡ By this time Jesus had been rejected in Natsareth (Luke 4:16-30) and had moved to Capernaum, which became His base of operations (Luke 4:31-32). ‡† Presumably the scribes would cite ‘authorities’ for more than one position, and leave the conclusion up in the air—but not Jesus. ‡‡ The name of the town in Hebrew is based on the consonants נצר (resh, tsadde, nun), but since Hebrew is read from right to left, for us the order is reversed = n, ts, r. This word root means ‘branch’. Greek has the equivalent for ‘ps’ and ‘ks’, but not for ‘ts’, so the transliteration used a ζ (zeta) ‘dz’, which is the voiced counterpart of ‘ts’. But when the Greek was transliterated into English it came out as ‘z’! But Hebrew has a ‘z’, ז (zayin), so in transliterating back into Hebrew people assumed the consonants נצר, replacing the correct tsadde with zayin. Neither ‘Nazareth’ nor ‘Nazarene’, spelled with a zayin, is to be found in the Old Testament, but there is a prophetic reference to Messiah as the Branch, netser—Isaiah 11:1—and several to the related word, tsemach—Isaiah 4:2, Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15; Zechariah 3:8, 6:12. So Matthew (2:23) is quite right—the prophets (plural, being at least three) referred to Christ as the Branch. Since Jesus was a man, He would be the ‘Branch-man’, from ‘Branch-town’. Which brings us to the word ‘Natsorean’. The familiar ‘Nazarene’ (Ναζαρηνοϛ) [Natsarene] occurs in Mark 1:24, 14:67, 16:6 and Luke 4:34, but in Matthew 2:23 and in fourteen other places, including Acts 22:8 where the glorified Jesus calls HIMSELF that, the word is ‘Natsorean’ (Ναζωραιοϛ), which is quite different. I have been given to understand that the Natsareth of Jesus’ day had been founded some 100 years before by a Branch family, who called it Branch town; they were very much aware of the prophecies about the Branch and fully expected the Messiah to be born from among them—they called themselves Branch-people (Natsoreans). Of course everyone else thought it was a big joke and tended to look down on them. “Can anything good...?” ^{‡‡†} The demon had no business piping up, and he did so without due respect, so the Lord did not waste any kind words on him. Since the speaker said ‘us’, there may have been more than one.

him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ^{‡‡27} And all were astounded, so that they questioned among themselves, saying: “What is this? What can this new doctrine be? [§] Because with authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him!” ²⁸ So His fame spread directly into the whole surrounding area of Galilee.

Peter's mother-in-law

²⁹ Immediately upon exiting the synagogue they went into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰ Simon's mother-in-law was lying down with a fever, ^{§†} so without delay they told Him about her. ³¹ So He went and grasping her hand lifted her up; immediately the fever left her and she began to serve them. ^{§††}

Many healings

³² That evening, when the sun had set, they started bringing to Him all who were sick and the demonized. ³³ So much so that the whole town was gathered at the door, ³⁴ and He healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew He was Messiah. ^{§†}

Alone to pray

³⁵ Now very early, still night, He got up, slipped out, and went off to a solitary place, where He was praying. ³⁶ Simon and those with him hunted for Him, ³⁷ and upon finding Him they said to Him, “Everyone is looking for you.” ³⁸ But He said to them: “Let us go to the neighboring towns, so I can preach there also; that is why I have come.” ^{§††}

³⁹ He was constantly preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and also casting out demons. ^{§†}

^{‡‡‡} Demons like to put on a show; personally, I like to deprive them of that ‘pleasure’ by forbidding any manifestation at the outset. [§] Instead of ‘what can this new doctrine be’, perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have ‘a new doctrine’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, etc.). ^{§†} The parallel passage in Luke 4:37 specifies that it was a high fever—she was burning. The case mentioned in Matthew 8:14-15 is probably different, happening some time later. ^{§††} A high fever usually leaves a person weak, even after it passes, so we really have a double miracle here: Jesus dismissed the fever, but also reversed its effect. ^{§‡} I here follow some 40% of the Greek manuscripts, including the best line of transmission; most versions omit “He was Messiah”. ^{§††} I here follow some 40% of the Greek manuscripts, including the best line of transmission; most versions have ‘come forth’, presumably referring to why He had slipped out of town (which doesn’t make very good sense). ^{§†} Was Galilee infested with demons? Beginning with Abraham, God declared a special interest in that area, so it is predictable that Satan would also devote special attention to it.

The hinge—proof, evaluation, rejection, blasphemy

A leper—the proof

⁴⁰ A leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling before Him and saying to Him, “If you want to, you are able to cleanse me.” ⁴¹ So being moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, [†] and said to him: “I want to; be cleansed!” ⁴² And when He said this, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. ⁴³ And He sent him away at once, sternly warning him, ⁴⁴ by saying: “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing the things that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.” ^{††45} However he went out and began to proclaim it freely, spreading the news, [‡] so that He was no longer able to enter a town openly, but remained outside in deserted places; yet they kept coming to Him from all over. ^{‡‡}

A paralytic—the evaluation

2 Well a few days later, He again entered Capernaum, and it was heard that He was at home. ² Without delay so many were gathered together that there was no more room, not even around the door, and He was speaking the Word to them. ³ Then four men came, carrying a paralytic to Him. ⁴ And not being able to get near Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof where He was; ^{‡‡} upon breaking through they lowered the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. ⁵ So seeing their faith Jesus says to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.” ⁶ Now some of the scribes were sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts: ⁷ “Why does this guy speak blasphemies like that? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” ⁸ Immediately Jesus perceived in His spirit what they were reasoning within themselves ^{‡‡‡} and said to them: “Why are you reasoning these things in your hearts? ⁹ Which is easier: ^{‡‡‡} to say to the paralytic

[†] Wow! In those days, no one would touch a leper, because of contamination. Notice that Jesus agreed with the leper: “I want to; be cleansed!” Beautiful! ^{††} This would be the first case the priest had ever had of evaluating a cleansed leper, because only the Messiah could cure leprosy. By instructing the cleansed leper in this way, Jesus was serving notice to the priests that the Messiah had come. [‡] But he did go to the priest, which resulted in the following evaluation—Luke makes this point clearly in his parallel account. That said, however, I can sympathize with that leper—he had good reason to sound off! But it did increase the pressure on Jesus. ^{‡†} There were an awful lot of sick people who all of a sudden had hope. ^{‡‡} The roof was presumably flat, with an outside staircase leading up to it. I suppose damaging someone else’s roof could be considered a crime, but they were determined. If Jesus was in His own house, there would be no problem. ^{‡‡†} Time and again the Inspired Record will point out that Jesus could read people’s thoughts. ^{‡‡‡} I suppose the point to be that the first is easier to say

ic, ‘Your sins have been forgiven’, or to say, ‘Get up, pick up your pallet and start walking!’? ¹⁰ But so that you may know that the Son of the Man [§] has authority on the earth to forgive sins”—He says to the paralytic: ¹¹ “To you I say, get up, pick up your pallet and go to your house!” ¹² So forthwith he got up, picked up his pallet and went out in front of them all; so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!” ^{§†}

Matthew called

¹³ Then He went out again by the sea; and the whole crowd came to Him, and He began to teach them. ¹⁴ As He passed by, ^{§††} He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office, and He said to him, “Follow me!” So he got up and followed Him.

¹⁵ Now it happened, as He was reclining at the table in his house, ^{§‡} that many tax collectors and sinners ^{§‡‡} joined Jesus and His disciples at the table; for there were many and they followed Him. ¹⁶ The scribes and the Pharisees, seeing Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, said to His disciples, “Why is it that He is eating and drinking with the tax collectors and sinners?” ¹⁷ Upon hearing it Jesus said to them: “It is not the healthy who have need of a doctor, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” ^{§†}

Fasting

¹⁸ Now John’s disciples and those of the Pharisees were fasting; and they came and said to Him, “Why do John’s disciples and those of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not?” ¹⁹ So Jesus said to them: “Can the groomsmen fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom to themselves they cannot fast. ²⁰ But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast, in those days.” ^{§‡}

[§] That is what the Text says, “the Son of the Man”, which appears to be a phrase coined by the Lord Jesus to refer to Himself. The phrase does not make very good sense in English, at first glance, but if “THE man” refers to pristine Adam and “THE son” to an only pristine descendant, it makes great sense. It seems to indicate a perfect human prototype, like Adam was before the fall—the human side of the God-man. ^{§†} Quite right; they never had! ^{§††} Presumably this happened as He headed out toward the sea. ^{§‡} Matthew’s—he evidently put on a big dinner and invited all his associates. ^{§‡†} ‘Tax collectors and sinners’ seems to have been almost a frozen idiom. A Jew who collected taxes for Rome was viewed as a traitor and held in very low esteem. ^{§†} Perhaps 10% of the Greek manuscripts omit ‘to repentance’, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. ^{§‡} Some 15% of the Greek manuscripts read ‘day’ instead of ‘days’ (as in NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.), but presumably the fasting would take place on more than one day.

Cloth and wineskins

²¹ “Further, no one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, or else the new tears away some of the old, and a worse hole results. ²² And no one puts new wine into old wineskins, or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine spills out and the skins will be ruined; rather, new wine must be put into new wineskins.” †

Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath ††

²³ Now it happened, on a Sabbath, that He was passing through some grain fields, and His disciples began to make a path, picking the heads of grain. ²⁴ So the Pharisees said to Him, “Just look, why are they doing on a Sabbath that which is not permitted?” ²⁵ And He said to them: “Did you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him? ²⁶ How he entered the house of God (making Abiathar high priest) ‡ and ate the consecrated bread, which only priests are permitted to eat, and shared it with those who were with him?” ²⁷ Then He said to them: “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ††²⁸ Therefore the Son of the Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.” ††

A Sabbath healing—the rejection

3 Another time He went into the synagogue, and there was a man there with a withered hand. ² So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. ³ Well, He says to the man with the withered hand, “Come out in the middle!” ⁴ Then He said to them: “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they remained silent. ⁵ After looking around at them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts, ††† He says to the man, “Stretch out your hand!” So he stretched, and his hand was restored as healthy as the other! †††⁶ Then the Pharisees went

† *There is no way of renewing an old wineskin. Whenever a church becomes an ‘old wineskin’, any introduction of new wine will always cause a split. Anyone who wants to obey the Holy Spirit will probably not be welcome in such a church. To be with Jesus it is often necessary to go ‘outside the camp’ (Hebrews 13:13).* †† *Between verses 22 and 23 all of John chapter 5 takes place—that chapter revolves around the second Passover of His public ministry, in 28 AD* † † *My rendering is rather different than the ‘in the days of Abiathar the high priest’ of the AV. We are translating three Greek words that very literally would be ‘upon Abiathar high priest’. As a direct result of David’s visit, Abiathar became high priest. For a complete discussion please see the Appendix: Abiathar is not Ahimelech.* †† *This is a crucial point. The Pharisees, etc., had turned the Sabbath into an instrument of domination that they used to impose their authority on the people.* †† *The Lord of the Sabbath can change the rules, or even retire it! Jesus’ claim was totally unacceptable to the Pharisees; He was depriving them of their favorite instrument.* ††† *They had no compassion, no agape*

††† *Perhaps 5% of the Greek*

straight out, and with the Herodians [§] started hatching a plot against Him, how they might destroy Him.

Healings by the sea

⁷ Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea; and a large crowd from Galilee followed Him—also from Judea, ⁸ from Jerusalem, from Idumea and beyond Jordan; even those around Tyre and Sidon. A huge crowd came to Him, having heard the sorts of things He kept doing. ⁹ So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the crowd, lest they should press in on Him. ¹⁰ Because He had healed many, so that as many as had afflictions were pushing toward Him so as to touch Him. ¹¹ And the unclean spirits—whenever one saw Him, he would fall down before Him and cry out, saying, “You are the son of God!” ¹² And He kept giving them strict orders that they should not make Him known. ††

The Twelve chosen

¹³ He went up on the mountain and summoned those whom He wanted, and they came to Him. ¹⁴ He appointed twelve, ††† that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach ¹⁵ —also to have authority to heal sicknesses and †† to cast out demons: ¹⁶ namely Peter (a name He gave to Simon); ¹⁷ James son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (and a name He gave to them was *Boanerges*, that is, ‘Sons of thunder’); ¹⁸ Andrew, Phillip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananite; ¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

²⁰ Then they went into a house; ††† and again a multitude gathered, so that they were not even able to eat bread. ²¹ Well upon hearing this His family came to apprehend Him, because they were saying, “He is out of his mind!” ††

Scribes blaspheme the Holy Spirit

²² Then some scribes who had come down from Jerusalem †† started saying, “He has Beelzebul,” ††† and

manuscripts omit ‘as healthy as the other’, as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. § *Pharisees and Herodians were political opponents, so this was a strange alliance; evidently they perceived Jesus as a common enemy; such a serious enemy that He needed destroying.* †† *I wonder why the demons felt compelled to proclaim who Jesus was, evidently. I would say that He generally has the opposite problem with us!* ††† *Less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, add ‘whom He also named apostles’, presumably imported from Luke 6:13, to be followed by NIV, LB, TEV, etc.* †† *Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit ‘to heal diseases and’, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.* ††† *This may well have been His own house in Capernaum. If He were in someone else’s house, the hosts could have protected Him so He could at least eat.* †† *Go down to verse 31 for more about this.* ††† *They had come all the way to Galilee, just to combat Jesus.* ††† *All Greek manuscripts have ‘Beelzebul’, rather than the familiar ‘Beelzebub’, that is a carryover from the Latin.*

"It is by the ruler of the demons that he casts out demons." ²³ So summoning them He started saying to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? ²⁴ If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵ And if a household is divided against itself, that household cannot stand. ²⁶ And if Satan has risen up against himself and become divided, he cannot stand, but is finished. ²⁷ No one can plunder the strong man's goods, [†] invading his house, unless he first binds the strong man—then he may plunder the house.

²⁸ "Assuredly I say to you: all the sins of the sons of men can be forgiven, including whatever blasphemies they may utter; ²⁹ but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation" ^{††30} —because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit." [‡]

Jesus goes on the offensive

New relationships

³¹ Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him. ³² A crowd was sitting around Him; so they said to Him, "Look, your mother and your brothers and your sisters ^{‡†} are outside asking for you." ³³ He answered them saying, "Who is my mother or my brothers?" ³⁴ And looking around at those seated in a circle around Him He said: "Behold my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ Because whoever does the will of God, the same is my brother, my sister, my mother." [‡]

Many parables

4 Once again He began to teach beside the sea. And a large crowd was gathered to Him, so that He got into the boat and sat down, out on the water, while the whole crowd was on the land, at the water's edge.

[†] Since the definite article occurs with 'strong man' the first time the phrase occurs, the entity has already been introduced, so the reference is to Satan. Here is a biblical basis for binding Satan, which is now possible because of Christ's victory. Hebrews 2:14 informs us that Jehovah the Son took on human form to destroy the devil, while 1 John 3:8 affirms that He was manifested to undo the works of the devil. But in John 20:21 the resurrected Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, so send I you", and not long after that He returned to the Father. He defeated Satan alright, but it is up to us to 'undo the works'. ^{††} Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read 'sin' instead of 'condemnation', to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. [‡] Those scribes committed the unpardonable sin. They said that the Holy Spirit was Satan; that His work was Satan's. Are there not those in our day who have done the same thing? ^{‡†} The reference to 'sisters' makes clear that the 'brothers' were indeed Mary's sons. Some 30% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'and your sisters' (as in TR, AV and NKJV). ^{‡‡} The claims of Christ's Kingdom are more important than the claims of one's family. Of course, if a true disciple's family does not share his commitment, they are not going to like it.

² Then He began teaching them many things by parables and said to them in His teaching:

Parable of the soils

³ "Listen! Yes, a sower went out to sow. ⁴ And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell along the path, and the birds ^{‡‡†} came and devoured it. ⁵ Some fell on the rocky area where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly because it had no depth of soil. ⁶ But upon the sun's rising it was scorched, and because it had no root it was withered up. ⁷ And some fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up and smothered it, and it yielded no fruit. ⁸ And some fell into the good ground, and coming up and growing it started to produce fruit—yielding thirty times as much, sixty times as much, even a hundred times as much." ⁹ Then He said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

The why of parables

¹⁰ But when He was alone, those who were around Him, with the twelve, ^{‡‡†} asked Him about the parable. ¹¹ So He said to them: "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, everything is being given in parables, ¹² so that:

'Seeing they may see, and not perceive;
and hearing they may hear, and not understand;
so that they should not return
and their sins be forgiven them.'" [§]

'The soils' explained

¹³ Then He said to them: "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? ¹⁴ The sower sows the Word. ¹⁵ These are the ones where the Word is sown along the path: as soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the Word that was sown in their hearts. ^{§†16} Similarly, these are

^{‡‡†} The AV and NKJV add 'of the air', following the TR and perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts. ^{‡‡‡} Evidently there were some regular followers beyond the twelve. In fact, later on He would send out seventy, two by two (Luke 10:1). [§] See Isaiah 6:9-10. Jesus only started using parables after He had been rejected by the religious leaders. As Jesus clearly states, He started using parables so the people would NOT understand. (Any claim that Jesus was a 'great teacher' based on His use of parables is just hot air.) If parables are not to be understood, then no doctrine should ever be based on one—but if the Lord interpreted it, the interpretation may be used. Perhaps 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "their sins" (to be followed by NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.). ^{§†} This statement is really a continuation of that given in Mark 3:27. The Lord Jesus declares that it is impossible to steal Satan's goods unless we bind him first. (From His use of "no one" it seems clear that the Lord is enunciating a general principle or truth.) And what might the nature of those 'goods' be? In the context (see Matthew 12:22-24) Jesus had delivered someone from a demon that caused blindness and dumbness, and in their comments the scribes and Pharisees include other instances where Jesus had expelled demons—it seems clear that the 'goods' are people who are subject to Satan's power, in

the ones sown on the rocky area: as soon as they hear the Word they receive it with joy,¹⁷ but since they have no root in themselves they are temporary—when oppression or persecution comes because of the Word, they quickly fall away.¹⁸ And these are the ones sown among the thorns: they hear the Word,¹⁹ but the worries of this age, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the undue desires for other things come in and smother the Word, and it becomes unfruitful.²⁰ And these are the ones sown on the good ground: such people hear the Word, welcome it and produce fruit—thirty times as much, sixty times as much, even a hundred times as much.”

The candlestick

²¹ Also He said to them: “The lamp is not brought to be put under a box^{††} or under a bed, is it? Is it not to be placed on its stand?²² For there is no ‘hidden’ that may not be exposed, nor has anything been concealed but that it should come to light.²³ If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!”²⁴ Then He said to them: “Pay attention to what you hear. With the same measure you use it will be measured to you in return; and to you who hear, ‡ more will be added.²⁵ Because whoever has, to him more will be given; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”

‡†

one way or another. Thus we have the same essential truth as that declared in Acts 26:18—we have to do something about Satan’s power over a person so that he or she can be saved! But what does Satan do to people that makes it necessary to “bind” him? We find the answer in 2 Corinthians 4:4. Let us begin with verse 3: “If our gospel is veiled it is veiled to them who are perishing, in whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers so that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine in them.” The Text clearly states that Satan, ‘the god of this world’, is in the business of blinding the minds of unbelievers when they hear the Gospel, so they will not understand, so they will not be convicted, so they will not repent and convert. This is a terrible truth, the most terrible truth in the world, at least as I see it. The enemy has access to our minds, access in the sense that he has the power or ability to invade them, whether by introducing thoughts or by jamming our reasoning. The Lord Jesus declared this truth when He explained the parable of the sower. “These are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown; but, as soon as they hear it Satan comes and takes away the Word that was planted in their hearts” (Mark 4:15). In the parallel passage in Luke 8:12 Jesus adds the following words: “lest they believe and be saved”. Note that the Word is already in the mind or heart of the person, but then Satan comes, invades the mind and “takes away” that Word. I am not sure just how this intrusion by the enemy works, perhaps he causes a mental block of some sort, but the practical effect is that the Word becomes ineffective, as if the person had not even heard it. Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, read ‘them’, instead of ‘their hearts’ (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). † Note that with both the stones and the thorns, the seed did germinate; there was life. †† The reference is to a peck measure, whether a box or a basket (or a basin). ‡ Less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit ‘to you who hear’, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. The phrase is relevant to verse 25. ‡† To stand still spiritually is not an available option. Either we grow, or we lose. Spiritual growth is like riding up an incline on a bi-

Spontaneous growth

²⁶ He also said: “The Kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter the seed on the ground²⁷ and should sleep and get up night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how.²⁸ All by itself the earth produces fruit: first a shoot, then a head of grain, then full grain in the head.²⁹ But as soon as the grain is ready, he sends in the sickle, because the harvest has come.” ‡†

The mustard seed

³⁰ Again He said: “To what shall we compare the Kingdom of God, or with what sort of parable should we illustrate it?³¹ It is like a mustard seed, that when it is sown on the ground is the smallest of all such seeds, ‡†† yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden herbs and produces big branches, so that the birds of the air are able to rest in its shade.” ‡††

³³ It was with many such parables that He was speaking the word to them, as they were able to hear it.

³⁴ But apart from a parable He did not speak to them; privately, however, He would explain everything to His disciples.

A supernatural tempest

³⁵ On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.”³⁶ Since He was already in the boat,[§] they took off with Him, leaving the crowd behind (other little boats were also with Him).^{§†37} Well a strong cyclonic wind came up, such that the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling up.³⁸ But *HE* was on the poop deck, sleeping on the cushion; §†† so they awakened Him and

cycle with no brakes—if you stop pedaling, you go backwards. ‘The same measure’ includes effort; ‘hearing’ implies doing something about it. ‡† We do not have to understand how God works; we just have to do our part, and the harvest will come. ‡†† The rendering ‘the smallest seed in the world/earth’ is unfortunate and misleading. The Text has ‘of those on the ground’, repeating the phrase above it, only eliding the verb. The Lord was not making a global botanical statement, as the next verse makes clear—He was referring to vegetables planted in a garden in His day and in that area, and of such herbs mustard had the smallest seed. To object that tobacco and orchid seeds are smaller is beside the point. ‡†† The verb I have rendered ‘to rest’ is a compound form. The noun root refers to a temporary shelter, like a tent or a hut. The verbal form means to make use of such a shelter. Here the preposition kata is prefixed to the verb, emphasizing, as I suppose, the temporariness. The Text says that the birds can use the SHADE, not the branches. But shade moves with the sun, and with the wind—how can you build a nest in something that keeps moving around (the Text actually says ‘under its shade’)? § Going back to 4:1, He was already in the boat. I would say that the explanations recorded in 4:10-20 actually happened later. §† I do not know why Mark mentions the other boats—maybe some of the crowd had come in them. In any case, they evidently did not follow Him across the lake (they may have been dangerously small to attempt it). §†† In keeping with the size of the boat, the poop deck was probably just big enough for some-

said to Him, "Teacher, don't you care that we are perishing?" ^{†39} Then, having been awakened, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Shut up; be muzzled!" So the wind stopped and there was a complete calm. ^{††40} And He said to them: "Why are you so afraid? How is it that you have no faith?" ^{††41} They were terrified and started saying to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!?" ^{††}

The 'legion'

5 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the region of the Gadarenes. ^{††2} And when He got out of the boat, right away a man with an unclean spirit met Him, coming from the tombs. ³ —He had his dwelling among the tombs. No one could bind him, not even with chains, ⁴ because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, only to have had the chains torn apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; no one had been strong enough to tame him. ⁵ Always, night and day, in the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying out and cutting himself with stones. ^{††—} ⁶ When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and knelt down to Him, ^{††7} and with a loud cry he said: "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore you by God, ⁵ don't torment me!" ⁸ Because He was saying to him, "You unclean spirit, come out of the man!" ⁹ Then He asked him, "What is your name?" And he answered, saying, "Legion ^{5†} is my

one to lie down on it. Jesus was not down in the boat or He would already be covered with water. He was so worn out that not even the storm aroused Him—they probably had to shake Him. † There were professional fishermen in that boat, who had seen no end of storms on that lake, but this one was unusual. Satan saw where Jesus was heading and did not want to lose his prize victim, so he made a valiant effort to stop Him. †† Jesus performed a double miracle here. First, He made the wind stop short. But once water is agitated, it takes a while to calm down, even if the cause is gone, so second, He smoothed out the water immediately. ‡ Jesus is evidently saying that they should not have been afraid, and that they themselves could have solved the problem—if they had the faith. I imagine that the Lord would say something similar to us, when we fail to respond appropriately to difficult circumstances that take us by surprise. †† Well really, what were the options?—human being, angelic being (good or bad), God. Who can turn water into wine, cleanse lepers, raise dead, feed 5,000 with five loaves, etc.? †† A very small handful (0.3%; 5 mss out of some 1,700) of objectively inferior Greek manuscripts have 'Gerasenes' instead of 'Gadarenes' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). Gadara being the Roman capital of the province of Perara, located some six miles from the Sea of Galilee, 'the region of the Gadarenes' is a perfectly reasonable description of the site, especially since Mark was writing for a Roman audience. For a more detailed discussion, please see the Appendix: The 'Legion' and the pigs; where was it? ††† Here in Brazil, where Spiritism and Satanism are out in the open, this sort of thing is well known. The demons 'heal' the victims so they don't become incapacitated. ††† I find this to be curious: this was an unusually powerful demon, yet he knelt to Jesus, whereas many lesser ones evidently did not (although they all knew who Jesus really was). § Now really, a demon appealing to God! Since he had recognized, correctly, that Jesus was 'Son of the Most High God', he was appealing to Him through His Father—pretty shrewd! (I assume that he had been informed that the attempt to destroy Jesus with the storm had failed.)

name, because we are many." ¹⁰ He started begging Him repeatedly that He would not send them out of that region. ^{††11} Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. ¹² So all the demons ^{5†} begged Him saying, "Send us into the pigs, so that we may enter them." ¹³ And forthwith Jesus gave them permission; and coming out the unclean spirits went into the pigs (there were about two thousand); but the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and they were drowned by the sea. ^{5††}

¹⁴ So those who were tending the pigs ran off and reported it in the town and the countryside. And they went out to see what it was that had happened.

¹⁵ They came to Jesus and observed the man who had been demonized, who had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid.

¹⁶ Those who had seen it related to them how it happened to the demonized man, and about the pigs.

¹⁷ Then they began to implore Him to depart from their borders. ^{5†}

¹⁸ Well upon His getting into the boat, the man who had been demonized started begging Him that he might be with Him. ¹⁹ But Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your family and report to them how much the Lord ^{5†} has done for you; and He had mercy on you." ²⁰ So he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and all were marveling. ²¹ Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered to Him; and He was by the sea.

A hemorrhage and a dead girl

²² And then, one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, comes, and upon finding Him he falls at His feet ²³ and pleads earnestly with Him, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death; do come and lay your hands on her ^{5††} so that she may be saved, and

5† A full Roman legion was 6,000 men, but many legions had only half that many. On the basis of verse 12, one wonders if there could have been 2,000 demons. This being the only recorded instance where Jesus asked a demon's name, I wonder why He did. Since He presumably already knew, I take it that He did it so we would have a record of demonic infestation. I see no basis here for needing to know a demon's name before you can cast it out. 5†† Demons are territorial. (See also Daniel 10.) The parallel passage in Luke records that they also begged not to be sent to the Abyss. 5† Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'all the demons', to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. (except that some supply 'the demons', but not 'all'). 5†† For the demons to destroy the herd would be self-defeating; I take it that the pigs preferred death to demons (animals often show better sense than people do). Since the Law forbade eating pork, presumably Jesus was not particularly disturbed (and I suppose it is possible that He Himself stampeded the pigs). 5† So far as we know, Jesus never went back there. The loss of the pigs was a hard blow to the local economy, so Jesus was obviously a 'dangerous' person to have around. The pigs were more important to them than the man. 5† Note that the Text has 'the Lord', not 'God'—since Jesus presumably was speaking Hebrew, He probably used God's personal name, Jehovah, to give that translation. In verse 20 the man credits 'Jesus'. 5†† This sort of thing happened

she will live.”²⁴ So He went with him. A large crowd was also following Him, and they were pressing around Him.

The hemorrhage

²⁵ Now a certain woman—who had been bleeding for twelve years,²⁶ and had suffered many things under many doctors, and had spent all that she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse—²⁷ when she heard about Jesus, she came from behind in the crowd and touched His garment.²⁸ (She had kept saying, “If I can just touch His clothes, I will be healed.”)^{†29} Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up, and she knew in her body that she was healed from the affliction.³⁰ And instantly Jesus perceived within Himself that some power had gone out of Him, and turning around in the crowd He said, “Who touched my clothes?”³¹ So His disciples said to Him, “You see the crowd pressing around you, yet you say, ‘Who touched me?’?”³² But He kept looking around to see who had done it.³³ So the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth.^{††34} And He said to her: “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go into peace[‡] and be healed from your affliction.”

The dead girl

³⁵ While He was still speaking, they came from the synagogue ruler's house saying: “Your daughter died. Why trouble the teacher further?”^{††36} But immediately upon hearing the spoken message Jesus said to the synagogue ruler, “Don't be afraid; just believe!”³⁷ He allowed no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James.^{††38} Then He came to the synagogue ruler's house and found a commotion—weeping and loud wailing.³⁹ So upon entering He said to them: “Why are you making such a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead, but is asleep.”⁴⁰ But they started ridiculing Him.^{††} After He put them all out, He took the child's father and mother, and those with Him,^{†††} and went in where the child was ly-

more than once; the Jews evidently believed that His physical presence was necessary. † The street was packed with people; the crowd was on both sides of Jesus, as well as behind. So she had to push her way forward, and no doubt got plenty of dirty looks, and maybe a few elbows—it would have been easy to give up, but she kept repeating her expectation to herself to keep up her courage (and she was desperate). †† That was not easy, in front of the crowd. ‡ That is what the Text says, ‘into’ not ‘in’. To go in peace is to leave on good terms, no hard feelings. But what might going INTO peace be? I would say that you take the peace with you; you live within an atmosphere of peace. Now that is a proper ‘blessing’! †† Healing is one thing, raising the dead is another! ††† At this point He told the crowd to stop, so He could proceed at a brisk pace, accompanied only by the three disciples and the father (the messengers doubtless followed). ††† They knew that she was dead, as indeed she was. †††† Peter was there, and he helped Mark write this Gospel.

ing.⁴¹ And taking the child by the hand He said to her, “*Talitha koumi*,” which is translated, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”⁴² Immediately the girl got up and started walking around (she was twelve years old). And they were overcome with great amazement.⁴³ He gave them strict orders that no one should know about it, and said to give her something to eat.[§]

A visit to Natsareth

6 Then He went out from there and came to His hometown,^{§†} and His disciples followed Him.² And when the Sabbath came He began to teach in the synagogue. And many who heard were astonished, saying: “Where did this man get these things? What wisdom is this that is given to him? Such mighty works are being performed by his hands!”³ Isn't this the carpenter,^{§††} the son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas and Simon? And aren't his sisters here with us?”^{§†} So they took offense at Him.⁴ But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown, among his relatives, even in his own house.”^{§††5} He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.⁶ And He marveled at their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

The Twelve commissioned and sent

⁷ Then He summoned the twelve and began to send them out, two by two, giving them authority over the unclean spirits as He did so.⁸ And He commanded them to take nothing for the road, except just a staff—no knapsack, no bread, no coin in the belt—⁹ but to wear sandals, and not put on two tunics.¹⁰ And He said to them: “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from that place.^{§††11} And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, as you depart from there, shake off the dust that is under your feet as a testimony against them.^{§†} Assuredly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomor-

§ Nothing like being practical! It had doubtless been a while since the last decent meal. Given the crowd that was there, it would be impossible to hide what had happened. §† It had probably been over a year since they tried to kill Him (Luke 4:28-30), and He now had a significant ‘body guard’. §†† They call Jesus ‘THE carpenter’; so Joseph had died. §‡ I placed all the statements within a single set of quotes, but they probably came from different people. Four brothers are named, and ‘sisters’ is plural, so there were at LEAST two of them (Matthew 13:56 has “all his sisters”, so there were probably more than two). After Jesus, Joseph and Mary had a full family. §†† In fact, His brothers did not believe in Him until after His resurrection (John 7:3-5). §† Jesus was obliging the disciples to be dependent on others for food and lodging, since they were not to take money—if no one fed them, they would go hungry; if no one took them in, they would have to sleep under a tree. How many of us would follow such instructions? §‡ Note that this is a command. Paul did this at least once (Acts 13:51), and the Lord Jesus Himself gave the example (Matthew 11:23-24), except that He spoke the curse. (I have had occasion to do it, and the consequences were serious.)

rah on Judgment Day than for that city.”¹² So they went out and started preaching that people should repent,¹³ and they were casting out many demons, and anointing with oil and healing many who were sick.

Herod had executed John the Baptizer

¹⁴ Now King Herod heard of *Him*, because His name had become well known, and he said, “John the Baptizer has been raised from the dead, and that is why the powers †† are at work in him.”¹⁵ Others said, “He is Elijah.” Still others said, “He is a prophet like one of the prophets.”¹⁶ But when Herod heard, he said: “This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!” ‡

¹⁷ You see, Herod himself had ordered John arrested, and bound him in prison, on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; because he had married her¹⁸—John had kept saying to Herod, “It isn't lawful for you to have your brother's wife.” ††¹⁹ So Herodias nursed a grudge against him and wanted to kill him; ‡ but she couldn't,²⁰ because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a just and holy man. And consulting him he would do many things; ††† indeed, he would hear him with pleasure.

²¹ Then an opportune day came ††† when on his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his courtiers, the military commanders, and the chief men of Galilee.²² When the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those reclining with him, the king said to the girl, “Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you.”²³ He even swore to her, “Whatever you may ask me I will give you, up to half of my kingdom!” §

²⁴ So she went out and said to her mother, “What shall I ask?” And *SHE* said, “The head of John the Baptist!”²⁵ Hurrying in directly to the king she requested,

† Perhaps 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit the last sentence of verse 11, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. †† Just what he meant by ‘the powers’, we do not know. His view of the supernatural was probably not strictly biblical. ‡ Do you suppose Herod had a guilty conscience? †† A coward John was not. †† I suppose that Herodias was ambitious and figured that Herod offered more than did Phillip, so it was probably she who took the initiative; but she hadn't counted on John being a persistent and vocal ‘conscience’. ††† I here follow the best line of transmission, albeit representing only 20% of the Greek manuscripts, that has ‘consulting’ in the present tense; the rest, followed by all versions, have the verb in the past. But the immediately following ‘he would do many things’ is attested by over 99%—a mere handful (0.4%), of objectively inferior quality, have ‘greatly disturbed’ or ‘very perplexed’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). But why then did Herod hear John with pleasure, and why was he ‘very sorry’ (verse 26)? But what sorts of things would Herod take to John for his opinion? I suggest that Herod used John as a sounding board for administrative problems, and since he often followed his advice, he had an unusually good administration, there for a while. That is why he was genuinely sorry to lose John. ††† Opportune for Herodias.

§ Herod had doubtless already drunk more than was good for him (he had probably started before the banquet), so his judgment was impaired. The girl's request sobered him up—too late.

saying, “I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter!”²⁶ Though the king became very sorry, because of his oaths and of his guests he did not want to refuse her.²⁷ Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded the head to be brought. So he went and beheaded him in the prison,²⁸ brought the head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother.^{§†29} Upon hearing of it, his disciples came, removed the corpse and placed it in a tomb.^{§††}

The Twelve return

³⁰ Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and reported all to Him, both what they had done and what they had taught.³¹ Because so many were coming and going that they did not even have leisure to eat, He said to them, “Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest awhile.”

Bread for 5,000 men

³² So they went away in the boat by themselves to a deserted place.³³ But many saw them going and recognized them,^{§†} and they ran there on foot from all the towns and arrived before them, and came together to Him.^{§††34} Well upon disembarking Jesus saw a large crowd^{§†} and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and He began to teach them many things.

³⁵ When it was late in the day, His disciples came to Him and said: “This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late.³⁶ Send them away so they may go to the

§† What effect do you suppose all that had on the party? The sight of that gory head would be enough to turn anyone's stomach. (And I wonder what she did with the head.) §†† If I were one of those disciples, I probably would have been just a little dissatisfied with God—how could He permit His servant to suffer such a ridiculous and humiliating death? God is under no obligation to explain Himself. All accounts will be settled at the judgment. §‡ There is an even split in the attestation; half the Greek manuscripts have ‘them’ and the other half ‘him’, but the best line of transmission has ‘them’. Consider: if the fishing boat were setting out to fish, there would not be 13 men in it; also, the boat was known and there was only one large group of men like that going around together; the people would not have to single out Jesus to know who they were. So ‘them’ is correct. §†† Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit ‘and came together to Him’, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. §† Let us try to get the picture. There is a large bay between Capernaum and Tiberias, the ‘mouth’ being some ten miles across. Just from the direction the boat took, many people would have a pretty good idea where they were headed. Unless there was a good tail wind, and especially if they had to row, people on the shore could easily outrun the boat, even covering a greater distance. Much like a modern marathon, the people would be scattered out along the shore for several miles, and any stragglers could follow the action. The front runners got ahead of the boat, and the followers were strung out, so wherever the boat put in, there would be people waiting; any who had gone too far would just double back. But people kept arriving and the crowd kept getting bigger (by the end of the day there were 5,000 men, plus women and children). The crowd frustrated the plan, but instead of being angry, Jesus felt compassion. [I'm afraid I often do just the opposite.]

surrounding farms and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.”^{†37} But in reply He said to them, “You feed them!”^{††} They say to Him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and feed them?”³⁸ So He says to them: “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” When they knew they said, “Five, and two fish.”

³⁹ Then He directed them all to recline in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So they reclined in ‘plots’ of hundreds and of fifties. ⁴¹ And taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to His disciples to serve the people; [‡] He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴² Well they all ate and were filled. ^{‡‡43} And they ^{‡‡} picked up twelve full baskets of broken pieces;

[†] This was an obvious cop-out; the surrounding area would not have enough extra bread to feed 10,000 people (or more). ^{††} They had no way of expecting such a response, since humanly speaking it was ridiculously impossible. In the end, the solution did pass through their hands, but unless Jesus was joking (which I doubt), He was telling THEM to perform the miracle, before they had seen it done. Wow! [‡] Let us pause and recall the scene. The Sacred Text affirms that there were about five thousand men, without counting the women and children

You

Can it be that Jesus was playing a joke on them, or was He serious? I don't know, but I prefer to think that He would not make a joke out of such a situation. But if He was serious, how could the disciples obey? Only with a miracle. In fact, they could not see a solution and gave the problem back to Jesus to solve; which He did. But did Jesus Himself hand the bread and fish to the crowd? No. Let us think about that scene a little more and we will see that the disciples still had to exercise faith. The Record affirms that they all ate until they were “full” or “satisfied”. It was not just a little something to tide them over. Have you ever considered how much bread and fish it would take to “fill” 15,000 people (who had gone without lunch)? It seems to me certain that when Jesus blessed and broke those loaves and fish there was not an instant multiplication, such that there was enough for everybody; the tremendous pile would have buried Jesus, the disciples and the closest of the people! Really. Just stop and think about it. It must not have been instantaneous. When Jesus placed some bread and fish in the hands of each disciple that was all there was, up to that moment. Now then, try to imagine that you are one of those disciples with a handful of bread and fish, and you have to feed at least a thousand people (12 disciples and 15,000 people). Can you picture it? Wouldn't you feel just a little ridiculous taking that first step toward the crowd? Somehow the disciples find the courage and approach the people. The first one helps himself and, wonder of wonders, the supply is undiminished! The second one helps himself and the supply is unchanged. It was never used up—as they went around distributing, the food kept multiplying (to have twelve bushels of leftovers, the people were also involved in passing it on). If they had tired and stopped in the middle, half the people would have stayed hungry. If the disciples had decided to eat first, I rather imagine that the miracle would have been frustrated and the crowd would have gone hungry. The disciples ate last, but they ate very well, thank you very much! (Have you ever tried eating a bushel of bread?)^{††} The Text is clear—they ate until they were full. ^{‡‡} It probably was not the disciples who did the picking up, at least not

also of the fish. ^{‡‡‡44} There were five thousand men who ate the loaves. ^{‡‡‡}

Jesus retires to pray

⁴⁵ Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, [§] while He dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶ And after taking leave of them He went up the mountain to pray.

A walk on water

⁴⁷ Now when evening had passed, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He was alone on the land. ⁴⁸ And He saw ^{§†} them straining at rowing, because the wind was against them. Well about the fourth watch of the night ^{§††} He comes to them walking on the water, and would have passed by them; ^{§‡49} but they saw Him walking on the water, supposed He was a ghost, and yelled! ⁵⁰ Because they all saw Him and were terrified. Immediately He spoke with them and said: “Have courage! It is I; don't be afraid!” ⁵¹ Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were totally astounded within themselves, and kept marveling. ⁵² Because they had not understood about the loaves—their hearts had been hardened. ^{§‡†}

In Genesaret

⁵³ After they had crossed over, ^{§†} they came to the land of Genesaret and anchored there. ⁵⁴ When they came out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, ⁵⁵ and running about that whole surrounding region they began to carry about on their pallets those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. ⁵⁶ Wherever He entered—into villages, towns, or countryside—they would place the sick in the market-places, and they would beg Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment; and all who touched Him were healed. ^{§‡}

by themselves. Also, those twelve baskets of pieces did not go with the disciples when they left. ^{‡††} The large baskets were probably borrowed from fishing boats near by (see the parallel accounts). Maybe the owners got their baskets back with interest! ^{‡‡‡} The term here refers exclusively to males, so with the women and children the crowd was doubtless over 10,000. [§] For a detailed discussion about the location, please see the Appendix: Bethsaida or Tiberias? ^{§†} It was night, and they were about eight miles away, so this was supernatural vision. ^{§††} That was 3 a.m.! ^{§‡} They had been rowing for about nine hours, and when Jesus sent them off He presumably knew what was going to happen. (We should not be surprised if God does similar things with us.) He obviously intended for them to see Him, otherwise He would not have come near enough. But He did not go straight at the boat, but was walking off to one side. Just why He did it that way, the Text does not say, but from the parallel accounts we know that it gave Peter a chance to try a walk. As soon as He got in the boat it was transported several miles to the shore, immediately (John 6:21). ^{§††} By whom? ^{§†} For a fuller explanation of what went on here, see the footnotes with the parallel account in John 6:16-25. ^{§‡} Wow!

Jesus rebuts scribes and Pharisees

7 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him, having come from Jerusalem.
¹² And upon seeing some of His disciples eating bread with 'unclean'—that is, ceremonially unwashed—hands, they found fault. ³ (Because the Pharisees, indeed all the Jews, do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding to the tradition of the elders. ⁴ When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things they have received and hold—washings of cups, pitchers, copper vessels and couches.) ^{††}
⁵ Then the Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, "Why don't your disciples walk according to the tradition of the elders, [‡] but eat their bread with unwashed hands?" ⁶ So in answer He said to them: "Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, ^{††} as it stands written:
 'This people honors me with their lips,
 but their heart is far from me.
⁷ But in vain do they worship me,
 teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' ^{†††}
⁸ Because having left the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men—washings of pitchers and cups, and many other similar things that you do." ^{†††9} Indeed He said to them: "You are very good at nullifying the commandment of God, so that you may keep your tradition. ¹⁰ For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother must be put to death.' ^{†††11} But *YOU* say that if a man should say to father or mother, 'Whatever profit you might have received from me is *Korban*' (that is, a gift to God), ^{§12} you don't even allow him to do anything for his father or his mother any more, ¹³ making the Word of God of no effect by your tradition that you have handed down. Yes, you do many such things."

That which really defiles

¹⁴ Upon summoning the larger crowd He said to them: "Hear me, everyone, and understand: ¹⁵ There is nothing outside a man that can defile him by going into him; ^{§†} rather, the things that come out of him,

† They were a long way from 'home'. Doing something about Jesus had become a necessity. ^{††} Mark was writing for a Roman audience, hence this explanation (which helps other non-Jews as well).
 ‡ They used tradition as an instrument of domination, to control the people. Jesus was challenging that control. ^{††} Jesus knows what they are about, and makes no effort to conciliate them.
 †† See Isaiah 29:13. Do none of our churches have doctrines that are mere 'commandments of men'? All such 'worship' is in vain.
 ††† Less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit '—washings of pitchers... that you do', to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. ^{†††} See Exodus 20:12, 21:17. § The inconvenient question begs to be asked, 'Where did all the goods and money go?' It went into the pockets of the leaders, presumably, so they were really stealing from the elderly. §† As the following con-

those are the ones that defile him. ¹⁶ If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!" ^{§††}

¹⁷ When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples started to question Him about the parable. ¹⁸ So He said to them: "Can you really be without understanding? Don't you perceive that nothing that enters a man from outside can defile him, ¹⁹ because it doesn't go into his heart, but into his stomach, which then expels the impure aspects of the food?" ^{§†20} He went on to say: "That which comes out of a man, *that* is what defiles him. ²¹ Because from within, out of men's hearts, the evil designs proceed—adulteries, fornications, murders, ²² thefts, covetings, malignancies; deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, arrogance, foolishness— ²³ all these malignant things proceed from within and defile the man."

A 'crumb' for a 'little dog' ^{§††}

²⁴ Then He got ready and went from there into the region of Tyre and Sidon. He went into a house and did not want anyone to know it, but He could not escape notice. ²⁵ In fact, as soon as she heard about Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit came and fell at His feet. ^{§†26} Now the woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenecian by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ^{§†27} But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first; it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." ^{§§†28} So she answered and said to Him,

text makes clear, the Lord is talking only about food. People are constantly being contaminated by things they see and hear.
 §†† Just over 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit verse 16 entirely, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, [TEV], etc. §‡ A literal rendering would be, 'then into the latrine, thus making all foods clean'. I take it that Jesus was referring to the process in the stomach having a 'purifying' effect, since the sewer does just the opposite. Perhaps 10% of the Greek manuscripts end the quote after 'latrine', and have Jesus declaring all foods clean.
 §†† This episode has puzzled me for quite some time. Consider: a) In explaining His lack of response to the woman's pleading, Jesus affirms that He was only sent to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24)—so what is He doing in Gentile territory? b) The Text says He tried to get into a house without being seen; it follows that the group had kept a low profile, trying to avoid attention; and yet the woman intercepted Him well before He got there, and followed, crying out repeatedly (thereby blowing His 'cover')—so how did the woman learn of His presence, how did she know when and where to go, and how did she know to address Him as 'Son of David'? c) Although He may have done more than is recorded, and we do not know how long He stayed, expelling that demon is all that is recorded—so why did He undertake that journey, apparently the only side trip to that region? I suspect that this was a special case, similar to Cornelius, or the Ethiopian treasurer—she had gotten God's attention, somehow. I imagine that an angel told her where to go, and when, and to call Him, 'Son of David' (Messiah). Of course she gave us an unusual example of faith, humility and perseverance, but I wonder if God is not telling us something more: it is possible to get a 'crumb' (a real need), even when it is not the proper time frame (καιρος). §† The parallel account in Matthew makes clear that this happened before He reached the house. §‡ Matthew 15:21-28 gives more detail, which see. §§† Big dogs would not be in the house, so these would be little house pets, or perhaps puppies. This

"Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs." ²⁹ So He said to her, "Because of this saying you may go; the demon has gone out of your daughter." ³⁰ She went away to her house and found that the demon was gone and the daughter had been placed on the bed. †

Jesus heals a deaf mute

³¹ Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, Jesus came to the Sea of Galilee by way of the Decapolis region. †³² Then they brought to Him a deaf man with thick speech ‡ and begged Him to place His hand on him. ³³ After taking him aside, away from the crowd, He put His fingers in his ears; He also spat and touched his tongue. †³⁴ Then looking up to heaven He sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha!" that is, "Be opened!" ³⁵ Immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he began to speak clearly. ³⁶ Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He would command them, so much the more they would proclaim it. †³⁷ People were astonished beyond measure, saying: "He has done everything well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Food for 4,000 men

8 In those days, the multitude being very large and not having anything to eat, Jesus called His disciples and said to them: ² "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have stayed with me three days now and have nothing to eat. ³ If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will give out on the way, because some of them have come a long distance." ⁴ His disciples answered Him, "From what source could anyone satisfy these people with bread here in a wilderness?" †⁵ He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven." ⁶ So He told the crowd to sit down on the ground; then taking the seven loaves and giving thanks, He broke them and gave them to His disciples to set before the crowd, and they did. ⁷ They also had a few small fish; so blessing them He said to distribute them as well.

episode always moves me. In effect, Jesus called the woman a 'dog' (that is what Jews called Gentiles), and she accepted the classification. She was determined to get her 'crumb', and she did! And she left us a great example of humility and faith! † The verb 'place' is perfect passive; evidently the child was too small, or too weak, to have gotten there by herself. †† He chose a round about way where He would not be known by sight, to avoid attention (presumably). ‡ We learn to speak by imitating what we hear, so a deaf person will not speak correctly, even if there is nothing wrong with the tongue. In this case, the following verses indicate that there was also a problem with the tongue. If the man had never learned to speak correctly, this would be a further miracle. †† The Lord seems to have varied His procedure on purpose: He could heal ears without using His fingers, and could heal tongues without spittle. †† The news was so good they just could not contain it. ††† They had already forgotten the 5,000!

⁸ Well they ate and were filled; they even took up seven hampers of broken pieces that were left over. ⁹ Now those who had eaten were about four thousand; and He sent them away. ¹⁰ Then He got right into the boat with His disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha. ††

Bad leaven

¹¹ The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, requesting of Him a sign from heaven, by way of testing Him. ¹² But He sighed deeply in His spirit and said: "Why does this generation seek a sign? I tell you emphatically, no sign shall be given to this generation!" ¹³ Turning His back on them, He got back into the boat [§] and went off to the other side.

¹⁴ (His disciples had forgotten to take bread; they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat.) †¹⁵ And He charged them, saying, "Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." †¹⁶ So they started reasoning among themselves, saying, "It's because we have no bread." ¹⁷ Being aware of it Jesus said to them: "Why are you reasoning because you have no bread? Do you still neither perceive nor understand? Do you still have hearts that have been hardened? †¹⁸ Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear, and do you not remember? ¹⁹ When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of pieces did you take up?" They say to Him, "Twelve." ²⁰ "And when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many hampers full of pieces did you take up?" And they said, "Seven." ²¹ So He said to them, "How is it that you still don't understand?" ††

A blind man

²² Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him and begged Him to touch him. ²³ So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village; then spitting into his eyes ^{§†} and laying hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. ²⁴ And looking up he said, "I do see men, only they look like walking trees." †²⁵ Then He put His hands on his eyes again, and made him look up; and he was restored and saw everyone clearly. ²⁶ Then He sent him away to

††† This was on the western side of the lake, so the feeding of the 4,000 probably took place on the Decapolis side. § One gains the impression that the Pharisees had not let Him get very far from the boat. Was Satan concerned to 'protect' Dalmanutha? §† As with the 5,000, they did not keep the seven hampers of leftovers. §†† These would be two different 'leavens'. Matthew 16:12 explains that 'leaven' refers to doctrine. §‡ The verb is in the passive voice, so one wonders who did the hardening. §†† It is easy to criticize those disciples as slow learners, and indeed the Lord was evidently unhappy with them, but I wonder if we would have done any better. §† Dear me, how unsanitary! Jesus used a variety of procedures to heal people, and here He used two stages. §‡ Evidently he was not born blind, because he knew what men and trees looked like.

his house, saying, "Neither go into the village nor tell anyone in the village." †

Jesus declares His death, and ministers on that basis

Peter is inspired

²⁷ Then Jesus and His disciples set out for the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He questioned His disciples, saying to them, "Who are people saying that I am?" ²⁸ So they answered, "John the Baptist; others Elijah; still others one of the prophets." ²⁹ He said to them, "And who do YOU say that I am?" So Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ!" ³⁰ Then He charged them that they should tell no one about Him.

³¹ He then began to teach them that the Son of the Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² He said these things quite plainly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. ³³ But He turned, looked at His disciples, and rebuked Peter, saying: "Get behind me, Satan! †† You have in mind men's values, not God's values."

The cost of discipleship

³⁴ He summoned the crowd, along with His disciples, and said to them: "Whoever wants to follow along behind me must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ³⁵ Because whoever may resolve to 'save' his life will waste it; but whoever may 'waste' his life for my sake and the Gospel's, HE will save it. ³⁶ Well, what

† Evidently he did not live in that village. A small handful (0.5%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit 'nor tell anyone in the village', to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. †† From the parallel passage in Luke 9:18-22, where we have three present participles—'answering', 'warning' and 'saying'—it is clear that Peter's two efforts form part of a single conversation. Well that scares me; that sends shivers up my spine. Within three minutes, or five at the most (we can see in Luke that this was a single conversation), Peter spoke two times. The first time it was God who put the words in Peter's mouth. It was Jesus Christ, God the Son on earth, who explained the true nature of the transaction—Peter did not speak on his own but moved by the Father. So far so good; that God can do something like that comes as no surprise. It is the second time that is bothersome, because this time it was Satan who put the words in Peter's mouth! Again, it is Jesus Christ, God the Son on earth, who explains the true nature of the transaction. When He uses the enemy's proper name, Satan, His meaning is inescapable. It really was Satan. Once again we are face to face with the most terrible truth that there is in this life, at least as I see it. The enemy has access to our minds, he can put words in our mouths. I wish in the worst way that it was not true, but my wishes do not change reality.

‡ What does the Lord mean when He speaks of saving or losing one's 'life'? One does not lose one's soul for love of Christ. Nor is the reference to being killed. Rather, Jesus has in mind the life we live, the accumulated results of our living. All that I have done up to this moment plus all that I will yet do until overtaken by death or the rapture of the Church, whichever happens first—that is the 'life' that

will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? ³⁷ Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? ³⁸ Yes, whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of the Man will also be ashamed of Him whenever He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy Angels." ††

A miniature of the Kingdom

9 And He said to them, "I tell you assuredly: there are some standing here who will certainly not taste death until they see the Kingdom of God present with

is at risk (in my own case). Let us look at our Lord's words a little more closely. There seems to be a contradiction here—if you lose, you save; if you want to save, you lose. How can it work? The parallel passage, Matthew 16:27, gives more context. "For the Son of the Man is going to come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he will repay each according to his deeds." Christ was thinking of the day of reckoning. In other words, "we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10) and "each of us will give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive his due according to what he has done while in the body, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). I understand that 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 is referring to the same occasion, the day of reckoning. After declaring that Jesus Christ is the only foundation, Paul speaks of different materials that one might use in building on it: "gold, silver, precious stones" or "wood, hay, straw". (Although the primary interpretation of this passage presumably has to do with the performance of teachers and leaders in the church, I believe it clearly applies to the daily life of each believer as well.) The point is, our deeds will be tested by fire. If fire has any effect upon gold or silver it is only to purify them, but its effect on hay and straw is devastating! Okay, so what? Let us go back to the beginning. God created the human being for His glory; to reflect it and contribute to it. I suppose we may understand Psalm 19:1 and Isaiah 43:7 in this way, at least by extension. But Adam lost this capacity when he rebelled against God. For this reason the sentence that weighs against our race is that we "fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). But the Son came into the world to restore our lost potential. Ephesians 1:12 and 14 tell us that the object of the plan of salvation is "the praise of His glory" (see also 2 Corinthians 1:20). And 1 Corinthians 10:31 puts it into a command

†† The world in which we live is no longer 'postmodern', it is becoming increasingly anti Christian. In North America and Europe people have already been put in prison for preaching what the Bible says. To spend eternity in the Lake of Fire is the price you will pay for being 'politically correct' in today's world.

power.”² After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John and led them up on a high mountain alone by themselves. Then He was transfigured in front of them; ³ His clothing became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth is able to whiten. ⁴ And Elijah appeared to them, along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus. ⁵ Well Peter reacted by saying to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three shelters: one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” ⁶ (Because they were terrified, he didn't know what to say.) ⁷ With that a cloud was covering them and a **Voice**^{††} came out of the cloud: “This is my Son, the beloved. Listen to Him!” ⁸ And then, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

⁹ Now as they were coming down from the mountain, [‡] He ordered them not to recount to any one the things they had seen until the Son of the Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰ So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the ‘rising from the dead’ meant. ¹¹ And they asked Him, saying, “Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” ¹² So in answer He said to them: “Elijah indeed does come first, and restores all things; also how it is written concerning the Son of the Man that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt. ¹³ Still, I say to you that ‘Elijah’ has also come, and they did to him as they wished, as it is written about him.” ^{‡‡}

The nine couldn't do it

¹⁴ Upon coming to the disciples, He saw a large crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. ¹⁵ Well as soon as the crowd saw Him they were excited and ran to greet Him. ¹⁶ He asked the scribes, “What are you discussing with them?” ¹⁷ In answer a man in the crowd said: “Teacher, I brought you my son, who has a mute spirit. ^{‡‡‡} And wherever it seizes him it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth and gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. Indeed, I spoke to your disciples, that they might cast it out, but they could not.” ¹⁹ But He answered him by saying: “O unbelieving generation, ^{‡‡‡} how long shall I be with you, how long shall I put up with you? Bring him to me!” ²⁰ So they brought him to Him. Upon seeing Him the spirit convulsed him, and falling to the ground he started wallowing, foaming at the mouth. ²¹ Then He asked his father, “How long has this been happening

[†] He threw away an excellent opportunity to say nothing. ^{††} Peter never forgot that Voice! See 2 Peter 1:17-18. [‡] This was the next day; they spent the night on the mountain (Luke 9:37). ^{‡‡} The Lord stated plainly that the coming of the real Elijah was still future. Since the Baptizer was Messiah's herald at His first advent, Jesus refers to him as ‘Elijah’ (recall that John was already dead). ^{‡‡‡} Here was a desperate father who considered that his problem was more important than a theological discussion. So he interrupts (although the discussion may have been about the demon and their failure). ^{‡‡‡} I suspect that He was looking at the nine, not the crowd.

to him?” And he said: “From childhood. ²² Really, it has often thrown him both into fire and into water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” ²³ Jesus said to him, “It's ‘if you can believe’; ^{‡‡‡} all things are possible to the one who believes.” ²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, with tears, “Lord, [§] I believe; help my unbelief!” ^{§†}

²⁵ When Jesus saw that the crowd was running up, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, ^{§††} I am commanding you, get out of him and never enter him again!” ^{§‡26} Then it yelled, convulsed him violently, and came out. Well he looked to be dead; so much so that many said, “He's dead.” ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he stayed on his feet. ²⁸ Well upon His entering a house His disciples asked Him privately, “Why couldn't we cast it out?” ²⁹ He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing except prayer and fasting.” ^{§††}

^{‡‡‡} Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit ‘believe’, which alters the meaning (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). [§] Around 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit ‘with tears’ and ‘Lord’, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. ^{§†} I can sympathize with this father. When I consider all the things that the Lord Jesus said could be done with faith, and that I have yet to do, I too must say, “Help my unbelief!” ^{§††} The father had said it was a mute spirit; Jesus adds that it is also deaf—the two often go together. ^{§‡} Note that Jesus forbade any return. Demons will do anything to deceive, confuse or demoralize us. If you resist a spirit, he leaves, but another may immediately take the place of the first and produce the same effect, making you think that nothing happened, so that you feel demoralized. If you resist but do not forbid a return, he leaves but may come back, in an hour, a day or a week. If I have to rebuke the enemy I now rebuke not only the spirit actually at work but any and all others that might wish to attack the person in the same way. I used to forbid any repetition of the attack, but now I send them to the Abyss. I believe Luke 8:31 give us basis for consigning demons to the Abyss, thereby reducing the number of the enemy's forces (against us). There we read that the demons begged Jesus “not to order them to go into the Abyss” (“the Abyss” is the same phrase that the AV renders as “the bottomless pit” in Revelation 20:1). That means that He could have—I conclude that He refrained from doing so because He had not yet won the victory, at that time. But now it is different. In John 14:12 the Lord Jesus said to His disciples: “Most assuredly I say to you, he who believes into me, the works that I do he will do also; even greater works than these he will do, because I go to my Father.” What does “because I go to my Father” imply? I conclude that it must be His victory—could He have returned if He had failed, if He had not succeeded in destroying the devil (Hebrews 2:14)? That is why we are supposed to be doing “greater

C. Fred Dickason, who has personally ministered to over 400 demonized believers, says that his experience indicates that once a demon is ordered into the Abyss it does not come back (Demon Possession & the Christian

Destined to Overcome

reduce

^{§††} Four Greek manuscripts (all inferior), against 1651, omit ‘and fasting’, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.

Jesus predicts His death again

³⁰ Having gone out from there they were passing through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know; ³¹ because He was teaching His disciples and saying to them, “The Son of the Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and once killed † he will rise on the third day.” ³² But they were not understanding this information, yet were afraid to ask Him.

About humility

³³ Then He came to Capernaum; and once in the house He asked them, “What were you debating among yourselves on the road?” ³⁴ But they kept silent, because on the road they had debated among themselves who was greater. ³⁵ So He sat down, called the twelve and said to them, “If anyone desires to be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.” ³⁶ Then He took a child and stood him in their midst, and embracing him said to them, ³⁷ “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives not *only* me, but the One who sent me.”

Either for, or against

³⁸ So John answered Him saying, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, one who doesn’t follow us; †† and we forbade him, because he doesn’t follow us.” ³⁹ But Jesus said: “Do not forbid him, because no one who works a miracle in my name can soon afterward speak evil of me. ⁴⁰ For he who is not against you is for you. ⁴¹ Further, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in my name, because you are Christ’s, I tell you with certainty, he will by no means lose his reward. †

About offenses

⁴² “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe into me to fall, †† it would be better for him if a

† This seems to us to be an awkward expression, but that is what the Text says. †† Around 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit ‘one who doesn’t follow us’, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. ‡ Instead of ‘you’, some 10% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘us’ (both times) (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). †† But how and where could an unbeliever be ‘rewarded’? I suppose with blessing in this life. †† It is clear from the context that the verb ‘fall’ throughout this paragraph refers to a spiritual fall with eternal consequences. I believe that the Lord was being perfectly serious and literal here. I suppose most deadly temptations come at us through the eye. Obviously it would be better to pluck out an eye, literally, if it would stop you in time, than to fall from the Faith and wind up in the Lake. In the first place, most people are not prepared to take such drastic measures, and in the second, by the time they wake up to what is happening, they have already crossed the line. That is why Hebrews 3:12-14 is precisely to the point: “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today’, lest any of you be hardened through

millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. †††⁴³ Further, if your hand is causing you to fall, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into the Life maimed than having both hands to go away into Gehenna, ††† into the unquenchable fire—⁴⁴ where ‘their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.’^{§45} And if your foot is causing you to fall, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into the Life lame than having both feet to be thrown into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire—⁴⁶ where ‘their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.’^{§47} And if your eye is causing you to fall, pluck it out; it is better for you to enter into the Kingdom of God with one eye than having both eyes to be thrown into the Gehenna of fire—⁴⁸ where ‘the †† worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.’

⁴⁹ “Further, everyone will be seasoned with fire, ††† and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. †††⁵⁰ Salt is good, but if the salt loses its saltiness, with what will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.” †††

Down with divorce!

10 Then He set out from there and came into the borders of Judea, by way of the other side of the Jordan. Again, crowds gathered to Him, and as was His custom, He began to teach them once more. ² Then some Pharisees approached to test Him and asked Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce a wife?” ³ So in answer He said to them, “What did Moses command you?” ⁴ They said, “Moses permitted one to write a certificate of divorce and to put away.”^{§†5} Jesus answered and said to them: “It was due to your hardness of heart that he wrote you this precept. ⁶ But from the

the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.”

††† The implication is clear: anyone who deliberately destroys a child’s faith in Jesus has bought himself a one-way ticket to the Lake of Fire. I suppose that ‘child’ could include high school and college students. ††† Strictly speaking, ‘Gehenna’ was the local dump outside Jerusalem—something was always being burned, and there would be plenty of worms. But Jesus here uses it as a figure for the Lake of Fire, the ‘second death’. § See Isaiah 66:24. Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit ‘into the unquenchable fire’ at the end of verses 43 and 45, and also omit verses 44 and 46 entire, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, [TEV], etc., except that most keep ‘into the unquenchable fire’ in verse 43 (but not in verse 45). I find the figure of an immortal worm to be rather daunting—always chewing on you, but never finishing you off! (Evidently there were those who thought that saying it once was quite enough.) †† I here follow the best line of transmission and 30% of the Greek manuscripts. ††† Now what might this mean? Well, those who believe into Him Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire; those who don’t, get a different fire. §† Some 7% of the Greek manuscripts omit the second clause of this verse, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. But just what might THIS mean? Well, Romans 12:1 speaks of a ‘living sacrifice’ and in Matthew 5:13 Jesus calls His followers ‘the salt of the earth’. If you present yourself as a living sacrifice to Jesus, He will make you salty. ††† For ‘salty’ people living and working together, ‘peace’ may not be easy. †† See Deuteronomy 24:1, 3.

beginning of creation, God made them a male and a female. ¹⁷ For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ⁸ and the two will be turned into one flesh. ^{††} So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. ⁹ Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

¹⁰ When they were in the house again, His disciples asked Him about the same subject. ¹¹ So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; ¹² and if a woman divorces her husband and gets married to another, she commits adultery." [‡]

Jesus blesses little children

¹³ People started bringing little children to Him, that He might touch them; so the disciples started rebuking those doing the bringing. ¹⁴ But when Jesus saw it He was indignant and said to them: "Let the little children come to me; do not hinder them, because the Kingdom of God is made up of such. ¹⁵ I tell you assuredly, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child does ^{††} will certainly not enter it."

¹⁶ And taking them in His arms and laying His hands on them, He blessed them. ^{‡‡}

A rich young man

¹⁷ As Jesus set out on the road, someone came running up, knelt before Him and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what must I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

¹⁸ So Jesus said to Him: "Why do you call me 'good'? ^{‡‡†} No one is good except one—God. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not give false testimony,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and mother.'" ^{‡‡‡20}

In answer he said to Him, "Teacher, [§] I have kept all these since I was young." ²¹ Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, ^{§†} and said to him: "One thing you lack; go, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, take up the cross, ^{§††} and follow me." ²² But he was dismayed at the suggestion and went away sorrowing, because he had many possessions. ^{§‡}

[†] See Genesis 1:27, 5:2. ^{††} See Genesis 2:24. The Text says 'two', not 'three', 'four', or whatever. The 'two' are a man and a woman; not two men, not a woman and a demon, or whatever. [‡] Note that Jesus recognizes that the woman may take the initiative. Whoever takes the initiative commits adultery. ^{††} Jesus did not say that only children can be saved; rather, one must believe the way a child believes, without question, and literally. ^{‡‡} Blessing children is an important thing to do. ^{‡‡†} Jesus was not denying that He was good; the trouble was that the man called him good without recognizing Him as God. ^{‡‡‡} See Exodus 20:12-16, Deuteronomy 5:16-20. [§] He did not repeat the 'mistake'. ^{§†} The verb is *ayataw*

^{§††} Scarcely 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit 'take up the cross' (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{§‡} Jesus had put His finger on the one the man was not obeying—he was not loving his neighbor as himself.

²³ Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to get into the Kingdom of God!" ²⁴ But the disciples were astounded at His words. So Jesus tried again and said to them: "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches ^{§††} to enter the Kingdom of God. ²⁵ It is actually easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." ^{§†‡6} Then they were totally astonished, saying to each other, "Who then can be saved?" ²⁷ But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; because all things are possible with God."

It pays to serve Jesus

²⁸ Then Peter began to say to Him, "So, we have left all and followed you." ²⁹ In answer Jesus said: "I tell you assuredly, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife ^{§‡} or children or fields, for my sake and for that of the Gospel, ³⁰ who will not receive a hundred times more, ^{§§†} now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and father and mother ^{§§‡} and children and fields (with persecutions)—and in the age to come, eternal life. ³¹ But many first will be last, and last first." ^{§§§}

Jesus predicts His death a third time

³² Now they were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going ahead of them; this surprised them, ¹⁸ and as they followed they started to be afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell

^{§††} Five Greek manuscripts (all of objectively inferior quality), against 1650, omit 'for those who trust in riches', producing an obviously inferior text, but even so they are followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. NIV favors us with a footnote: "Some manuscripts is for those who trust in riches"

^{§†} Ouch!

In the Old Testament it was expected that godly living would be accompanied by material blessing. The trouble is that we tend to get more attached to the blessing than to the Blessor. Our Lord's words in Matthew 6:24 are to the point: "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." Anyone who serves 'mammon' is not serving God, and therefore is not in the Kingdom. As for the 'camel' and the 'needle', there have been attempts to explain this away, but since Jesus went on to say it was "impossible", we may take them literally. ^{§‡} Less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit 'or wife' (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{§§†} Actually, the 'hundredfold' should presumably not be taken in a strictly literal sense. I take it that the Lord is saying that we will be abundantly recompensed, if not down here, certainly in heaven. In my own experience, in the absence of my real mother, whenever I needed one God provided one. If you only have one brother, that's all you can leave, obviously, so the plural nouns are also contingent on the facts in the case. 'Eternal' life is a quality of life, and it begins down here. ^{§§‡} I follow 40% of the Greek manuscripts, including the best line of transmission, in reading 'father and mother'. 55% have 'mothers', as in most versions. Note that Jesus does not promise more wives! ^{§§§} This sounds like a pushdown stack—first one in, last one out. ¹⁸ I gather that Jesus was going forward with a determined pace,

them the things that were about to happen to Him: ³³ "Take note, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of the Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him over to the Gentiles; ³⁴ and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And on the third day He will rise again." †

Selfish ambition rebuked

³⁵ Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached Him and said, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we may ask." ³⁶ So He said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" ³⁷ They said to Him, "Grant to us that we may sit, one at your right and one at your left, in your glory." †³⁸ But Jesus said to them: "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" ³⁹ They said to Him, "We are able." ‡ So Jesus said to them: "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and you will be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right and at my left is not mine to grant, but is for whom it has been prepared." †

⁴¹ Well when the ten heard it they began to be indignant with James and John. †⁴² But Jesus summoned them and said to them: "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ⁴³ But it must not be so among you, but whoever desires to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever desires to be your number one must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of the Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." ††

Blind Bartimaeus

⁴⁶ They came to Jericho. Then as He was going out from Jericho, †† with His disciples and a large crowd, the blind Bartimaeus [§] (son of Timaeus) was sitting by

which at first surprised them, but then something about His demeanor made them apprehensive. † Jesus knew perfectly well that this was His last trip to Jerusalem, and He had detailed knowledge of what would happen. (He had been given the word by Moses and Elijah—Luke 9:31.) †† Isn't this a strange request? Evidently visions of the Messianic Kingdom drove all other considerations from their minds, only they wanted to be top dogs! ‡ How did they know? †† If Jesus Himself is at the Father's right, then it follows that the Father is on Jesus' left, so only one of the spots is 'available', except that the occupant is already known. †† Now just why, do you suppose, were they upset? ††† The Lord Jesus is our example. ††† The parallel account in Luke has Jesus entering Jericho, not leaving it. At that time, there were two Jerichos, about a kilometer apart. What better place for an enterprising beggar than between the two towns? For a detailed discussion of the three accounts (also Matthew), please see the Appendix: Entering, or leaving Jericho? § Mark is the only account that gives the man's name—evidently he was known (or at least became known).

the roadside begging. ⁴⁷ And when he heard that it was Jesus the Natsorean, ^{§†} he began to call out and say, "O Son of David, ^{§††} Jesus, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸ Many started telling him to shut up, but he started calling out even louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹ So Jesus stood still and said to call him. Then they called the blind man, saying to him: "Courage! Get up! He's calling you!" ⁵⁰ Tossing off his cloak, ^{§†} he got up and went to Jesus. ⁵¹ Jesus reacted by saying to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" ^{§††} The blind man said to Him, "Rabouni, ^{§†} that I may see again!" ⁵² So Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has healed you." And immediately he could see, and followed Jesus on the road.

The last week

The 'triumphal' entry—Sunday, 03/31/30 AD

11 Now when they were drawing near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, ² saying to them: "Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you enter it you will find a foal tied, on which no man has sat. Untie and bring it. ³ And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and thereupon he will send it here." ^{§†}

⁴ So they went and found the foal tied at the door, out in the street, and they loosed it. ⁵ Some of those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the foal?" ⁶ So they answered them just as Jesus had instructed, and they let them go. ⁷ Then they brought the foal to Jesus, and they placed their clothes on it, and He sat on it. ⁸ And many spread their clothes on the road, while others were cutting leafy branches from the trees ^{§§†} and spreading them on the road. ⁹ Both those who went in front and those who followed started calling out, saying:

^{§†} *The Text has 'Natsorean', not 'Nazarene (Natsarene)'. Natsorean is presumably a reference to Isaiah 11:1, the Branch—Jesus was the Branch-man. Natsarene just means that He came from Natsareth. §†† Bartimaeus addresses Jesus as the Messiah. §† Now why did he abandon his cloak? He expected to be healed—being able to see he could easily find it (and who else would want a beggar's cloak?). §†† Does God ever take anything for granted from us? He knows what we need before we ask, but we must ask. §† Some 65% of the Greek manuscripts spell the word with two 'b's; I follow the best line of transmission, but there is no difference in meaning: 'my teacher/master'. §† At first glance the rendering, "The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly", looks inviting, but it doesn't quite fit. The animal would be gone for a number of hours, and one would expect a different verb. The seeming difficulty posed by the change from 'he' to 'they' (in verse 6) is easily answered: in verse 3 the 'he' agrees in number with the preceding 'anyone', and the owner of the animal may have been among the bystanders (verses 5 & 6). In any case, the owner evidently knew who 'the Lord' was, and had presumably been forewarned—why else was the foal already tied outside? §§† Well under 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have 'fields' instead of 'trees' (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).*

"Hosanna!"

"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" †

¹⁰ "Blessed is the Kingdom of our father David that is coming in the name of the Lord!" ††

"Hosanna in the highest!"

¹¹ So Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when He had looked around at everything, ‡ the hour being late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

A barren fig tree

¹² Now the next day, as they were leaving Bethany, He was hungry. ¹³ And seeing from a distance a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it He found nothing but leaves, because it was not fig season. ††¹⁴ So Jesus reacted by saying to it, "Let no one ever eat fruit from you again!" †† And His disciples were listening.

Jesus 'purifies' the temple (2nd time)—Monday, 04/01/30 AD

¹⁵ So they came to Jerusalem, and entering the temple Jesus began to drive out those who sold and bought in the temple, and He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of the dove sellers. ¹⁶ And He would not allow anyone to carry a container through the temple. ¹⁷ And He kept teaching them by saying: "Is it not written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? ††† but you have made it 'a den of robbers!'" †††

¹⁸ Well the scribes and the chief priests heard it, and kept on looking for a way to destroy Him; § because they were afraid of Him, in that all the people were astonished at His teaching. ¹⁹ When evening came, He went out of the city.

How to drown a mountain

²⁰ Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. ²¹ And Peter, re-

† See Psalms 118:26. †† Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'in the name of the Lord' (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). Different people were saying different things and Mark records some of the variety (he may well have been there; in fact I suspect that he probably was). ‡ He knew what He had to do the next day (clean out the commerce), but there wasn't enough time to do a proper job just then. †† Even though it was no longer fig season, sometimes an occasional fig would dry on the tree, and of course a dried fig is edible. Had the leaves all fallen, He could have seen from a distance that there were not any figs (any fig that was visible would have been eaten long before). ††† Dear me; it would seem to be unreasonable to curse a tree out of season—it was not the tree's fault that it had no figs! First, being the Creator, Jesus had the right to do as He did; but second, it was probably a prophetic act wherein the fig tree represented Israel; and third, He wanted to teach His disciples about faith. ††† See Isaiah 56:7. Note that it has always been God's intention that the whole world know and worship Him. ††† See Jeremiah 7:11. I get the impression that He kept repeating this as He went about His task. § They had already determined that they had to kill Him, long before.

membering, said to Him: "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has dried up!" ²² So in answer Jesus said to them: "Have faith in God. ††²³ Because I tell you assuredly, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be picked up and be thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that the things he says will happen, he will have whatever he says. †††²⁴ That is why I say to you, whatever things you ask for in prayer, believe that you receive, and you will have them.

²⁵ "And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father, who is in heaven, may also forgive you your trespasses. ²⁶ But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your trespasses." ††

Jesus' authority questioned—Tuesday, 04/02/30 AD

²⁷ Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes and the elders came to Him. ²⁸ And they said to Him, "By what authority are you doing these things?" and "Who gave you this authority to do these things?" ²⁹ So in answer Jesus said to them: "I also will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ³⁰ The baptism of John: was it from heaven or from men?" †††³¹ They considered among themselves, saying: "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'So why did you not believe him?' ³² But if we say, 'From men'..."—they feared the people, for everyone held John to really be a prophet. ³³ So they answered Jesus by saying, "We don't know." †† And in answer Jesus said to them, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Parable of wicked tenants

12 Then He began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard—put a hedge around it, dug a wine trough, built a tower—rented it to farmers and went on a journey. ² At the proper time he sent a slave to the farmers, that he might receive from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. ³ But they took him, beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴ Again

†† I wonder if the intended meaning might not be, 'have the faith of a god' ('god' is in the genitive case and without an article)—a god giving an order would expect to be obeyed. ††† It is an ongoing source of frustration to me that I have not yet attained to this level of faith. †† Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit verse 26 entire, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, [TEV], etc. The last three words of verses 25 and 26 are identical (in the Greek Text), giving rise to a common transcriptional error—after writing the first, the copyist's eye returns to the second and he continues, having omitted what was in between. Verse 26 reinforces and emphasizes the need for forgiveness—the reference is to things done against us personally. ††† Some 80% of the Greek manuscripts continue with 'answer me', as in most (if not all) versions; I follow the best line of transmission, albeit representing only 20% of the manuscripts. 'Answer me' is already in verse 29. †† Of course they did know, and they also knew who Jesus was, and the source of His authority, but they had chosen to rebel.

he sent another slave to them, and that one they wounded in the head by stoning, † and sent him away shamefully treated. ⁵ Again he sent another, and him they killed; and many others, beating some and killing some. ⁶ Finally, still having his one beloved son, he even sent him to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ⁷ But those farmers said to one another: 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and the inheritance will be ours.' ⁸ So they took him, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. ††

⁹ "What therefore will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy those farmers, and give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰ Have you not even read this Scripture:

'The stone that the builders rejected,
is the very one that became the cornerstone;

¹¹ this was the *LORD's* doing,
and it is marvelous in our eyes?" †

¹² So they started looking for a way to arrest Him, because they knew He had spoken the parable against them, but they were in fear of the crowd. Then they left Him and went away.

Render to Caesar

¹³ Then they †† sent some of the Pharisees and of the Herodians to Him, in order to trap Him with a question. ¹⁴ Upon arriving they said to Him: "Teacher, we know that you are honest—you do not 'protect' anyone, because you do not consider the position of people, but teach the way of God in truth †—is it right to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? ¹⁵ Should we pay, or should we not?" But knowing their hypocrisy, He said to them: "Why are you testing me? Bring me a denarius to look at." ¹⁶ So they did, and He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" They said to Him, "Caesar's." ¹⁷ Then Jesus answered them by saying, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." ††† And they marveled at Him.

A hypothetical situation †††

¹⁸ Then some Sadducees came to Him—they say there is no resurrection—and asked Him, saying: ¹⁹ "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother

† Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit 'by stoning' (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).
†† The details of this particular parable strike me as improbable. Most owners would take punitive measures after the second slave, if not the first. But the parable was a picture of how Israel had treated God, over the centuries, culminating in the death of His Son. † See Psalm 118:22-23. †† The reference is presumably to the leaders mentioned in 11:27. They were hoping to be able to denounce Jesus to the Governor, who was Caesar's representative. †† They were really almost too obvious. ††† We are to do both: tithe and pay taxes. The Lord's answer left them empty-handed. ††† If you ever have to deal with someone who wants to argue on the basis of a hypothetical situation—be careful! Like these Sadducees, they will have a hidden agenda.

dies and leaves behind a wife, but no children, then his brother should take that wife and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁰ Well there were seven brothers. The first took a wife, and dying left no offspring. ²¹ So the second one took her, and died; and neither did he leave any offspring. The third likewise. ²² In fact, all seven took her, and left no offspring. Last of all the woman also died. ²³ In the resurrection, whenever they may rise, whose wife will she be?—because all seven had her as wife."

²⁴ Then in answer Jesus said to them: "You do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God §—is this not the reason that you err? ²⁵ Whenever people rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in the heavens. §†²⁶ But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, about the Bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?' ²⁷ He is not the God of dead people, but the God of living ones. You are therefore badly mistaken." §††

The greatest commandment

²⁸ Then one of the scribes came on the scene, heard them arguing, realized that He had answered them well, and asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?" ²⁹ Jesus answered him: §† "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the *LORD* your §†† (pl) God, the *LORD* is one; ³⁰ and you (sg) shall love the *LORD* your (sg) God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' §† This is the first commandment. §††³¹ And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' §†† There is no other commandment greater than these."

³² So the scribe said to Him: "Well said, teacher; you said truly that He is one, and there is no other except He. ³³ And to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the soul §§† and with all

§ What a sad commentary! But is it not true of most religious leaders today, as well? §† Jesus does not say that angels do not have gender. Angels are always treated as male, not female—with-out females there could never be baby angels. That may be why they are evidently fascinated by the female of our species (1 Corinthians 11:10). Because of death, on this planet we must reproduce, or the race will die out. Since there is no death in Heaven, there will be no need to reproduce; it follows that 'marriage' and 'family' will be irrelevant up there. §†† The Sadducees were basically materialists, and like them any materialists today will also be badly mistaken in their whole world view. §† I take it that Jesus answered without hesitation—this one was easy. §†† I follow the best line of transmission in reading 'your', albeit some 75% of the Greek manuscripts have 'our', as in all versions. §† See Deuteronomy 6:4-5. The 'love' here cannot be limited to emotion, obviously. We are to love God with our whole being, all we have. But how does that work? Love for God is demonstrated by obedience, so all we do is to be oriented by God's will. §† Just over 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit 'this is the first commandment' (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §†† See Leviticus 19:18.

the strength, and to love the neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”³⁴ Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.”[†] And after that no one dared ask Him any question.

Is the Christ David's son?

³⁵ Then, teaching in the temple, Jesus reacted by saying: “How is it that the scribes say that the Messiah is David's son? ³⁶ Because David himself said by the Holy Spirit:

‘The *LORD* said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand, until I place your enemies
as a stool for your feet.”’^{††}

³⁷ Therefore David himself calls Him ‘Lord’; so how can He be his son?” The large crowd listened to Him with pleasure.

Down with hypocrisy!

³⁸ Then He said to them in His teaching: “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk about in long robes and to get greetings in the market places,³⁹ and the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts;⁴⁰ who devour the houses of widows, [‡] while praying long and loud for a show. These will receive a more severe judgment.”

A widow's offering

⁴¹ Then Jesus sat down opposite the offering chest and started watching how the people were depositing money into the chest. Many rich people put in large amounts. ⁴² A certain poor widow also came and put in two ‘lepta’, which equal a ‘quadrans’.^{‡43} So summoning His disciples He said to them: “I tell you assuredly that this poor widow has put more in the chest than all these contributors; ⁴⁴ because they all gave out of their excess, but she, out of her lack, put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.”^{‡‡}

The temple will be destroyed

13 Then as He was going out from the temple, one of His disciples said to Him: “Teacher, just look! Such stones, such buildings!”² In answer Jesus said to him: “Do you see these great buildings? Here not a sin-

§§‡ Perhaps 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit ‘and with all the soul’ (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). † Quite right—all the man had to do was put it into practice. †† See Psalm 110:1. Note that the Lord Jesus affirms that David wrote under divine inspiration! ‡ Presumably, when the man died the widow no longer had the means to clear any debt; so they would just take over the house and put the widow out in the street. ‡† The ‘lepta’ was a tiny coin used in Israel, but not in Rome; their smallest coin was a ‘quadrans’. Since Mark is writing for a Roman audience, he uses a value they can understand. ‡‡ Wow! I imagine she was appealing to God for help.

gle stone will be left upon another; each one will be thrown down.”^{‡‡‡}

The Olivet Discourse

The end of the age

³ Then as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, ^{‡‡‡} Peter, James, John and Andrew asked Him privately: ⁴ “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign whenever all these things are about to be fulfilled?”^{§5} So by way of an answer to them Jesus began by saying: “Take care that no one deceives you. ⁶ Because many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many. ⁷ But whenever you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not let it distress you; because happen they must, but the end is not yet. ⁸ Because nation will be raised against nation, ^{§†} and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and tumults. ^{§††} These things are the beginning of birth pains. ^{§‡}

⁹ “But watch out for yourselves, because they will deliver you up to councils and flog you in synagogues, and you will be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, as a testimony to them. ¹⁰ Also, the Gospel must first be proclaimed to all the ethnic nations. ^{§††11} Now whenever they lead you away and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand nor premeditate what you will say; ^{§†} rather, whatever is given to you in that hour, speak that, because it will not be you doing the speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

¹² “Further, brother will betray brother to death and a father his child, and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. ¹³ And you will be hated by all for my name's sake, ^{§‡} yet he who endures to the end, *HE* will be saved. ^{§§†}

‡‡† This was literally fulfilled in 70 AD. The Jews used the temple buildings as their last bastion of defense. They themselves set fire to some buildings and the Roman soldiers finished the job. Apparently the gold on the dome melted and ran down the cracks between the stones. So the looters literally tore stone from stone to make sure they got all the gold. ‡‡‡ I take the point to be that He could see the temple from where He was sitting. § There are two questions: “When these things?” and “What the sign?” The answer to the first is given in Luke 21:20-24. The answer to the second begins here in verse 5. §† The verb is in the passive voice, so the necessary question is, who does the raising? §†† In our day we have seen violence and looting in the wake of earthquakes and food shortages. Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit ‘and tumults’ (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

§‡ The Text has ‘birth pains’, so what is the ‘baby’? I suppose the ‘baby’ is the Messianic Kingdom. §†† See the footnote at Matthew 24:14. §† In Seminary I was taught that this instruction is for martyrs, not preachers! But churches today would be better off if their pastors got their messages from the Holy Spirit. §‡ It is already the case in many places that anyone who takes a public stand in defense of biblical values is vituperated by the media—some have gone to prison in what once were ‘Christian’ countries. §§† We must endure persecution, without denying the Lord—if you deny Him, He will deny you.

The Great Tribulation

¹⁴ “Now whenever you see the ‘abomination of desolation’, the one spoken of by Daniel the prophet, † standing where he should not”—let the reader understand—“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁵ Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. ††¹⁶ Let him who is in the field not return to his things to get his cloak. ¹⁷ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ¹⁸ And pray that your flight not take place in winter, †††¹⁹ because those will be days of affliction such as there has not been the like from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, †† and never again shall be. †††²⁰ If the Lord did not cut those days short, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom He chose, He did shorten the days. †††

²¹ “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ ‘Look, there!’ do not believe it; ²² because false christs and false prophets will be raised up, ††† and they will show signs and wonders so as to even mislead the elect, if that were possible. ²³ So you watch out! See, I have told you everything in advance.

The return of Christ

²⁴ “But in those days, after that tribulation, ‘the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; ²⁵ the stars of heaven will be falling, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken.’ ²⁶ And then they will see the Son of the Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. †††²⁷ And then He will send His angels and gather together His elect from the four winds, from earth's extreme point to heaven's extreme point. †††

† Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit ‘the one spoken of by Daniel the prophet’, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. †† I confess that I cannot imagine a situation where a few seconds would make any difference. Evidently the attack will be sudden. † I find this instruction to be curious. Is the Lord really saying that by praying we can influence the time of year when the ‘abomination’ will take place? I wonder. †† The Lord Jesus Christ affirms that God created this world; anyone who embraces the evolutionary hypothesis of origins is calling Him a liar. †† There has always been affliction and distress in the world, but not like what is coming. ††† The tense of the verb is definitely past. The Lord is evidently referring to something that has already been determined. ††† Again, the voice is passive; I suppose it is Satan that does the raising up. § See Isaiah 13:10, 34:4. The reference is presumably to angelic beings, not literal stars (just one would demolish the planet). †† Note that this Return will be visible, in contrast to the Rapture (as I understand it). ††† I have difficulty understanding this statement, if it is to be taken literally. That the elect will be collected from all over the world, no problem, but from all over heaven? However, since resurrected saints will participate in the administration of the Messianic Kingdom (1 Corinthians 6:2, 2 Timothy 2:12, Revelation 5:10, 20:6), perhaps they are included in this statement.

Example of the fig tree

²⁸ “Now learn this example from the fig tree: whenever its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves, one knows that the summer is near. ²⁹ Even so you also, whenever you see these things happening, know that it is near—at the doors! ³⁰ Assuredly I tell you that this generation †† will certainly not pass away until all these things happen. ³¹ The heaven and the earth will pass away, but my words will certainly not pass away. †††

Watch!

³² “Now concerning that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels who are in heaven, not the Son, †† but only the Father. ³³ Watch! Keep alert! Pray! †† Because you do not know when that time will be. ³⁴ It is like a man off on a journey, having left his house and given the authority to his slaves, and to each his work; and he commanded the doorkeeper to keep watch. ³⁵ Therefore be watchful, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming—at evening or at midnight or at cockcrow or early morning—³⁶ lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. ³⁷ The things I say to you, I say to all: Watch!” †††

The Sanhedrin make plans

14 It was two days before the Passover and the Unleavened Bread. ††† The chief priests and the scribes were looking for an underhanded way to seize and kill Him. ² But they said, “Not during the feast, or the people may riot.”

An anointing in Simon's house

³ Being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He was reclining at a meal, a woman came having an alabaster vase of very costly perfume of pure nard.

§† “This generation” could refer to the Jewish race (render ‘this race’), but I think it more probable that it refers to the generation that “sees all these things”. To be more precise, I think that those who were alive on the planet in 1967 (when the city of Jerusalem returned to the political control of the nation Israel) are the generation in question. ††† Jesus affirms that His words have eternal validity/authority. †† While He was walking this earth as Jesus, He didn’t know, but presumably now He does. †† Since the Return draws ever closer, of necessity, we, of all people, should be doing this. A mere handful (0.6%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit ‘pray’ (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ††† To whom does the ‘all’ refer? Those who are not followers of Christ will not pay attention in any case (presumably). ††† I take it that this statement settles the question of the exact day of the crucifixion. It was late Tuesday afternoon, probably after 6:00 p.m.—adding two days takes us to 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, but the proceedings in the upper room began after 6:00 p.m. on that Thursday, which to the Jews was already Friday. Therefore Jesus died on a Friday [not Thursday]. (See also Luke 23:54-24:1—Jesus was buried on Friday afternoon; then the women rested during the Sabbath [singular = just one day]; then early the first day of the week they went to the tomb.) For further discussion, please see the Appendix: “How long was Jesus in the tomb?”

Then she broke the vase and began to pour it over His head. ⁴ But there were some who were expressing indignation to one another and saying: "To what purpose was this perfume wasted?" ⁵ It could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor!" And they started censuring her. ⁶ But Jesus said: "Leave her alone! Why are you bothering her? She has done something useful to me. ⁷ You will always have the poor with you, and whenever you wish you can do them good; but you will not always have me. ⁸ She did what she could. ^{††} She has perfumed my body for the burying before the fact. ⁹ Assuredly I tell you, wherever this Gospel may be proclaimed throughout the whole world, what she has done will also be told as a memorial to her." [‡]

Judas is hired

¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went off to the chief priests, so as to betray Him to them. ^{†††} Well upon hearing it they rejoiced and promised to give him silver coins. ^{‡‡} So he started figuring how he might conveniently betray Him.

The upper room is made ready

¹² Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they would sacrifice the Paschal lamb, His disciples said to Him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare, so that you may eat the Passover?" ¹³ So He sent two of His disciples, saying to them: "Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a clay jar of water; follow him. ¹⁴ Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, 'The teacher says, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"'" ¹⁵ He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready; there prepare for us." ^{††††} So His disciples set out and came into the city and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover.

† When Mary did it in her own house, only Judas complained. Now several others join in; it was getting to be too much of a good thing. See the footnote at verse 10 below. †† She did what was in her power to do. I would be happy to have that epitaph on my tombstone (if I ever have one) —'he did what he could'. ‡ Yes indeed; we are still reading about it, some 2,000 years later. ‡† It was too much for Judas. On Saturday (03-30-30) Mary of Bethany had anointed His feet with 300 denarii worth of the same perfume, and now four days later (Wed., 04-03-30) another woman anoints His head with another 300 denarii worth of perfume (that was a LOT of money, and he liked money). In both cases Jesus affirms they are anointing Him for burial (and He had repeatedly told them He was going to be killed). Judas figured out that his expectation of an immediate kingdom was unfounded, and he rebelled. (He might even have convinced himself that Jesus had deceived him when He called him to be a disciple.) ‡‡ I follow the best line of transmission and 40% of the manuscripts in reading 'silver coins' rather than 'money'. ‡†† This had obviously been prearranged. I suppose that this was the upper room that the disciples continued to use.

The last night—begins Thursday evening, 04/04/30, and ends the next morning

¹⁷ When it was evening He came with the twelve.

The traitor identified

¹⁸ Now as they were reclining and eating, Jesus said, "Assuredly I tell you, one of you who is eating with me will betray me." ¹⁹ So they began to be sorrowful and to say to Him one by one, "Surely not I?" And another, "Surely not I?" ^{‡‡‡} He answered and said to them: "It is one of the twelve, the one dipping with me in the bowl. ²¹ The Son of the Man is indeed going just as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of the Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man not to have been born." [§]

Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper

²² As they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, gave it to them and said, "Take, eat; ^{§†} this is my body." ²³ Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank it. ²⁴ And He said to them: "This is my blood, that of the new ^{§††} covenant, that is being shed for many. ²⁵ I tell you assuredly that I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God." ^{§†‡} And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Peter will deny Him

²⁷ Then Jesus said to them: "All of you will be caused to stumble because of me this night, ^{§††} because it is written:

'I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be scattered.'^{§†}

²⁸ But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." ²⁹ But Peter said to Him, "Even if all are caused to stumble, yet not I." ³⁰ Jesus said to him, "I tell you assuredly that YOU, today, this very night, before a rooster crows twice, ^{§†} you will deny me three times."

‡‡‡ Some 8% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'and another, surely not I' (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). § Praying to His Father, Jesus said: "Those whom you gave me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled" (John 17:12). Judas was lost. But what are the implications of 'better not to have been born'? I suppose it means that it is better to have never existed, than to spend eternity in the Lake. I find this line of reasoning to be uncomfortable. §† Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'eat' (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §†† A small handful (0.6%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit 'new', to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. Hebrews 8:7-10:18 clearly links the new covenant in Jeremiah 31 to the shed blood of God's Lamb. §‡ Jesus affirms that He will drink it in the Kingdom. I imagine this will be during the Millennial Reign, not in Heaven. §†† Some 30% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'because of me this night' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §† See Zechariah 13:7. §‡ For a full discussion of Peter's denials,

³¹ But he insisted even more vehemently, "If I have to die with you, I will absolutely not deny you!" And all the others said the same.

The agony in Gethsemane

³² Then they came to a place that was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³ But He took with Him Peter, James and John, and began to be greatly troubled and distressed.

³⁴ And He said to them: "My soul is overwhelmed with grief, to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch."

³⁵ Going on a little, He fell to the ground and started praying that if it were possible the hour might pass from Him. ³⁶ And He said: "Abba (Father), all things are possible to you. Please remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what you will." ³⁷ Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter: "Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn't you keep watch for even one hour? ³⁸ Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." ³⁹ Again He went away and prayed, saying the same thing. ⁴⁰ And when He returned He found them sleeping again, because their eyes were being weighed down; † and they did not know how to answer Him. ⁴¹ Then He came the third time and said to them: "You are still sleeping and resting! It is enough, the hour has come; yes, the Son of the Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴² Get up, let's be going. See, my betrayer has approached." ††

The betrayal and arrest

⁴³ And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived, and with him a considerable crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. ⁴⁴ Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, he it is; seize him and take him away securely." ⁴⁵ So upon arriving he went directly to Him and said to Him, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. ⁴⁶ So they laid their hands on Him and secured Him. ⁴⁷ But a certain one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck

harmonizing all four accounts, please see the Appendix: How often did Jesus say Peter would deny Him? I argue that this is the fourth warning, and since Peter became increasingly belligerent and disrespectful, Jesus added a second crowing preceded by another three denials. † The verb is in the passive voice, so the necessary question is, by whom? I follow some 35% of the Greek manuscripts, including the best line of transmission, in reading 'were being weighed down', rather than 'had been weighed down', as in the rest. †† There may have been pauses between the statements. ‡ John 18:12 informs us that there was a 'chiliarch' present (a commander of 1,000 soldiers). An officer of such high rank could only be there by the Governor's order (Pilate). Subsequent events make clear that Pilate had been consulted, and had agreed to play along. ‡† Why the 'securely'? Judas had seen so many manifestations of Jesus' power that he should have known better, but of course he was under Satan's control at that time. However, it appears that they expected resistance.

the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

⁴⁸ Then Jesus reacted by saying to them: "You have come out with swords and clubs to arrest me, as if I were a bandit. ⁴⁹ I was with you daily in the temple, teaching, and you did not seize me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." ⁵⁰ Then they all deserted Him and ran away. ‡‡

A curious case

⁵¹ Now a certain young man had followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around his naked body. The young men grabbed him, ⁵² so leaving the linen cloth he fled from them naked. ‡‡

At Caiaphas' house

⁵³ They led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. ⁵⁴ Well Peter had followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the operatives and warming himself at the fire.

A farcical trial

⁵⁵ Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus so as to kill Him, but were not finding any. ⁵⁶ To be sure, many were testifying falsely against Him, but their statements did not agree. ⁵⁷ Then some stood up and started testifying falsely against Him, saying, ⁵⁸ "We heard him saying: 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.'" ⁵⁹ But not even then did their testimony agree. §

⁶⁰ Then the high priest stood up in the center and questioned Jesus, saying: "Are you not going to answer? What are these testifying against you?" ⁶¹ But He remained silent and answered nothing. ⁶² Again the high priest questioned Him and said to Him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" ⁶³ So Jesus said: "I am, and you will see the Son of the Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of the heaven." ⁶⁴ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said: "What further need do we have of

‡‡ We know from Luke 22:51 that Jesus immediately healed the ear—otherwise things could have gotten nasty. ‡‡† Mark's account is brief. The parallel accounts fill in the picture of what actually happened. ‡‡‡ Now why would Mark want to include an incident like this in his account? (None of the others do.) I rather imagine that he was that young man. Although not invited to the Passover, he probably waited outside and followed them to Gethsemane. In effect he is saying, "I was there." § It was indeed false testimony, since that was not what Jesus said. But even if He had said that, it would just be stupid, not criminal. They were desperate. §† It was so obviously a farce that no answer was required. §†† This was an illegal proceeding on the part of the priest: he was asking Jesus to testify against Himself. The priest was desperate. §‡ Wow! Jesus gave him more than he asked for! But how and when will those men, certainly lost, "see the Son of the Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of the heaven"? They will still be in

witnesses? ⁶⁴ You heard the blasphemy! † What do you think?" They all condemned Him to be deserving of death. ⁶⁵ Then some began to spit on Him, to cover His face, punch Him and say to Him, "Prophecy!" †† And the operatives started slapping Him.

Peter's denials

⁶⁶ Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. ⁶⁷ And seeing Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Natsarene!" ⁶⁸ But Peter denied, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying." And he went out into the entryway, and a rooster crowed. ⁶⁹ But that servant girl saw him again and began to say to those standing by, "This guy is one of them." ⁷⁰ But again he kept denying it. Again, after a little while, those who were standing by said to Peter, "Surely you are one of them; because you really are a Galilean, and your accent agrees!" ††† Then he began to curse and to swear, "I do not know this man of whom you are speaking!" ⁷² And for the second time a rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered †† the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." He broke down and started to cry.

Crucifixion Day—Friday, 04/05/30 AD

15 As soon as it was early morning, having already formed a plan, the chief priests with the elders and scribes, indeed the whole council, bound Jesus, led Him away and handed Him over to Pilate. †††

Jesus before Pilate

² Pilate asked Him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" So in answer He said to him, "You stated a fact!" ³ But the chief priests kept accusing Him of many things. ⁴ So Pilate asked Him again, saying: "Are you not going to answer? See how many things they are testifying against you!" ⁵ But Jesus still gave no answer, so that Pilate marveled. †††

Hades when Christ returns. Will those in Hades be able to see what goes on outside? I don't have an answer. † Wait a minute! How could the truth be blasphemy? They rejected the truth.

†† They wanted Him to say who had hit Him. What they were doing was really cowardly, but they were probably under demonic influence. † Nine Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, against 1,623 (according to TuT

†† Around 2.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit 'and your accent agrees', to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. †† But only after the Lord looked at him and broke the spell (Luke 22:61). ††† And just why was Pilate dressed and waiting for them at 5:30 in the morning? Obviously this was a put up job. Pilate knew it was a farce, but he soon found himself in over his head. For a detailed analysis concerning Pilate, please see the Appendix: Poor Pilate—wrong place, wrong time. ††† Jesus simply did not look or act like a criminal.

Barabbas

⁶ Now at the feast he would release to them one prisoner, whomever they would request. ⁷ Well there was one called Barabbas, who had been bound with his fellow insurrectionists, who in the insurrection had committed murder. ⁸ Then the crowd began to call out ⁵ and request that he do just as he always did for them. ⁹ So Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" ¹⁰ (He knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.) ¹¹ But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should release Barabbas to them instead. ¹² Pilate answered and said to them again, "What then do you want me to do to him you call 'king of the Jews?'" ¹³ Again they shouted, "Crucify him!" ¹⁴ But Pilate said to them, "But what evil did he do?" They just yelled all the louder, "Crucify him!" ¹⁵ So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them, and Jesus, after a flogging, he handed over to be crucified. ††

Soldiers have a little 'fun'

¹⁶ Then the soldiers led Him away into the courtyard (that is, the Praetorium) and assembled the whole garrison. ¹⁷ They clothed Him with purple, plaited a crown of thorns and put it on Him, ¹⁸ and began to 'acclaim' Him by saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ¹⁹ They kept hitting Him on the head with a rod ††† and spitting on Him, and kneeling down they would 'worship' Him. ²⁰ When they had ridiculed Him, they took the purple off Him and put His own clothes on Him. Then they led Him out to crucify Him.

The crucifixion

²¹ A certain passer-by, Simon a Cyrenian (the father of Alexander and Rufus), †† coming in from the countryside, was compelled to carry His cross. †††† They brought Him to a place *Golgotha*, which is translated, 'Place of a Skull'. ²³ They offered Him wine mixed with myrrh to drink, †† but He did not take it. ²⁴ After crucifying Him, they divided His clothes by casting lots for them, to see who would take what. ²⁵ It was the third

§ A mere handful [0.5%] of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have 'go up' instead of 'call out', to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. †† By comparing the parallel accounts we know that a great deal more happened than is given here. ††† This drove the thorns into His scalp, and since they were probably poisonous, His face began to swell. †† After carrying the cross, Simon doubtless stayed around to see what happened. In consequence he was no doubt converted, as were his two sons. ††† A condemned person usually had to carry his cross, but this one was doubtless heavy, and evidently Jesus was having difficulty carrying it. †† This was a humanitarian gesture—myrrh is a crude analgesic and would deaden the pain. But Jesus refused it; He wanted nothing to cloud His senses or diminish the suffering.

hour † when they crucified Him. ²⁶ The statement of His 'crime' that had been written was:

THE KING OF THE JEWS.

²⁷ With Him they also crucified two bandits, one on His right and one on His left. ²⁸ So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And He was numbered with transgressors." ††

²⁹ Those who passed by kept ridiculing Him, wagging their heads and saying, "Hey! You who can destroy the temple and build it in three days, ³⁰ save yourself and come down from the cross!" ³¹ Similarly, the chief priests, with the scribes, kept mocking among themselves saying: "He saved others; he can't save himself! ^{‡32} Let the Christ, the king of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe him." †† Those who were crucified with Him insulted Him as well. ††

³³ Now when the sixth hour had come [noon], darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. ††³⁴ At the ninth hour Jesus called out strongly, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lima sabachthan?" which is translated, "O God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" ††³⁵ When some of the bystanders heard it they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah." ³⁶ Then someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a reed and started offering it to Him to drink, saying, "You let him be! 'Let's see if Elijah is coming to take him down!'" †

³⁷ Then Jesus gave a loud shout and breathed out His spirit; ^{‡38} and the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. ^{‡†39} Well when the centurion, who was standing opposite Him, saw that He breathed out

† Using Jewish time, that was 9 a.m. †† See Isaiah 53:12. Around 11% of the Greek manuscripts omit verse 28 entire, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, [TEV], etc. † This was precisely true, but not in the sense they intended. To save us, He could not save Himself. †† They were lying; they would not have submitted to Him even then. †† But one of them changed his mind later. ††† The darkness could not have been a solar eclipse, as some have ignorantly argued. The Passover always occurs at full moon, and a solar eclipse only occurs at new moon. Further, even a total eclipse only lasts for a few minutes, not three hours. ††† See Psalm 22:1. † To understand Mark's turn of phrase, we need Matthew's account (27:47-49). "Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, 'This man is calling for Elijah!' Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink. The rest said, 'Let him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save him.'" The 'let him' is 2nd person singular. But in Mark's account, the 'let him' is 2nd person plural! How do we reconcile the two accounts? I suggest the following: First, the man was quite possibly Mark himself; next, anyone who really understood the language would know that Jesus had not called Elijah; so, he responds sarcastically to their erroneous interpretation and therefore unreasonable demand that he stop; he retorts, "You stop!" and repeats their interpretation in disgust. † Both Matthew 27:50 and John 19:30 plainly state that Jesus dismissed His spirit. It was not the cross that killed Him [see the third note down]. As He Himself said in John 10:18, "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." He chose to die so that we might live. Thank you, Lord! ††† That veil represented the barrier between sinful man and a Holy God. For it to be ripped in two from top to bottom

His spirit after giving such a loud shout, [‡] he said, "This man really was God's Son!" ^{‡†}

⁴⁰ There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome ⁴¹ —they used to follow Him and minister to Him when He was in Galilee—and many other women who had come up with Him to Jerusalem.

The burial

⁴² Now when evening had come, because it was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath), ⁴³ Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member who also himself was waiting for the Kingdom of God, came and boldly went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴ Well Pilate was surprised that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion he asked him when He had died. ^{‡45} Upon the centurion's confirmation he granted the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶ Having bought linen, he took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen and laid Him in a tomb that had been cut out of rock; then he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. ^{‡47} Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses observed where He was placed. ^{‡†}

16 Now when the Sabbath was past, ^{‡†} Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, in order to go and anoint Jesus. ^{‡‡‡}

‡† A mere handful (0.4%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit 'after giving a loud shout', to be followed by NASB and LB. ‡†† Any centurion would be a hardened soldier, who had seen no end of crucifixions. He knew that a cross killed by asphyxiation. Hanging from the hands, with the arms stretched out, pushes the diaphragm against the lungs so you can't breathe. Nailing the feet was a sadistic procedure to prolong the agony—even though painful, the victim would push up so he could get a breath, until finally too worn out to do so. Breaking the legs would put an end to that expedient, and the person died within a few minutes, asphyxiated. Someone who is dying asphyxiated does not shout. Since Jesus gave a loud shout, but then immediately died, the centurion knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that the cross had not killed Jesus (later, when Joseph asks for the body, Pilate is surprised that Jesus could already be dead). But who can just tell his spirit to leave? Putting two and two together, the centurion concluded that Jesus was a supernatural being. Just so! † As soon as Jesus died, the centurion most probably had left the scene, going back to headquarters. He probably felt he should inform Pilate about the unusual events, but somehow Joseph got ahead of him. Well, Joseph was evidently primed for action; watching from a distance, as soon as Jesus dismissed His spirit Joseph headed for Pilate. † If he rolled it, it was in the form of a wheel; there would be a track in which it rolled, with a bit of incline, so that he and Nicodemus could roll it down into place, where it would stop; but it would take several men to roll it back up and away (16:3-4). Obviously all of this had been planned and prepared in advance—the donkey owner, the upper room owner, the sepulcher owner all knew in advance just what part they were to play. ‡† They had seen where Jesus was placed, but obviously had not looked in the tomb—there were 100 pounds of spices in there, with enough linen to tie it all in. ‡†† After 6 p.m. that Saturday, shops could do business. ‡‡‡ I follow the best line of transmission and 30% of the manuscripts in reading 'Jesus', instead of 'Him'.

Resurrection Day—Sunday, 04/07/30 AD †

Women go to sepulcher

²Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. ³And they were saying among themselves, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?” ⁴(because it was very large), but when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away! ⁵Upon entering the tomb they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. ⁶But he said to them: “Don’t be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Natsarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He isn’t here! See, the place where they laid Him. ⁷But go, tell His disciples, also Peter: ‘He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.’” ⁸Trembling and bewildered they went out and fled from the tomb; and they said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid. †

Jesus appears to the Magdalene, first

⁹Having risen early on the first day of the week, Jesus ‡ appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. ¹⁰She went and reported to those who had been with Him, as they were mourning and weeping. ¹¹When they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe.

Emmaus ††

¹²After these things He appeared in a different form to two of them as they were walking, going into the country. ¹³So they returned and reported to the rest; neither did they believe them. ‡

Jesus appears to the ‘Eleven’, fifth

¹⁴Later He appeared to the eleven as they were reclining at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. ¹⁵Then He said to them: “Go to the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to all creation. ¹⁶He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be

† For a harmonization of the four Gospel accounts of events on Resurrection Day, please go to the Appendix: The Resurrection Accounts: a Harmonization. †† That is, they said nothing to the guards or anyone else on the way, until Jesus appeared to them (Matthew 28:9-10). After that they weren’t afraid any more. [See the final footnote, at 16:20.] ‡ I follow the best line of transmission and 30% of the manuscripts in reading ‘Jesus’, instead of ‘He’. †† We have no objective way to know if this was before or after the appearance to Peter—the second was to the women (Matthew 28:9-10).

‡‡ Mark is writing for a Roman audience, so he emphasizes that the disciples did not gullibly believe, just because they wanted to. Just the opposite.

condemned. ¹⁷And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new languages; ¹⁸they will remove ‘snakes’; ‡‡ and if they drink anything deadly, it will not hurt them at all; ‡‡‡ they will lay hands on sick people, and they will get well.” §

‡‡† The NIV renders ‘they will pick up snakes with their hands’, the ‘with their hands’ being based on just over 2% of the Greek manuscripts. I would say that this particular statement of the Lord’s has been generally misunderstood. The verb in question covers a wide semantic area, one of the uses being to pick up the way a garbage man picks up a bag of trash—he does so to get rid of it (hence ‘remove’). I believe Luke 10:19 sheds light on this question. In Luke 10:19 the Lord Jesus said: “Behold, I GIVE [so 98% of the Greek manuscripts] you the authority to trample on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of THE enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” The Lord is addressing the Seventy, not the Twelve, and others were doubtless present; further, this was said perhaps four months before His death and resurrection. It follows that this authority is not limited to the apostles, and there is no indication of a time limit. The Lord Jesus affirms that He gives us the authority over all the power of the enemy. In Matthew 28:18 He declares that He holds “all authority... in heaven and earth”, and so He has the right and the competence to delegate a portion of that authority to us. We may have any number of enemies, but THE enemy is Satan. The phrase, “all the power”, presumably includes his works, followed by their consequences. Returning to Luke 10:19, the Lord gives us the authority to “trample snakes and scorpions”. Well now, to smash the literal insect, a scorpion, you don’t need power from on High, just a slipper (if you’re fast you can do it barefoot). To trample a snake I prefer a boot, but we can kill literal snakes without supernatural help. It becomes obvious that Jesus was referring to something other than reptiles and insects. I understand Mark 16:18 to be referring to the same reality—Jesus declares that certain signs will accompany the believers (the turn of phrase virtually has the effect of commands): they will expel demons, they will speak strange languages, they will remove ‘snakes’, they will place hands on the sick. (“If they drink...” is not a command; it refers to an eventuality.) But what did the Lord Jesus mean by ‘snakes’? In a list of distinct activities Jesus has already referred to demons, so the ‘snakes’ must be something else. In Matthew 12:34 Jesus called the Pharisees a ‘brood of vipers’, and in 23:33, ‘snakes, brood of vipers’. In John 8:44, after they claimed God as their father, Jesus said, “You are of your father the devil”. And 1 John 3:10 makes clear that Satan has many other ‘sons’. In Revelation 20:2 we read: “He seized the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is a slanderer, even Satan, who deceives the whole inhabited earth, and bound him for a thousand years.” If Satan is a snake, then his children are also snakes. So then, I take it that our ‘snakes’ are human beings who chose to serve Satan, who sold themselves to evil. I conclude that the ‘snakes’ in Luke 10:19 are the same as those in Mark 16:18, but what of the ‘scorpions’? Since they also are of the enemy, they may be demons, in which case the term may well include their offspring, the humanoids [see my paper, “In the Days of Noah”]. I am still working on the question of just how the removal is done. ‡‡‡ All the other ‘signs’ involve volitional participation on the part of a believer, but this one presumably refers to an enemy taking advantage of one’s trust or good faith and putting poison in one’s drink. I suggest that the Lord was enunciating a principle here that we can claim. Whenever we feel that someone has tried/is trying to harm us, taking advantage of our confidence, we can claim the nullifying of the attempt, based on our promise. § Jesus did not say that each believer will do all these things, but any Christian community should be able to do them all.

The Ascension

¹⁹ So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at God's right. ²⁰ And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the message by the accompanying signs. Amen. †

† *For well over a hundred years, there has been an ongoing campaign to discredit the last twelve verses of Mark (16:9-20). I wonder where people get the motivation to expend so much time and energy on such an enterprise. Only three known Greek manuscripts omit the verses, and one of them is a falsification at this point [there would be no point in a falsification unless the first hand in fact contained the verses]. For a full discussion of this variant, please see *The Identity of the New Testament Text IV, Appendix E.**

Luke

Dedicatory

1 Given that many have undertaken to set in order a narrative concerning those things that really did take place among us, ^{†2} just as those who became eye-witnesses, from the beginning, and ministers of the Word delivered them to us, ^{††3} it seemed good to me also, most excellent Theophilus, [‡] having taken careful note of everything from Above, ^{††} to write to you with precision and in sequence, ^{†††} so that you may *KNOW* the certainty of the things in which you were instructed. ^{†††}

The birth of John the Baptizer foretold

⁵ In the days of Herod, the king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the *priestly* division of Abijah. ^{†††} His wife was of the daughters of Aaron and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶ They were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. ⁷ But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren; and they both were well advanced in years.

The setting

⁸ Now it happened, as he was officiating as priest before God in the order of his division, ⁹ according to the custom of the priesthood, that his lot was to burn incense, upon entering the sanctuary of the Lord; ¹⁰ and

† Upon reflection it seems obvious that anyone who knew how to write would likely jot down salient points about Jesus, but Luke affirms that there were ‘many’ who attempted a serious account. Such records may well have furnished material, presumably factual, for spurious ‘improvements’ added to the four inspired accounts in the early decades of copying. †† Luke insists that his information comes from responsible eyewitnesses, who were there all the time. ‡ ‘Theophilus’ means ‘God-lover’; although Luke is evidently addressing a specific person, I would like to think that the account is also addressed to all lovers of God. †† The normal meaning of the Greek word here, ἀνωθεν, is precisely ‘from above’, and I see no reason to reject that meaning (although the secondary meaning ‘from the beginning’ is possible). The more so since in the prior verse he already used the normal phrase, ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, that means ‘from the beginning’. I take it that Luke is claiming divine inspiration, up front. ††† In fact, with a few exceptions Luke’s narrative is in chronological sequence, and as a physician he doubtless valued precision. ††† Given Luke’s stated purpose in writing, his account needs to be historically accurate. Note that Theophilus had already received some instruction. ††† See 1 Chronicles 24:10. There were 24 divisions, so each division could only serve for two weeks in a year. The members of a division would take turns.

the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. ¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense; ¹² and upon seeing him Zacharias was shaken, and a fear fell upon him.

Gabriel delivers

¹³ But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, because your prayer was heard, [§] and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴ And you will have joy and exultation, and many will rejoice over his birth. ¹⁵ For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; he *MUST NOT* drink either wine or strong drink; ^{§†} indeed, he will be filled with Holy Spirit ^{§††} already from his mother’s womb. ¹⁶ And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God; ¹⁷ in fact he himself will go before Him ^{§†} in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of fathers to children’ ^{§††} and the disobedient to the mindset of the righteous, ^{§†} to prepare a people made ready for the Lord.”

Zacharias doubts

¹⁸ But Zacharias said to the angel: “How can I be sure of this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years.” ^{§†19} So in answer the angel said to him: “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; ^{§§†} I was sent to speak to you and bring you this good news. ²⁰ Now look, you will be silent and not able to speak until the day in which these things happen, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time.”

§ Given his expression of doubt this evidently was not a recent prayer. Zacharias had given up hope (since having a child was now a physical impossibility), and may well have been unhappy with God for not having answered. He was not even impressed with the tremendous things the angel said, but continued to doubt. §† This sounds like a Nazirite—Numbers 6:3. §†† Since ‘Holy Spirit’ occurs without a definite article, I take the phrase as a proper name. §‡ The antecedent of “Him” is “the Lord their God”; in effect Gabriel is affirming that the Messiah, Jesus, is God—since he was speaking Hebrew, he may well have said ‘Jehovah their God’. §†† See Malachi 4:5-6. §† The righteous have one mindset; the disobedient have a different one. To change someone’s conduct you need to change his mindset. §‡ Does it occur to you to wonder why God would choose such an old couple for a job like this? Perhaps because they would no longer be sidetracked by personal ambitions and would dedicate their energies to preparing John. §§† Gabriel is no ordinary angel, possibly one of the cherubim; he is probably not far below Michael in rank. He imposes his authority on the priest.

Zacharias punished

²¹ Now the people were waiting for Zacharias and wondering at his delay in the sanctuary. ²² But when he came out he was unable to speak to them, and they understood that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary—he kept gesturing to them while remaining mute. ²³ And so, when the days of his service were fulfilled, he took off for home. †

²⁴ Well after those days †† his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and stayed in seclusion five months. ‡ She kept saying, ²⁵ “So that’s what the Lord has done for me in the days †† when He concerned Himself to take away my reproach among the people!” ‡‡

The birth of Jesus foretold—5 BC

²⁶ Now in the sixth month ††† the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town of Galilee named Natsareth, ††††† to a virgin betrothed § to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house §† of David; the virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ So upon entering where she was the angel said, “Rejoice, recipient of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!” §†††† But upon seeing him she was perplexed at his word and was trying to figure out what sort of greeting it might be. §†

Gabriel delivers

³⁰ The angel said to her: “Do not be afraid, §†† Mary, because you have found favor with God. ³¹ Now then, you will conceive in your womb and give birth to a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS. §††† He will be

† We know the time frame when it was the division of Abijah’s turn to serve (for only two weeks). Assuming that Elizabeth became pregnant as soon as Zacharias got home, we may deduce that Jesus was born in September/October (six months after John). †† Which ones? Presumably “the days of his service” in verse 23. ‡ Her menopause was ancient history, so what was happening was ‘impossible’; besides, even if she was pregnant the likelihood of a miscarriage would be high; so she kept quiet. But after five months she would begin to ‘show’, and the prospect of success was good. †† A pregnancy involves a fair number of days, and divine intervention was necessary all the time to enable her to carry the baby to term. ‡‡ At that time people looked down on a married woman who had no children. ††† Of Elizabeth’s pregnancy. †††† For an explanation of this spelling, and its importance, please see the note at Matthew 2:23. § This involved a signed legal document, so much so that the couple were then called husband and wife, so ‘engaged’ (at least in contemporary society) is not an adequate rendering. §† See Luke 2:4. §†† To be the mother of the Messiah was a blessing granted to only one woman in the whole history of this world (see Genesis 3:15). Less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit ‘blessed are you among women’ (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §† In Zacharias the angel inspired fear, but Mary sensed immediately that the angel did not represent a menace or threat and concentrated on his astounding words. In typical female fashion, she was trying to figure out the hidden agenda. §†† He is not telling her not to be afraid of himself, because she wasn’t; I take it that he is telling her not to fear the future and the implications of his message. §† Although the angel presumably addressed Mary in Hebrew, when it came to pronouncing the name,

great, and will be called ‘Son of the Most High’; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, §††† and He will reign over the house of Jacob §†† into the ages; indeed, of His kingdom there will be no end!” §††

Mary agrees

³⁴ So Mary said to the angel, “How shall this be, since I do not know a man?” §§§§ In answer the angel said to her: “Holy Spirit ¹⁸ will come upon you and the power of the Most High will hover over you; precisely for this reason the holy One who is to be born will be called ‘Son of God!’ ¹⁹§§§ Furthermore, your relative Elizabeth, she has actually conceived a son in her old age and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren; ³⁷ because any word spoken by God will be possible.” ³⁸ So Mary said: “Yes, I am the Lord’s slave! Let it happen to me according to your word.” ²⁰ And the angel departed from her.

Mary visits Elizabeth

³⁹ Then Mary quickly got ready and went into the hill country in those days, to a town of Judah, ⁴⁰ and entered the house of Zacharias and saluted Elizabeth. ²¹†† Well it happened that as Elizabeth heard Mary’s salutation the babe bounced up and down in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with Holy Spirit.

Elizabeth prophesies

⁴² And she cried out with a great voice ²² and said: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the Fruit of your womb! ⁴³ Why am I so favored that the mother of my Lord ²³ should come to me? ⁴⁴ Yes in-

he may well have used the Greek name as we know it. The precise sequence of sounds can be written and pronounced in Hebrew. §† Through Mary, Jesus received some of David’s genes; David was literally His ancestor (see Mary’s genealogy in Luke 3:23-38). §†† The ‘house of Jacob’ is not the Church, but the unending Kingdom will include much more than just that ‘house’. §§† This world will come to an end, but not Christ’s Kingdom. What the angel said to Mary was even more tremendous than what he said to Zacharias. §§§ Zacharias expressed doubt, but Mary simply requests some necessary information. She has understood that God wants her to be the Messiah’s mother—she was doubtless highly intelligent and perceptive. (In the Bible the verb ‘to know’ is used to refer to sexual intercourse.). ¹⁸ The Text does not have a definite article with ‘Holy Spirit’. ¹⁹ Literally so—the Holy Spirit supplied the genes that normally are supplied by a human father. ²⁰ Mary had to understand the proposal and be in full agreement, or she would not have been a good mother. ²¹ I take it that Mary understood that the angel’s reference to Elizabeth was relevant to her. ²² To cry or call out suggests unusual volume by itself, so why add ‘with a great/loud voice’? Since she spoke under the Holy Spirit’s control, there was probably an unusual quality to the voice, and the neighbors heard it. ²³ What Elizabeth is saying, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is that the Messiah is already in Mary’s womb, as witnessed by baby John’s reaction. There was no human way that Elizabeth could know of the angel’s conversation with Mary. Her prophecy served as a tremendous confirmation and encouragement to Mary—I imagine that the Holy Spirit had fertilized her as soon as she said, “Yes”.

deed, because as the sound of your salutation came into my ears the babe bounced up and down in my womb for joy. †⁴⁵ Blessed is she who believed, because there will be a fulfillment of the things that have been spoken to her from the Lord.” ††

Mary worships

⁴⁶ So Mary said:
 “My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷ and my spirit has exulted over God my Savior, †
⁴⁸ in that He paid attention
 to the humble station of His slave (f).
 Yes indeed, because from now on
 all generations will declare me to be highly favored,
 ††
⁴⁹ in that the Mighty One did sublime things for me,
 and Holy is His name.
⁵⁰ His mercy is for generations of generations
 to those fearing Him.
⁵¹ He has done mighty deeds with His arm;
 He has dispersed the arrogant in the reasoning of
 their hearts.
⁵² He has dethroned rulers and exalted the lowly.
⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things
 and sent the rich away empty. ††
⁵⁴ He has taken the part of His servant Israel,
 in remembrance of mercy,
⁵⁵ just as He spoke to our fathers,
 to Abraham and to his seed while *there is an age.*” †††
⁵⁶ So Mary stayed with her about three months, †††
 and returned to her house.

The birth of John

⁵⁷ Now the time for Elizabeth to give birth was completed and she bore a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had used His great mercy with her, and they rejoiced with her.

† The clear implication is that baby John was aware, was already a person in the womb. †† She is stating that Mary had heard from God through the angel, although she had no human way of knowing anything about it. † Mary declares her own need of a Savior. †† So it has been for 2000 years; in every generation there have been those who called her ‘blessed’. †† This sounds like social justice. ††† I follow the best line of transmission, as I believe, albeit representing only 35% of the Greek manuscripts, in this case. I take the point to be that the things mentioned are pertinent to this world, not the next. ††† Those three months in the home of a priest were doubtless filled with relevant instruction from the Scriptures (of course Zacharias was mute, so he would have to write everything), part of Mary’s preparation for her role. Note that Mary evidently took off before John was born [I wonder why]. On the other hand, being three months pregnant it was high time that she go home and face the situation that awaited her. Although Joseph evidently took her to his house immediately, at God’s direction, after only six months a full size baby would be born.

John is named

⁵⁹ So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child, § and they started calling him by the name of his father, Zacharias. ⁶⁰ His mother reacted and said, “Absolutely not; §† he shall be called John!”
⁶¹ So they said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name.” ⁶² So they started motioning to his father, as to what he would have him called. ⁶³ Asking for a writing tablet he wrote this: “His name is to be John!” They all marveled. ⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed and he started to speak, blessing God. ⁶⁵ (Well a fear came on all who lived around them; and all these sayings kept being talked about throughout all the hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶ All who heard kept them in their hearts saying, “What then will this child be?” And the hand of the Lord was with him.) §††

Zacharias prophesies

⁶⁷ Now his father Zacharias was filled with Holy Spirit and prophesied saying:
⁶⁸ “Blessed be the LORD, §† the God of Israel,
 because He has visited and provided redemption for
 His people;
⁶⁹ and has raised up a horn of deliverance for us
 in the house of His servant David
⁷⁰ —just as He spoke through the mouth of His holy
 prophets from antiquity—
⁷¹ deliverance from our enemies and out of the hand
 of all who hate us; §††
⁷² to use mercy with our fathers,
 even to remember His Holy covenant,
⁷³ the oath that He swore to our father Abraham;
⁷⁴ to grant to us (having been rescued from the hand
 of our enemies) to serve Him without fear,
⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness §† before Him
 all the days of our life.
⁷⁶ And you, child, will be called Prophet of the Most
 High,
 because you will go before the face of the Lord §†
 to prepare His ways,
⁷⁷ to give a knowledge of salvation to His people

§ ‘The eighth day’—two different blood clotting agents, vitamin K and prothrombin, are at their highest level (110% of normal) on the eighth day of a person’s life, so it is the best of all days for minor surgery. Who but the Creator knew that 4000 years ago, when He told Abraham to do it? §† She was emphatic! §†† The material within parentheses is an historical aside, after the fact. Presumably Zacharias started right in with his prophecy. §† They spoke Hebrew in Judea, and Zacharias probably said “Jehovah”. §†† Zacharias knew that the Messiah would soon be born, but was evidently expecting a physical, political kingdom that would deliver them from Roman domination. For that matter, Jesus’ own disciples evidently shared the same expectation. §† ‘To serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness’—that is what life is supposed to be about, but is only possible because the Messiah came. §† Zacharias is affirming that Jesus is ‘the Lord’ and ‘the Most High!’

by the forgiveness of their sins, †
⁷⁸ through the merciful compassions of our God,
 with which the divine Dawn has contemplated us, ††
⁷⁹ to give light to those who are sitting in darkness
 and the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

⁸⁰ So the child kept growing and being strengthened
 in spirit, ‡ and he stayed in uninhabited areas until the
 day of his manifestation to Israel. ††

The birth of Jesus—4 BC

2 Now it happened in those days that a decree went
 out from Caesar Augustus that the whole inhabited
 world should be enrolled. ††2 This first census took
 place while Quirinius was governing Syria. ††3 So
 everyone was traveling, each to his own town, to en-
 roll himself.

At night, in Bethlehem, the Savior is born

⁴ So Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of Nat-
 sareth town, into Judea to the city of David, that is
 called Bethlehem, because he was of David's 'house',
 that is, line of descent, ⁵ to enroll himself with Mary,
 the woman who had been betrothed to him, ††† who
 was pregnant. ⁶ So it happened that when they got
 there the days for her to give birth were completed;
⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn [§] Son, wrapped
 Him in pieces of cloth and laid Him in the manger, ^{§†}

† In this paragraph Zacharias emphasizes the spiritual benefits
 of Messiah's coming. †† Without doubt, the coming of the Messiah,
 with all that involved, represented the dawning of a new Day for this
 world. Instead of "has contemplated us", less than 0.5% of the Greek
 manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have "will contemplate
 us" (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The difference may
 appear to be small, but I take the point to be that the Messiah was
 already in the virgin Mary's womb—the incarnation was irreversibly
 underway. ‡ The verb 'strengthen' is in the passive voice, so John
 had outside help—just like Gabriel said. †† Because of their ad-
 vanced age, his parents may well have died by the time he was a
 teenager. Although as Zacharias' son he was in line to become a
 priest, he could not begin to serve until he was thirty, which was
 when he began his public ministry. He evidently spent the interval
 as a recluse. †† Of course the Roman Empire did not control the
 whole world, but the decree was doubtless worded in grandiose
 terms. ††† Quirinius served two terms: the best known was in AD

BC ††† That is what the Text says. We know from Matthew 1:24-25 that Joseph
 had already received her as his wife, but still had not had sexual re-
 lations with her—obviously an atypical situation. He had taken re-
 sponsibility for her as his wife, but as far as sex was concerned she
 was still 'pledged'—thus Luke's unusual turn of phrase. § Luke's
 use of the term 'firstborn', writing after Mary had passed the age
 that she could bear children, clearly implies that she had other chil-
 dren after the first; otherwise Luke would have used 'only' rather
 than 'first'. §† Some 95% of the Greek manuscripts have the defi-
 nite article with 'manger', so there was only one in the place, which
 implies that it was a stable. Since Bethlehem stands on a limestone
 ridge, there were probably natural caves that would make excellent
 stables. Actually, mother and baby were probably better off there
 than in the crowded lodging.

because there was no room for them in the lodging
 place.

Angels and shepherds

⁸ Now there were shepherds in that same area, stay-
 ing out in the field and keeping the nightly watches ^{§††}
 over their flock. ⁹ When *wow*, an angel of the Lord
 stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone
 around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ The angel said
 to them: "Do not be afraid because listen, I am an-
 nouncing the most joyful news to you, which will be to
 all the people! ¹¹ You see, today, ^{§†} in David's city, a Sav-
 ior was born to you, who is Lord Christ! ¹² And this is
 the sign to you: you will find a Baby wrapped in pieces
 of cloth, lying in a manger." ^{§††13} Suddenly a multitude
 of the heavenly army was with the angel praising God
 and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest

and on earth peace, good will toward mankind!" ^{§†}

Shepherds go and report

¹⁵ So when the angels went away from them into the
 sky the men, the shepherds, said to one another, "Hey,
 let's go to Bethlehem and see this event that has tak-
 en place, that the Lord made known to us!" ¹⁶ So they
 went in a hurry and located both Mary and Joseph,
 and the Baby lying in the manger. ¹⁷ And having seen
 they spread an exact account of the saying that had
 been spoken to them concerning this Child. ¹⁸ All who
 heard marveled at the things told them by the shep-
 herds. ^{§††19} As for Mary, she treasured all these sayings,
 pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds re-
 turned, glorifying and praising God over all that they
 had heard and seen, just as it was told them.

Jesus is named

²¹ When eight days were completed so as to circum-
 cise Him, His name was indeed called JESUS, the name
 given by the angel before He was conceived in the
 womb.

§†† They would take turns standing watch. §‡ The shepherds
 were Jews, and their 'day' began at 6 p.m. The angel's use of 'today'
 indicates that Jesus was born at night, since the angel delivered his
 message at night. §†† This may not seem like much of a 'sign' to
 us, but doubtless there was only one newborn baby in the whole
 area who met those conditions. §† "Good will toward
 mankind"—what greater proof of God's good will could there be
 than the whole plan of salvation, the center piece of which was the
 incarnation! "Good will toward mankind" reflects some 1700 Greek
 manuscripts; only six known Greek manuscripts, of objectively infe-
 rior quality, read "among those with whom He is pleased" (as in NIV,
 NASB, LB, TEV, etc.); the New Living Translation favors us with a foot-
 note: "Some manuscripts read... goodwill among people

§‡ Since the shepherds lived in that town, presumably,
 they would certainly tell their families and friends; in short order the
 whole town had heard the news. In all probability, the very next day
 someone offered Joseph a house to use.

Jesus is presented to God

²² And when the days of their [†] purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they took Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord ²³ (just as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male who opens a womb shall be called holy to the *LORD*” ^{††}), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what was specified in the Lord's Law, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons”. [‡]

Simeon

²⁵ Well now, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, expectantly waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ (It had been revealed to him repeatedly by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he saw the Lord's Messiah. ^{††}) ²⁷ So by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought the Child Jesus in, to do concerning Him according to the custom of the law, ²⁸ Simeon took Him into his arms and blessed God and said:

²⁹ “Sovereign, [‡] now You can release your slave in peace,

according to Your word,

³⁰ because my eyes have seen Your salvation,

³¹ which You have prepared before the face of all peoples:

³² a light for revelation to Gentiles,
and the glory of Your people Israel.”

³³ And Joseph ^{†††} and His mother were marveling at the things ^{†††} being spoken concerning Him.

³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother: “Listen, this One is appointed to bring about the fall and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that is spoken against, ³⁵ so that the reasonings of

[†] The Text has ‘their’, not ‘her’; since a woman was not to have intercourse for forty days after giving birth to a boy (80 for a girl), Leviticus 12:2-5, her purification obviously affected her husband as well. ^{††} See Exodus 13:2, 12-15. [‡] See Leviticus 12:8. The prescribed sacrifice was a lamb; only if the couple was too poor to bring a lamb could they substitute the birds (since they could be caught in the wild, the poorest of the poor could meet this requirement). Evidently Joseph and Mary could not afford a lamb, which indicates that they had not yet received the gifts from the magi. ^{†††} The Greek Text has ‘Christ’, but the Holy Spirit presumably used Hebrew to communicate with Simeon. The man evidently lived in communion with God, and thus the Holy Spirit could guide him at any time—here He sends him into the temple at just the right moment. ^{‡‡} Simon actually used the term from which we get ‘despot’, but in English this term has a negative flavor, unless one adds ‘benevolent’; but ‘benevolent despot’ does not work very well in direct address—so I render ‘Sovereign’. [When I myself address God, I habitually follow Simeon's example—I also am His slave.] ^{††††} Instead of ‘Joseph’, about 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have ‘his father’ (to be followed by NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.). ^{†††††} Simeon may have actually said more than is here recorded; in fact, I rather imagine that he did.

many hearts may be revealed (furthermore, a sword will pass through your own soul also).” [§]

Anna

³⁶ Also there was a prophetess Anna, a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher—she was of a great age, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity ³⁷ and having been a widow for about eighty-four years ^{§†}—who did not depart from the temple, serving *God* with fastings and petitions night and day. ³⁸ Well she, having come up at that very moment, started praising the Lord, ^{§††} and kept on speaking of Him to all those in Jerusalem who were looking for redemption. ^{§‡}

Back to Natsareth

³⁹ When they had completed everything, according to the law of the Lord, they went back to Galilee, to their own town, Natsareth. ^{§††40} And the Child kept growing and being strengthened in spirit, ^{§†} being filled ^{§‡} with wisdom; yes, the grace of God was upon Him.

A twelve-year-old Boy

⁴¹ Now every year His parents would go to Jerusalem to the feast of the Passover; ⁴² so when He was twelve years old they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. ⁴³ When they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but Joseph and His mother ^{§§†} did not know it. ⁴⁴ Supposing Him to be in the caravan, they went a day's journey and *then* started looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. ⁴⁵ Not finding Him, they returned to Jerusalem seeking Him. ⁴⁶ So it happened that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ (All who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. ^{§§‡})

[§] Watching her Son suffer, Mary would also suffer. Jesus obliged the people, especially the leaders, to take sides, and so the reasonings of their hearts were exposed. ^{§†} If she married at 15 she would have been about 105 at the time. Instead of “for about eighty-four”, perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read ‘until eighty-four’ (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, etc.). ^{§††} Instead of ‘the Lord’, less than 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have ‘God’ (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{§‡} She must have known who they were. ^{§††} We know from Matthew that there was a detour through Egypt, that began from Bethlehem, so from Jerusalem they went back to Bethlehem. ^{§†} Less than half a percent of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit ‘in spirit’ (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{§‡} Both ‘strengthened’ and ‘filled’ are in the passive voice; like John, only more so, Jesus had outside help. ^{§§†} Instead of ‘Joseph and His mother’, perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts, have ‘his parents’ (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{§§‡} Really and truly—how many of us could discuss theology intelligently for one hour, let alone three days!

⁴⁸ So upon seeing Him they were amazed, and His mother said to Him: "Son, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in distress." ^{†49} So He said to them: "Why were you seeking me? Didn't you know that I must be about my Father's concerns?" ^{††50} But they did not understand the statement that He made to them. ‡

⁵¹ Then He went down with them and came to Natsareth, and continued subordinating Himself to them; His mother kept all these sayings in her heart. ^{††52} And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Enter John the Baptizer—26 AD

3 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, while his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, ² during the high priesthood of Annas (also Caiaphas), [‡] the word of God came upon ^{††} John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. ³ So he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins; ^{†††4} as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying:

"A voice calling out:

'Prepare the way of the Lord in the wilderness, make His paths straight. [§]

† They evidently thought that Jesus had met with foul play; they were afraid for His life. In contrast, Jesus never worried about suffering harm (see next note). †† At twelve Jesus knew precisely who He was—"my father" cannot refer to Joseph because Jesus was not discussing carpentry with the doctors of the Law—He was consciously about God's business. Notice that Jesus does not even come close to apologizing; in fact He rebukes them for worrying—after all, they also knew just who He was. (Jesus was no doubt unusually mature for His age, and may have just had His bar mitzvah

‡ Perhaps they should have, knowing who He really was, but by now they probably had at least four children and each day was filled with very ordinary concerns—do the concerns of life not cause us also to forget spiritual realities? †† This is the second time Luke records this. No doubt Mary was one of the eyewitnesses that Luke interviewed; I imagine it was a long and detailed interview, and maybe several. ‡ Annas was the real high priest, which office was for life. But in an effort to diminish the political influence of the high priest (presumably) the Roman government obliged the Jews to name a different high priest each year, and the governor dealt with him—so that particular year it was Caiaphas. Notice how Luke emphasizes historicity. ††† That's what the Text says, 'upon' not 'to'; I take it that that Word compelled him to action. ††† There are those who squirm at the plain meaning of the Text—John was offering forgiveness of sins. Well, throughout the Old Testament, if you brought an animal offering you were confessing to being a sinner, and expecting to be forgiven. As forerunner to the Lamb of God, who would provide the ultimate payment for sin, John represented a transition, from the old to the new.

§ The Hebrew text of Isa. 40:3 has "in the desert" here, making it overtly parallel to "in the wilderness", so both are part of what the 'voice' is saying.

⁵ Every ravine will be filled up, and every mountain and hill will be leveled; ^{§†} the crooked parts of the roads will be straightened out, and the rough parts will be smoothed out; ⁶ and all flesh ^{§††} will see the salvation of God.'" "

"Brood of vipers!"

⁷ Then he said to the crowds that were coming out to be baptized by him: "You sons of poisonous snakes! ^{§†} Who tipped you off to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Well then, produce fruits befitting repentance, and don't even begin to say among yourselves, 'We have Abraham as father,' because I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones! ^{§††9} But even now the axe is being laid to the root of the trees; ^{§†} so then, every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

"What shall we do?"

¹⁰ So the people ^{§†} started asking him, "What then must we do?" ¹¹ In answer he said to them, "He who has two coats, ^{§††} let him share with him who has none; and he who has food should do likewise." ^{§§†12} Well even tax collectors came to be baptized by him and said to him, "Teacher, what must we do?" ¹³ So He said to them, "Don't charge more than what was determined to you." ^{§§§14} So the soldiers started asking him too: "What about us? What must we do?" He said to them, "Don't extort or harass anyone, and be content with your wages." ¹⁸

"A greater One is coming"

¹⁵ Now as the people were expectant and all were reasoning in their hearts concerning John, whether he

§† That is, where the highway passes, not all over the place; just like modern superhighways. §†† That's what the Text says. I resist the temptation to limit the reference to people, because the animals will also see it (Isaiah 11:6-9). In Genesis 6:17 "all flesh" clearly includes the animals. §‡ We don't know the precise type of snake, except that it was presumably poisonous. The Text has 'offsprings', plural, which doesn't make very good English, so I put 'sons'. From Matthew 3:7 we may conclude that he was mainly referring to Pharisees and Sadducees (who had come to evaluate what was happening, but did not themselves submit to the baptism; they would not want to admit that they had sin to confess). §†† To be born into a Christian family is certainly an advantage, but does not guarantee your eternal destiny. God has no 'grandchildren'; you must believe into the Lord Jesus Christ to become God's child. §† The Messiah was about to be introduced and to begin His public ministry; among other things He would condemn the Pharisees and other 'snakes'—'thrown into the fire' refers to their eternal destiny. §‡ The Text has 'crowds'. §§† Literally, 'tunics'. §§‡ The verb 'share' is an aorist imperative, implying a one time event—you give the extra coat, but get to keep one. The verb 'do' is a present imperative, implying a continuing action—food is to be shared all the time. §§§ Right on. The tax collectors were hated, among other things, because they usually added a percentage for themselves. ¹⁸ Right on again. Soldiers would frequently try to 'supplement' their wages.

just might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ John anticipated them all saying: “I indeed am baptizing you with water, but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal straps I am not worthy to untie. *HE* will baptize you with Holy Spirit and fire; ¹⁷ whose winnowing shovel is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor and gather the wheat into His barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” ^{††}

John is imprisoned—an historical aside

¹⁸ (Indeed, with many other exhortations as well he kept on preaching to the people; ¹⁹ but Herod the tetrarch—being reproved by him concerning Herodias, his brother’s wife, as also about all the wicked things that Herod perpetrated ‡— ²⁰ added this also to them all: he actually locked John up in his prison.)

Jesus is baptized

²¹ Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus, having been baptized also, was praying, when the heaven was opened ²² and the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove *and rested upon Him*, and a *Voice* came out of heaven saying, “You are my beloved Son; in you I am always well pleased.” ^{‡‡}

Mary’s genealogy ^{‡‡}

²³ (Beginning *His ministry* at about thirty years of age, being (so it was supposed) a son of Joseph, Jesus Himself ^{‡‡‡} was of Eli, ^{‡‡}

† I suppose that this was fulfilled at Pentecost, although it is also true that all our works will be tested by fire (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).
 †† “Unquenchable fire” is a clear reference to the Lake; recall that there is always more chaff than grain, but the chaff is also part of the wheat plant. I suspect that most churches have more chaff than grain. ‡ A coward John was not! ‡† The Trinity is manifested here, which would be an important confirmation for Jesus. ‡‡ The genealogy interrupts the chronological sequence of the narrative, which resumes at 4:1. ‡‡† There are several unusual grammatical features in the Greek text of this verse, which has been badly translated by every version I have seen; resulting in contradictions and errors of fact. Here is the Greek, for those who can read it: *Και αυτος η̄ν ο̄ Ιη̄σους, ω̄σει ε̄των τριακοντα αρχομενος, ων ω̄ς ενομιζετο ῡιος Ιωσηφ, του Η̄λει, του Μᾱθθαν, του Λευι, του Με̄λχι...* There are four words here that invite special attention: *και, αυτος, η̄ν* and *ω̄ς*. Since verse 22 ends with a statement from the Father at Jesus’ baptism, it is clear that verse 23 begins another section. But the conjunction that signals the transition is *και* and not *δε*, as one would expect—this means that ‘Jesus’ continues as the topic. But in that event, how does one explain the personal pronoun *αυτος*, the more so in such an emphatic position? If the author’s purpose was simply to register Jesus as a son of Joseph, as many suppose, why did he not just write *και ο̄ Ιη̄σους η̄ν ῡιος Ιωσηφ*, etc.? But then, why write *ω̄ς ενομιζετο*? It seems to me that the normal meaning of “as was supposed” is to affirm that Jesus was in fact Joseph’s son; but that is precisely what Jesus was NOT. Luke has already made clear that Jesus’ real Father is the Holy Spirit—1:34-35, 43, 45; 2:49. So what Luke is really saying is that although the people supposed Jesus to be Joseph’s son, He actually had a different lineage—we should translate “so it was supposed”. (Recall that a faithful and loyal translation seeks to transmit correctly the meaning intended by

²⁴ of Matthan, [§] of Levi, of Melchi, of Janna, of Joseph, ²⁵ of Mattathiah, of Amos, of Nahum, of Esli, of Nag-gai,
²⁶ of Maath, of Mattathiah, of Semei, of Joseph, of Judah,
²⁷ of Joannan, of Rhesa, of Zerubbabel, ^{§†} of Shealtiel, ^{§††} of Neri,
²⁸ of Melchi, of Addi, of Cosam, of Elmodam, of Er,
²⁹ of Jose, of Eliezer, of Jorim, of Matthat, of Levi,
³⁰ of Simeon, of Judah, of Joseph, of Jonam, of Eli-akim,
³¹ of Melea, of Menan, of Mattatha, of Nathan, of David,
³² of Jesse, of Obed, of Boaz, of Salmon, of Nahshon,

*the AUTHOR.) The verb η̄ν is the only independent one in the whole paragraph, verses 23-38. Is it working with the participle αρχομενος in a periphrastic construction? That appears to be the tendency of the eclectic text that places the participle right after ‘Jesus’ (following about 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality), which makes Jesus out to be in fact Joseph’s son. It seems to me to be far more natural to take the participial clauses as being circumstantial: “beginning at about thirty years of age” and “being (so it was supposed) a son of Joseph”. Setting those two clauses aside, the independent clause that remains is η̄ν ο̄ Ιη̄σους του Η̄λει, “Jesus was of Eli”. The participle ‘beginning’ requires an object, that the Text leaves implicit; from the context it seems clear that we may supply ‘His ministry’, or some such thing, which is why most versions do so. I suggest the following rendering: “Beginning His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (so it was supposed) a son of Joseph, Jesus was actually of Eli, of Mathan, of Levi...” I take it that the emphatic pronoun αυτος heightens the contrast between what the people imagined and the reality. Jesus was a grandson of Eli, Mary’s father—Luke gives the genealogy of Jesus through His mother, while Matthew gives it through His stepfather. The eclectic text gives our verse a different wording: *και αυτος η̄ν Ιη̄σους αρχομενος ω̄σει ε̄των τριακοντα, ων ῡιος, ω̄ς ενομιζετο, Ιωσηφ του Η̄λι του Μᾱθθαν του Λευι του Με̄λχι...* The RSV translates it like this: “Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat...” Is not the normal meaning of this rendering that Jesus was in fact the son of Joseph? However, every version that I recall seeing has “Joseph, the son of Heli”, which directly contradicts Matthew, “Jacob begot Joseph”. The word ‘son’ (without the article) occurs only with Joseph, although most versions supply it on down the genealogy. But Luke is precisely correct in not using it, because it would not hold for the first and last names in the list—Eli did not beget Jesus (nor Joseph) and God did not beget Adam. So then, properly understood Luke does not contradict Matthew (with reference to Joseph’s father), nor does he affirm an error of fact (with reference to Jesus’ father). ‡‡‡ All published Bibles that I have seen add ‘son’ or ‘the son’ to each prepositional phrase in the genealogy, but Luke did not write that—from ‘Eli’ to ‘God’ there is no ‘son’. Why not? I do not know, I was not there, but with both Eli and God the word would have a different meaning than with the rest of the names in the list. Adam could be called a ‘son’ of God by creation, but not procreation. I take it that Eli was Mary’s father, and thus the maternal grandfather of Jesus, so here also ‘son’ would have a different meaning. For all that, through Mary and Eli Jesus received some of David’s genes, so He was literally a descendant of David, through his son Nathan. § There is considerable confusion among the Greek manuscripts as to the spelling of all these names. I have generally just followed the spelling we are used to (since the meaning is not affected), but not always. §† For more on this man see the whole book of Haggai and Zechariah 4:6. §†† The Greek form is actually ‘Salathiel*

³³ of Amminadab, of Aram, † of Joram, †† of Hezron, of Perez, of Judah,

³⁴ of Jacob, of Isaac, of Abraham, of Terah, ‡ of Nahor,

³⁵ of Serug, of Reu, † of Peleg, of Eber, of Shela,

³⁶ of Cainan, † of Arphaxad, of Shem, of Noah, of Lamech,

† Rather than “of Aram”, a variety of modern versions have “the son of Admin, the son of Arni”, and they do so following the eclectic text that has been in vogue for several generations (UBS/N-A). As is their habit, the editors of that text follow the so-called ‘Alexandrian’ witnesses, but at this point those witnesses are scattered all over the back side of the desert—almost no two agree. One would have thought that this would give the UBS editors pause, but not at all. They were so intent on doing despite to Christ’s genealogy that they actually concocted a ‘patchwork quilt’ and intruded the fictitious Admin and Arni into that genealogy. UBS has presented the evidence in their apparatus in such a way as to obscure the fact that no Greek MS has the precise text they have printed (the same holds for N-A). In Bruce Metzger’s presentation of the UBS Committee’s reasoning in this case he wrote, “the Committee adopted what seems to be the least unsatisfactory form of text”. Is this not a good candidate for ‘chutzpah’ of the year? The UBS editors concoct their own reading and proclaim it “the least unsatisfactory”! And just what might be “unsatisfactory” about the reading of 95% of the Greek manuscripts except that it does not introduce any difficulties? There is complete confusion in the Egyptian camp. That confusion may have commenced in the second century, resulting from several easy transcriptional errors, simple copying mistakes. The total confusion in Egypt does not surprise us, but how shall we account for the text and apparatus of UBS3/N-A26 in this instance? And whatever possessed the editors of NASB, NRSV, TEV, LB, Berkeley, etc. to embrace such an egregious error? ‘Admin’ and ‘Arni’ have no more place in Christ’s genealogy than does Idi Amin, although he at least is not a fiction. †† ‘Joram’—Luke 3:33 X Matthew 1:3, Ruth 4:19, 1 Chronicles 2:9. I follow 80% of the Greek manuscripts, including the best line of transmission, in placing Joram between Aram and Hezron. However, since both the Textus Receptus and the eclectic text currently in vogue follow the 20%, mine is the first version that I have seen that includes Joram. The obvious difficulty with this proceeding is that it goes against Matthew 1:3, Ruth 4:19 and 1 Chronicles 2:9, that have no ‘Joram’. The apparent disagreement with Matthew, Ruth and Chronicles would be an obvious inducement to omit ‘Joram’. But what possible motivation would there be to invent and insert an unknown name? And if someone did, how could it come to dominate the stream of transmission, to the tune of 80%? But wherever could Luke have come up with ‘Joram’? I understand that Luke obtained the information about Joram from records existing in his day, and being correct information was led by the Holy Spirit to include it in his Gospel. Just like Jude, who quoted Enoch—Enoch’s prophecy must have been in existence in Jude’s day, but we have no copy in Hebrew today (though Jews are reported to have used one so recently as the 13th century AD); similarly we have no copy of Luke’s source. Recall Luke’s stated purpose in writing: “It seemed good to me also, most excellent Theophilus, having taken careful note of everything from Above, to write to you with precision and in sequence, so that you may know the certainty of the things in which you were instructed” (Luke 1:3-4). Given his stated purpose in writing, Luke’s account needs to be historically accurate (cf. 2:2 and 3:1). So then, I take it that the Holy Spirit guided Luke to include Joram. So then, Aram (Ram) was actually a grandson of Hezron; Hezron fathered Joram, who fathered Aram. While I am on this tack, my solution to the ‘Jeremiah’ problem in Matthew 27:9-10 is similar. Daniel (9:2) refers to “the books” (plural) in connection with Jeremiah the prophet. So I assume that Matthew had access to other writings of Jeremiah, of which no copy survives. ‡ The Greek form is actually ‘Tharra’. †† The Greek form is actually ‘Ragav’. ††† Cainan2—Luke 3:36 X Genesis 11:12. There are several spelling variations that to-

³⁷ of Methuselah, of Enoch, of Jared, of Mahalaleel, of Cainan,

gether are attested by almost 1% of the Greek manuscripts; 99% have *Kauvav*. Apparently only two omit, \diamond 75v and D, but no printed text follows their lead. So there is no reasonable doubt that Luke in fact wrote that Shelah was fathered by Cainan, not Arphaxad. This Cainan has been widely used to justify treating the genealogies in Genesis like accordions—if one name was demonstrably left out in the Genesis account, then who knows how many others were also left out. This Cainan is also used to deny the validity of constructing a strict chronology based on the time spans given in the genealogies. But where did Luke get this information? The LXX contains Cainan in Genesis 11:12, but is so different from the Massoretic text here that it looks like fiction. Recall that the LXX we know is based on codices Vaticanus, Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus, produced centuries after Luke. It is more likely that our LXX is based on Luke than vice versa. Where then did Luke get it? I understand that Luke obtained the information about this Cainan from records existing in his day, and being correct information was led by the Holy Spirit to include it in his Gospel (see my discussion of ‘Joram’ above). This brief note was inspired by the discussion of the subject given by Dr. Floyd N. Jones in *Chronology of the Old Testament* (which book comes close to solving all the alleged numerical discrepancies in the OT, at least as I see it). However, the explanation that follows is original with me (if anyone else has proposed it, I am unaware). Consider the exact wording of Genesis 11:12-13. “Arphaxad lived thirty-five years and begot Salah; after he begot Salah, Arphaxad lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters.” The verb ‘begot’ requires that Salah be a blood descendant of Arphaxad, not adopted. He could be a grandson, the son of a son of Arphaxad, or even a great-grandson, etc., except that in this case the time frame only has room for one intervening generation. The plain meaning of the formula in the Text, ‘W lived X years and begot Y; after W begot Y he lived Z years,’ is that W was X years old when Y was born, is it not (and Y was Z years old when W died)? It follows that this formula destroys the ‘accordion’ gambit. There were precisely 130 years between Adam and Seth, 105 between Seth and Enosh, 90 between Enosh and Cainan1, etc., etc. (To argue that the years were based on lunar months will not save the gambit.) I take the clear meaning of the Hebrew Text to be that Arphaxad was 35 years old when Salah was born, whatever we may decide to do about ‘Cainan’. Let us try to imagine the situation in the years immediately following the Flood. After the Flood the ‘name of the game’ was to replenish the earth. Indeed, the divine command was: “Be fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 9:1). So, whom could Noah’s grandsons marry? Obviously their cousins, Noah’s granddaughters. There would be an urgency to reproduce—thus, the girls would be married off at puberty, and the boys would not be wasting around either. The women would be giving birth as often as they possibly could. Really, the absolute top priority would be to increase the number of people. Arphaxad was born two years after the flood, but his wife could have been born a year or two earlier. (The Sacred Text is clear to the effect that only eight souls entered the ark, but some of the women could have conceived during the Flood, since they were in the ark for a full year.) Thus, Arphaxad could have fathered “Cainan” when he was 17/18. Similarly, Cainan could have fathered Salah when he was 17/18. In this way Arphaxad could be said to have “begotten” Salah when he was 35. Cainan could have died early or been passed over in Genesis because the time span did not constitute a ‘generation’, or both. Or, as things got back to normal, culturally speaking, the haste with which Arphaxad and Cainan procreated might have been viewed as unseemly. The expedient of omitting Cainan would make the account more ‘normal’ while preserving precision as to the elapsed time. But Luke would be correct in saying that Salah was “of” Cainan who was “of” Arphaxad. Salah was Arphaxad’s grandson. In any case, the Messianic line was passed on by Salah. Without Luke’s record I, for one, would never have stopped to consider what must have happened immediately following the Flood—the absolute priority must have been to increase the number of people.

³⁸ of Enosh, of Seth, of Adam, of God.)

Jesus tested by Satan

4 Then Jesus, full of Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ² where He was tested for forty days by the devil. [†] He ate nothing at all during those days, so after they were completed He was *HUNGRY*. ^{††3} So the devil said to Him, "Since you are Son of God, [‡] tell this stone to become bread!" ^{††4} Jesus answered him saying, "It is written: 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'" ^{‡‡}

⁵ And taking Him up on a high mountain, ^{†††} the devil showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ^{†††6} The devil said to Him: "To *you* I will give all this authority, and their glory, because it has been handed over to *ME*, and I give it to whomever I want to. ⁷ So you, if you would worship before me, all will be yours." ^{§§} In answer Jesus said to him: "Get behind me, Satan! ^{§†} It is written, 'You shall worship the *LORD* your God, and Him only shall you serve!'" ^{§††}

⁹ He also took Him to Jerusalem and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, ^{§‡} and said to Him: "Since you are Son of God, throw yourself down from here; ¹⁰ because it is written, 'He will give His angels orders concerning you, to protect you,' ¹¹ and, 'They will carry you along on their hands, so you do not stub your foot on

[†] We are not told just how Satan did this. ^{††} This episode was ordained by the Holy Spirit. Jesus had to confront Satan when He was physically the weakest He would ever be (40 days without food!).

When Satan failed to defeat this weakened Jesus, he was probably filled with despair—he now knew that he could never defeat Him (but he would still try to kill Him). Hebrews 2:18 and 4:15-16 give at least part of the reason why Jesus had to undergo this experience.

[‡] There are several kinds of conditional clause in Greek, among them 'of doubt', 'of fact' and 'contrary to fact'—Satan was not so crude as to express doubt about Christ's identity, 'if', he was more subtle; he granted the fact, 'since', and appealed to His pride.

^{††} Matthew 4:3 has "these stones", instead of "this stone". I gather that Satan said both: he started with 'these stones' and then picked out a specific one. ^{†††} See Deuteronomy 8:3. Less than half a percent of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "but by every word of God" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). If we are to live by 'every' word, then every word must be kept available.

^{†††} Just three known Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality (against over 1,700), omit "up on a high mountain the devil" (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc., except that some keep 'the devil', but not the rest). ^{††††} This is obviously supernatural. Even from a satellite you cannot see the whole world at once, because it is a sphere. [§] This was a master stroke. Jehovah the Son entered this world as the second/last Adam precisely to recover what the first Adam had lost, and Satan was evidently well aware of what was going on. So he offers it to Jesus on a 'silver platter', with just one small condition... Note that Jesus does not deny Satan's right to make the offer. ^{§†} Some 3.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit "Get behind me, Satan" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{§††} See Deuteronomy 6:13. ^{§‡} Matthew's report has the temple before the mountain; since he employs adverbs of time (sequence) while Luke does not, I take it that Matthew gives the correct sequence (which is also the logical progression). Luke handles the temple event almost as an afterthought.

a stone.'" ^{§††12} In answer Jesus said to him: "The statement stands, 'You shall not test the *LORD* your God!'" ^{§†}

¹³ Having finished every test, ^{§‡} the devil departed from Him until an opportune time. ^{§§†}

Jesus begins His public ministry, in Galilee ^{§§‡}

¹⁴ Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and news about Him spread throughout the whole surrounding area; ¹⁵ yes, He started teaching in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

His hometown rejects Him

¹⁶ So He came to Natsareth, where He had been brought up; as was His custom He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.

¹⁷ The book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him, so unrolling the scroll He found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the *LORD* is upon me, because He has anointed me to evangelize poor people.

He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, ^{§§§} to proclaim release to captives and recovery of sight to blind people, to send those who are oppressed out in freedom, ¹⁹ to proclaim the Lord's favorable year." ¹⁸

"Today this Scripture is fulfilled"

²⁰ Then, having rolled up the scroll and returned it to the attendant, He sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on Him, ²¹ and He began by saying to them, "Today, this Scripture in your ears has been fulfilled." ²² (All were bearing witness to Him and were marveling at the gracious words that were coming out of His mouth; ¹⁹ and they started saying, "Isn't this the son of Joseph?") ²³ He said to them: "Doubtless you will quote this parable to me: 'Physi-

^{§††} See Psalm 91:11-12. ^{§†} See Deuteronomy 6:16. To do something irresponsible to try to oblige God to perform a miracle to save you from the consequences is forbidden. It would be a kind of 'blackmail'. ^{§‡} Jesus was tested in the three areas: "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). Hebrews 2:18 and 4:15-16 give at least part of the reason why Jesus had to go through this experience. ^{§§†} "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7), but he is in the business of returning and renewing the attack—constant vigilance is required. ^{§§‡} A number of months elapsed between verses 13 and 14; John 1:15-4:42 records some of what transpired during that interval. ^{§§§} Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "to heal the brokenhearted" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ¹⁸ Jesus interrupted the reading of Isaiah 61:2 at a coma—"the great parenthesis". The part that He read pertained to His first coming, but "the day of vengeance of our God" pertains to His second coming—the 'parenthesis' is closing in on 2,000 years. ¹⁹ He doubtless spoke for a reasonable length of time and was producing a favorable impression, but at the end He got offensive; verses 23-27 presumably contain the conclusion of His discourse.

cian, heal yourself!—do here in your hometown the things we have heard were done in Capernaum.”

Jesus treads on their toes

²⁴ Then He said: “Assuredly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his hometown. ²⁵ Further, I can assure you that there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut for three years and six months and a severe famine came over all the land; ²⁶ yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow woman in Sarepta, near Sidon. ²⁷ And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, yet not one of them was cleansed—just Naaman the Syrian.” †

²⁸ Well, upon hearing these things everyone in the synagogue was filled with fury, ††²⁹ and rising up they drove Him out of the town and took Him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw Him off the cliff. ³⁰ But He, passing through the middle of them, went on His way. ‡

Capernaum becomes His base of operations—27 AD

³¹ Then He went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee; He started teaching them on the Sabbaths. ³² They kept on being amazed at His teaching, because His word was with authority.

A demonized man

³³ Now in the synagogue was a man having a spirit of an unclean demon; he cried out with a loud voice ³⁴ saying: “Ugh! What do you want with us, Jesus of Natsareth? Did you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God!” ††³⁵ So Jesus rebuked him saying, “Be muzzled, and get out of him!” When the demon had thrown him down in the midst, it came out of him without harming him. ³⁶ Everyone was taken with amazement and they started conversing together, saying: “What is this word! For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!” ³⁷ And the news about Him started going out to every place of the surrounding region.

† It appears that Jesus antagonized them on purpose. Why? I see two possible answers: to remove any claim to special privilege that they might harbor because of being His home town; to be personally free from possible pressure arising from such a claim. In fact He moved out, choosing Capernaum as His base of operations. †† The violent reaction was out of all proportion to the ‘provocation’. Presumably Satan took this opportunity to try to kill Him. ‡ “Passing through the middle of them, He went on His way”—now how did that happen? To throw Him down, someone would have to be holding Him, probably a man on each arm, and they had gotten Him there by force, and He was surrounded. Obviously the Lord made use of supernatural power to free Himself from that situation—He had come to this world to die, all right, but not then and not in that way. †† Evidently the Lord’s mere presence was enough to make the demons feel threatened. Based on John 14:12, I wonder if the same thing should not be true of us.

Peter’s mother-in-law

³⁸ Then He left the synagogue and entered Simon’s house. But Simon’s mother-in-law was suffering with a high fever, and they requested Him on her behalf. ³⁹ So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. Immediately she got up and began to serve them. ‡

Healings at sunset

⁴⁰ Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on each one of them and healed them. ‡‡⁴¹ Moreover, demons came out of many, crying out and saying, “You are the Christ, ‡‡ the Son of God!” But rebuking them He would not allow them to continue speaking, because they knew that He was the Messiah. §

⁴² Now at daybreak He departed and went to a deserted place; so the crowds started looking for Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them. ⁴³ But He said to them, “I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other towns also, because for this purpose I have been sent.” ⁴⁴ So He went preaching in the synagogues of Galilee. §†

By the sea

5 Now it happened, as He had come along the Lake of Genesaret, that the multitude crowded Him to hear the Word of God; ² He saw two boats standing by the lake (the fishermen were out of them, washing their nets). ³ So He got into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, and asked him to put out a little from the land. §†† Sitting down He began to teach the crowds from the boat.

‡‡ Normally a high fever leaves one weak, so the Lord reversed the consequences of the fever as well. I take it that Matthew 8:14-15 records a different occasion. Just because God heals you once does not mean you will not get sick again. ‡‡† On this occasion Jesus placed a hand on each one, but that would not always be the case. It would appear that He deliberately used a variety of procedures to heal. ‡‡‡ Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “the Christ” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). § I find this to be curious: the demons kept telling the truth about Jesus, but He evidently did not want testimony from that quarter. But it seems that the demons felt compelled to identify Him—I wonder why. §† Around 4% of the Greek manuscripts read Judea rather than Galilee, possibly influenced by Lectionaries. There is confusion among the 4% such that the prepositional phrase as given in UBS is read by less than 1%. However, Jesus was in Galilee (and continued there), not in Judea, as the context makes clear. In the parallel passage, Mark 1:35-39, all texts agree that Jesus was in Galilee. Thus UBS3 contradicts itself by reading Judea in Luke 4:44. Bruce Metzger makes clear that the UBS editors did this on purpose when he explains that their reading “is obviously the more difficult, and copyists have corrected it...in accord with the parallels in Matthew 4:23 and Mark 1:39.” Thus the UBS editors introduce a contradiction into their text which is also an error of fact. This error in the eclectic text is reproduced by LB, NIV, NASB, NEB, RSV, etc. NRSV adds insult to injury: “So he continued proclaiming the message in the synagogues

A miraculous catch

⁴ When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ And in answer Simon said to Him, "Master, we have worked hard the whole night and caught nothing, but based on your word I will let down the net." ⁶ When they had done this, they caught such a large number of fish that their net began to tear. ⁷ So they signaled to their partners who were in the other boat to come help them; they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸ Upon experiencing this Simon Peter fell at Jesus' knees, †† saying, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" ⁹ Because astonishment gripped him and all who were with him at the haul of fish which they had caught; ¹⁰ yes, this included James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." ¹¹ Pulling the boats up on the shore, they left it all †† and followed Him.

The hinge: proof, evaluation, rejection

A leper—the proof

¹² Now it happened, while He was in one of the towns—a man full of leprosy! Upon seeing Jesus he fell on his face and begged Him, saying, "Lord, if you want to, you can cleanse me!" ¹³ So He extended His hand and touched him, saying, "I want to; be cleansed!" †† Immediately the leprosy left him. ¹⁴ Then He ordered him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing just as Moses prescribed, as a testimony to them." ††† ¹⁵ However the news about Him spread all the more, and large crowds kept gathering to hear and to be healed by Him of their sicknesses. ¹⁶ So He Himself would withdraw into deserted places and pray. †††

of Judea. ††† Peter had already spent time with Jesus, so this was natural. † Peter was the professional here, and figured he knew better than Jesus, but he does obey. However, Jesus had said to let down 'nets' (pl), but Peter let down only one. 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read 'nets', to be followed by most modern versions. (Actually, Jesus put 'let down' in the plural, so there was at least one other in the boat, unless it was really His intention that both boats should go out.) †† Jesus was still sitting in the boat, only now surrounded by fish, probably up to His knees. † Do you find Peter's reaction to be curious? No doubt he felt pretty 'small' at that point. †† The hired men took care of the fish, etc. No doubt most of the crowd had stayed to watch, so getting rid of the fish probably was not a problem. †† "I want to"—beautiful! To actually touch a leper was unheard of, but of course Jesus had no fear of contamination. ††† As a testimony about what? This would be the first time in the life of the priest that anyone had done this, because lepers did not get better. Who but the Messiah could heal leprosy? That they got the point is indicated by the examining council that is described in verse 17 below. ††† He made sure that He kept in touch with the Father.

An examining council—the evaluation

¹⁷ Now it happened on a certain day that He was teaching, and there were Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee, and from Judea and Jerusalem, sitting there—and the power of the Lord was there to heal them. ⁵

"Your sins are forgiven"

¹⁸ And then, some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a cot, and tried to take him in and place him before Him. ¹⁹ When they could not find how to do it, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him with the cot through the tiling into the center, in front of Jesus. ²⁰ Seeing their faith He said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you!" ††

A 'discussion' ensues

²¹ So the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying: "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" †††²² But Jesus perceived their reasonings and reacted by saying to them: "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? ²³ Which is easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you', or to say, 'Get up and walk!?' †††²⁴ But that you may know that the Son of the Man ††† has authority on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralyzed man: "I say to YOU, get up! Take your cot and go to your house."

God is glorified

²⁵ Immediately he stood up in front of them, took up what he had been lying on, and set out to his own house glorifying God. ²⁶ Amazement gripped them all and they kept glorifying God; they were also filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things today!" ††

§ The eclectic text currently in vogue makes a mess of this statement by changing 'them' to 'him', following about 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality. 'Him' is in the accusative case, as is 'them', and is thus the direct object of the verb 'to heal'. The modern versions that follow the 1% render 'present with Him to heal', or some such thing, which the text does NOT say. †† Those men were really determined, but they wanted healing, not forgiveness of sins; however, Jesus had His own agenda. ††† Their theology was not all that bad; they just did not recognize Jesus as God. †† "Your sins are forgiven" is easier to say, because no one can see if it happened or not. If you say, "Get up and walk!" and he does not, it makes you look stupid. ††† That is what the Text says, "the Son of the Man", which appears to be a phrase coined by the Lord Jesus to refer to Himself; the phrase does not make very good sense in English, at first glance, but if "THE man" refers to pristine Adam and "THE son" to an only pristine descendant, it makes great sense. It seems to indicate a perfect human prototype, like Adam was before the fall—the human side of the God-man. †† Their initial reaction was favorable, but then Jesus went and ate with tax collectors, and that was too much for them.

Enter Levi (Matthew)

²⁷ After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax office; and He said to him, "Follow me!" ²⁸ So leaving everything he got up and followed Him. ¹²⁹ Then Levi made a great banquet for Him at his house; and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others who were reclining with them.

The Pharisees have a problem

³⁰ Well the scribes and Pharisees complained about them to His disciples, saying, "How can you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?!" ³¹ So Jesus reacted and said to them: "Those who are healthy have no need of a physician, just those who are sick. ³² I have not come to call righteous people to repentance, just sinners."

³³ Then they said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but yours keep eating and drinking?"

³⁴ So He said to them: "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? ³⁵ But days are coming when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; *THEN*, in those days, they will fast."

New wine X old wineskins

³⁶ Then He also told them a parable: "No one puts a patch from a new garment on an old one; otherwise, both the new makes a tear and that from the new does not match the old. ³⁷ And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst those skins and will itself be spilled and the skins wasted. ³⁸ Rather, new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved. ^{††39} Further, no one having drunk old *wine* immediately desires new, for he says, 'The old is better.'"

Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath

6 Now it happened on a second-first † Sabbath that He was passing through the grain fields, and His disciples began to pick and eat the heads of grain,

† Wow! Evidently he really did, turning his responsibilities over to his colleagues. Because tax collectors were ostracized by the people, they probably wanted to join the crowds following Jesus, but felt excluded. So a direct invitation to Matthew was all he wanted. †† I take it that the Lord is saying that a church that has become an 'old wineskin' cannot be renewed—any attempt to introduce 'new wine' will only result in division and bitterness. Bearers of 'new wine' should just start a new congregation. The truth stated in verse 39 is one of the factors. Less than 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "and both are preserved" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡ That is what the Text says. No doubt everyone at that time knew just what was intended, but in the meantime we have lost the necessary cultural information. Less than 2% of the

rubbing them in their hands. ² But some of the Pharisees said to them, † "Why are you doing that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?" ³ So in answer to them Jesus said: "Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: ⁴ how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and even gave it to those with him—that which only the priests are allowed to eat?" ⁵ Then He said to them, "The Son of the Man is Lord even of the Sabbath!" ††

He heals on the Sabbath

⁶ Now it happened on a different Sabbath that He entered the synagogue and began to teach. Well there was a man there whose right hand was shriveled; ⁷ so the scribes and the Pharisees started watching, to see if He would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find an accusation against Him. ⁸ But He knew their thoughts and said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Get up and stand in the center." So he got up and stood. ⁹ Then Jesus said to them: "I will ask you something: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" ††¹⁰ And when He had looked around at them all, He said to him, "Stretch out your hand!" So he did that, and his hand was restored, as sound as the other. †††

The rejection

¹¹ But they were filled with rage, [§] and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus.

Choosing the Twelve

¹² Now it happened in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and He continued all night in prayer to God. ^{§†13} When it was day He called His disciples, and from them He chose twelve, whom He also named apostles: ^{§††14} Simon (whom He also named Peter) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Phillip and Bartholomew, ¹⁵ Matthew and Thomas, James (the

Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "second-first", to be followed by most modern versions. †† By now the Pharisees had 'spies' following Jesus wherever He went. †† Now that was something that they were not prepared to assimilate. They used the Sabbath as an instrument to dominate the people, and Jesus was threatening to deprive them of that instrument. Mark 2:27 preserves an added comment: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath". Man needs one day of rest in seven, but it is not intended as a 'straitjacket'. ††† Instead of "to kill", perhaps 10% of the Greek manuscripts have 'to destroy', as in almost all versions, since both the TR and the eclectic text follow the 10%. ††† Perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "as sound as the other" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). § Filled by whom, or what? Only someone controlled by Satan could become furious over a good deed like that. §† Presumably He was making sure that He made the correct selection of twelve, taken from a larger group of followers. He certainly knew why He was including the Iscariot. §†† The basic meaning of the term was 'messenger', or 'envoy'.

son of Alphaeus) and Simon (the one called 'Zealot'),
¹⁶Judas of James and Judas Iscariot (who also became
 'traitor'). †

A sermon on a level place ††

¹⁷ Then He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, also from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases, ¹⁸ as well as those who were being harassed by unclean spirits—and they were being healed! ¹⁹ So the whole crowd kept trying to touch Him, because power was going out from Him and was healing all. ‡

Blessings

²⁰ Then He raised His eyes toward His disciples and said:

"Blessed are you poor,
 because the Kingdom of God is yours.

²¹ Blessed are you who hunger now,
 because you will be filled.

Blessed are you who weep now,
 because you will laugh.

²² Blessed are you whenever men hate you,
 and whenever they exclude you and heap insults on you

and trash your name as 'malignant', †† for the Son of the Man's sake.

²³ Rejoice in that day and skip about! †† Because your reward really is great in Heaven; for that is how their fathers treated the prophets.

Woes

²⁴ "But woe to you who are rich!
 because you have already received your comfort.

²⁵ Woe to you who are full!
 because you will go hungry.

Woe to you who are presently laughing!
 because you will mourn and weep.

²⁶ Woe, when all men speak well of you;
 for that is how their fathers treated the FALSE prophets!

† Note the 'became'—Judas was doubtless just as sincere as the others when he joined up, and won everyone's confidence to the extent that he was made treasurer. It was only toward the end that he 'became' a traitor. †† Although similar to the 'sermon on the mount' recorded by Matthew, this is clearly a different time and place. During His ministry the Lord doubtless repeated His basic concepts over and over. ‡ The crowd would be constantly shifting, because those who were healed would back off to make room for others. †† As someone has said, 'A man is known by his enemies'. †† Well, you know, I can almost manage to 'rejoice' in theory, but to 'skip about' is physical—that is harder to pretend.

Instructions

²⁷ "Further, to you who are listening †† I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you; ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ††²⁹ To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer also the other; § and from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold the tunic as well. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks of you; §† and from him who takes away your things, do not demand them back. ³¹ Yes, like you want people to treat you, that is just how you must treat them. §†³² Also, if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those doing good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do the same. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect to get it back, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners', to receive an equal value back.

Be compassionate

³⁵ "So, love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing back; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; §† because HE is kind toward the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶ So be compassionate, even as your Father is compassionate. §††

We get what we give

³⁷ "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸ Give and it will be given to you: a good measure—pressed down and shaken together and running over—will they deposit in your lap. §† Because with the same measure that you use it will be measured back to you."

³⁹ Then He told them a parable: "Can a blind man guide a blind man? Will they not both fall into a ditch? ⁴⁰ A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher. §†⁴¹ Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not con-

††† Are you 'listening'? Really? ††† People who do these things are being used by Satan; they need to be delivered, and this is done in the spiritual realm. § Do not use physical violence to respond to physical violence—but we can use our spiritual authority. Animals must resort to force, but Adam was given dominion over the animals, which presumably was not exercised with physical force—we should not lower ourselves to the animal level; but Satan tries to trick us into doing so. If someone lashes out in anger, turning the other cheek should shame him. §† Presumably this does not refer to professional beggars (2 Thessalonians 3:10), but to someone overtaken by adversity who needs temporary help, someone you know who is part of the community. §†† This is the so-called 'golden rule'—if everyone did this the world would be a better place. §† I take the point to be that the behavior described indicates that the person already is a 'son' of the Most High. As it says in Ephesians 2:8-10, we do good works because we are saved, not in order to become so. §†† Only if you have the Holy Spirit can you even come close to following the Father's example. §† 'They' refers to human beings, not to God. §† This is an important point; it takes TIME to become 'fully trained'. No one becomes like Jesus in a hurry.

sider the plank that is in your own eye? ^{†42} Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the plank that is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye.

A tree is known by its fruit

⁴³ "Now no good tree produces rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree produce good fruit ⁴⁴—each tree is known by its own fruit: people do not gather figs from thorn bushes, nor do they pick a bunch of grapes from a bramble. ⁴⁵ The good man produces the good out of the good treasure in his heart, and the malignant man produces the malignant out of the malignant treasure in his heart; because his mouth speaks out of the abundance of the heart. ^{††}

Two foundations

⁴⁶ "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord', and not do what I say? ⁴⁷ Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them—I will show you who he is like: ⁴⁸ he is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on the bedrock. When a flood occurred, the torrent burst upon that house but could not shake it, because it was founded on the bedrock. ^{††49} But he who heard and did nothing ^{‡‡} is like a man who built his house on the ground without a foundation, against which the torrent burst, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

The faith of a centurion

7 Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. ² Well a certain centurion's slave, who was valuable to him, was sick and about to die. ³ So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, asking Him to come and rescue his slave. ⁴ And when they came to Jesus they started pleading earnestly with Him, saying that the one for whom He would do this was worthy, ⁵ "Because he loves our nation, and he

[†] *Even a speck in the eye is very uncomfortable, making it hard to use that eye. An eye with a 'plank' would be useless, totally blind, so in effect Jesus is repeating the question, "Can a blind man guide?" On the other hand, a 'plank' is so large that one can grab it and remove it without sight. Unfortunately there are a lot of 'blind' teachers who don't think they are, and they do untold damage to their students. ^{††} This whole paragraph is really about people, not plants, thus the term 'rotten'. [‡] This is presumably one of the questions that will be on the Final Test. ^{††} Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read "because it was built well", instead of "because it was founded on the bedrock" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). If the bedrock refers to the Lord Jesus and His teaching, then this alteration is bad. ^{‡‡} Notice the change in tense: 'hears and does' changes to 'heard and did nothing'. The second person heard the Truth, but rejected it, and so is without excuse.*

himself built our synagogue." ⁶ So Jesus went with them.

But when He was no longer far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him: "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy that you should come under my roof. ⁷ In fact I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. ^{‡‡‡} Just say a word and my servant will be healed; ⁸ because I also am a man placed under authority, ^{‡‡‡} having soldiers under me. I say to one, 'Go!' and he goes; and to another, 'Come!' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does."

⁹ Well upon hearing these things Jesus marveled at him, and turning to the crowd following Him, He said, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith!" ^{§10} When those who were sent returned to the house they found that the slave who had been sick was well.

A widow's son raised

¹¹ Now it happened on the next day that He went to a town called Nain, and many of His disciples went with Him, also a large crowd. ¹² But as He approached the town gate, mercy, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; a large crowd from the town was with her. ¹³ When the Lord saw her He had compassion on her ^{§†} and said to her, "Don't cry!" ¹⁴ And advancing He took hold of the bier and the bearers stood still. Then He said, "Young man, to you I say, get up!" ^{§††15} So the dead man sat up and began to talk! Yes, He gave him back to his mother.

¹⁶ Fear took hold of all, and they began glorifying God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and, "God has visited His people!" ¹⁷ And this report about Him went throughout Judea, as well as all the surrounding region. ^{§†}

Messengers from John

¹⁸ Then the disciples of John informed him about all these things. ¹⁹ And summoning a certain two of his disciples, John sent them to Jesus, saying, "Are you the Coming One, or should we look for another?"

^{§††20} When the men had come to Him, they said: "John

^{‡‡†} *This event is not the same as that recorded in Matthew 8:5-13. For a discussion please see the Appendix: "Did the centurion leave his house?". ^{‡‡‡} He was part of a chain of command, with people both above and beneath him. Whereas he had military authority, he understood that Jesus had spiritual authority—all He had to do was speak. So how about us? [§] If Jesus were here today, He could say the same thing about almost all churches. ^{§†} She needed compassion; her situation was desperate, with no means of support. ^{§††} Jesus was always specific when He brought someone back from the dead, so as not to empty the graveyard. ^{§‡} Nain is in Galilee, but besides the surrounding region the report of this particular miracle made it to Judea as well. ^{§††} John was puzzled and disillusioned. If Jesus was the Messiah, why was he, John, in prison? Why didn't Jesus set up His Kingdom and deliver John? Everyone was*

the Baptizer has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the Coming One, or should we look for another?'" ²¹ Well in that very hour He healed many from diseases and torments and malignant spirits, and to many blind He granted sight. ²² So in answer Jesus said to them: "Go and report to John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind regain sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, dead are raised, the poor are evangelized. ^{†23} AND, blessed is he who does not take offense at me!" ^{††}

Jesus praises John

²⁴ Now when John's messengers had departed, He began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to observe, a reed being shaken by the wind? ²⁵ But what did you go out to see, a man clothed in soft garments? Really, those with gorgeous apparel and living in luxury are in palaces. ²⁶ But what did you go out to see, a prophet? Yes, I say to you, and much more than a prophet. ²⁷ This is he about whom it is written:

'Take note, I am sending my messenger before your face,

who will prepare your way before you.' [‡]

²⁸ Further, I tell you that among those born of women there is no greater prophet ^{††} than John the Baptizer; yet he who is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he." ^{‡‡}

²⁹ (When all the people, including the tax collectors, heard this, they declared God to be just, having been baptized with John's baptism. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.) ^{‡‡‡}

Inconsistency of the Pharisees

³¹ "To what then shall I compare the men of this generation, and to what are they similar? ³² They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying,

'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we mourned to you, and you did not cry.'

³³ Because John the Baptizer came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon!' ³⁴ The Son of the Man has come eating and

looking for the Messianic Kingdom to be set up forthwith (see 19:11). † "The poor are evangelized"—what the poor (and everyone else) need most is salvation and a new life, not a free distribution of wealth. †† Jesus was not meeting John's expectations, and the same thing happens to us, from time to time, but we had better keep the proper perspective. ‡ See Malachi 3:1. ‡† Perhaps 14% of the Greek manuscripts omit "prophet", to be followed by most modern versions, but the difference in meaning is significant. Jesus did not say, 'no greater person'. ‡‡ I find this statement to be puzzling; is John not part of the Kingdom? If John is not, then none of the OT saints is either. ‡‡† John's baptism was based on repentance, but self-righteous people would consider that they did not need it.

drinking, and you say, 'Just look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' ³⁵ Still, by all her children wisdom is justified." ^{‡‡‡}

A lesson in forgiveness

³⁶ Then one of the Pharisees invited Him to eat with Him, [§] so He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined. ³⁷ But then, a woman in the town who was a sinner, when she found out that He was reclining in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster flask of perfume, ³⁸ and as she stood behind Him at His feet weeping, ^{§†} she began to wet His feet with her tears and kept wiping them with the hair of her head; and she kept kissing His feet ^{§††} and anointing them with the perfume. ^{§‡}

³⁹ Now as the Pharisee who had invited Him observed this, he was saying to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him, including what sort of woman she is—because she is a sinner!" ^{§††40} So Jesus reacted by saying to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he said, "Teacher, say on." ⁴¹ "A certain creditor had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² And when they had no way to repay, he freely forgave them both. Now tell me, which of them will love him more?" ⁴³ So Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one to whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have judged correctly."

⁴⁴ Then He turned toward the woman and said to Simon: "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. ⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but she has not stopped kissing my feet since the time I came in. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with perfume. ⁴⁷ For this reason, I say to you, her many sins have been forgiven, because she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."

⁴⁸ Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." ⁴⁹ The other recliners began to say within themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰ Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go into peace." ^{§†}

^{‡‡‡} In other words, the Pharisees were not children of 'wisdom'.
[§] This was not a friendly invitation. ^{§†} He was reclining on a 'couch' with His head in toward the table, so His feet were 'available'.
^{§††} To do all of this she would have to be kneeling. She started by standing, and probably waited a minute to see if anyone would object. ^{§‡} This is a moving picture. She was ashamed and distressed, because of what she was, but she desperately wanted to change, and she saw in Jesus the way out. ^{§††} Evidently the woman was well known to the locals. ^{§†} That is what the Text says, 'into' not 'in'—from then on her life would be different, one characterized by peace. She got what she so desperately wanted.

Jesus takes the offensive

Women provide for Jesus

8 Now it happened after this that He started going around town by town, village by village, preaching and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God, and the twelve were with Him; ² also certain women who had been healed of malignant spirits and infirmities: Mary (the one called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had gone out; ³ and Joanna the wife of Chuza, an official of Herod; and Susanna, and many others—these were providing for Him [†] from their substance.

Parable of the soils

⁴ Now when a large crowd had gathered, with people coming to Him from town after town, He spoke by a parable: ⁵ “A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed some fell along the road, and it got trampled, and the birds of the air devoured it. ⁶ And some fell on the rock ledge, and upon sprouting it withered, because it had no moisture. ⁷ And some fell among thorns, and springing up together the thorns choked it. ⁸ The rest fell into the good ground, and growing up it produced fruit a hundredfold.” Upon saying these things He called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

The purpose of parables

⁹ Then His disciples asked Him saying, “What does this parable mean?” ¹⁰ So He said: “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but to the rest *only* in parables, so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’ ^{††}

The parable of the soils explained

¹¹ “Now here is the parable: The seed is the Word of God. ¹² Those along the road are those who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, in order that they not be saved, having believed. ¹³ Those on the rock ledge are the ones who, whenever they hear, receive the word with joy; yet these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of testing fall away. ¹⁴ Now that which fell into the

[†] The Greek manuscripts are divided between ‘him’ and ‘them’ (I follow the best line of transmission), which in practice would amount to the same thing—since He would not eat alone, any providing would have to include the twelve. ^{††} See Isaiah 6:9. The Lord plainly states that He used parables so that people would NOT understand. It follows that doctrine should never be based on a parable—however, if the parable is explained, the explanation may be used. [‡] The Lord here states a terrible truth: Satan has access to the human mind. See also 2 Corinthians 4:3-4. ^{††} Note that with the exception of those along the road all the seeds germinate—there is life.

thorns: these are the ones who heard, yet as they go they are choked by cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. ¹⁵ But that on the good ground: these are the ones who having heard the word with a noble and good heart, hold on to it and produce fruit with perseverance.”

All will be exposed

¹⁶ Upon saying these things He called out: “He who has ears to hear, let him hear! [‡] No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but he sets it on a lamp stand, so that those who come in may see the light. ¹⁷ Further, there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, nor anything concealed that will not be made known and come into the open. ¹⁸ So be careful *HOW* you hear: ^{‡‡} Because whoever has, to him *more* will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken away from him.”

Relationships redefined

¹⁹ Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and they could not get near Him because of the crowd. ²⁰ And it was told Him by some saying, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you.” ²¹ But in answer He said to them, “My mother and my brothers are these, the ones who hear the word of God and do it!” ^{‡‡‡}

Jesus stills a storm

²² Now it happened on one of those days that He got into a boat with His disciples; and He said to them, “Let us go over to the other side of the lake.” So they launched out. ²³ But as they sailed He fell asleep. A windstorm descended on the lake, and they were being swamped and were in jeopardy. ²⁴ So they came and awakened Him, saying, “Master, Master, we are perishing!” Then He got up and rebuked the wind and the waves of water—and they stopped, and there was a calm! ²⁵ So He said to them, “Where is your faith?” ²⁶ But being terrified they marveled, saying to each oth-

^{‡‡} Most (if not all) versions omit “Upon saying these things He called out: He who has ears to hear let him hear!” following 45% of the Greek manuscripts. I follow the best line of transmission, which is part of the 55% here. Jesus was calling attention to what He was about to say. ^{‡‡‡} Spiritual growth is like going up an incline on a bicycle with no brakes; if you stop pedaling, you start going backwards. Either we grow, or we start losing what we have. There is no standing still. So be careful *how* ^{‡‡‡} Our primary commitment should be to Christ and His Kingdom, not to our physical family. There are times when the Kingdom ‘trumps’ family. [§] Agitated water does not calm down immediately, even if the cause stops, so there was a double miracle here—Jesus undid the consequences of the wind. ^{§†} In other words, He is telling them that they could, and should, have done something about it themselves. Had we been there, would we have done any better?

er: "Who can this be? † Because He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him!"

Jesus handles demon infestation

²⁶ Then they sailed to the district of the Gadarenes, †† which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷ Well when He stepped out on the land, a certain man of that town met Him, who had had demons for a long time—he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house, but among the tombs.

²⁸ When he saw Jesus he gave a yell, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice he said: "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? † I beg you, don't torment me!" ²⁹ because He had commanded the unclean spirit to get out of the man (it had seized him many times—he would be bound with chains and shackles, being kept under guard; then bursting the bonds he would be driven by the demon into deserted places). ³⁰ Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

‡‡ And he said, "Legion" (because many demons had gone into him). ³¹ And he ‡‡ kept imploring Him that He would not order them to go away into the Abyss. ‡‡‡

³² Now a herd of *MANY* pigs was feeding there on the hillside; and they started begging Him that He would allow them to go into those; so He gave them permission. ³³ Then the demons exited the man and entered the pigs—and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned! ‡‡‡

³⁴ Well when the herders saw what had happened they ran away and reported it in the town and in the countryside. ³⁵ So they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus; they found the man from whom the demons had gone out sitting at Jesus' feet, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid.

§§§ Also, the eyewitnesses reported to them how the demonized man was healed. ³⁷ Then the whole multitude from the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, because they were

† This puzzles me; after all the miracles they had seen, they still wonder who Jesus is! Well, maybe controlling nature is in a 'higher league' than controlling sickness and demons. Still, what were the options: human, angel (good or bad), or God. †† The eclectic text currently in vogue, following just 4 Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, against 1,700, reads 'Gerasenes' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, etc.). For a full discussion of this question please see the Appendix: "The 'Legion' and the pigs; where was it?" ‡ The disciples may not have known who Jesus was, but the demons did! ‡‡ I assume that Jesus knew the demon's name without asking, so why did He ask? I would say that He wanted it to be part of the Record, to teach us that demon infestation can and does occur. ‡‡ The boss demon does most of the talking, representing his cohort. ‡‡‡ The Text has 'THE Abyss', presumably the same one mentioned in Revelation 20:3. The demons knew something that most of us do not. ‡‡‡ I very much doubt that the demons engineered that reaction; it would have been counterproductive, leaving them without a 'home'. Animals often show more good sense than do humans, and they may have preferred death to demons. (And I suppose it is possible that Jesus Himself commanded the action, since pork was proscribed for God's people.) § With good reason; a supernatural power was at work, obviously.

overcome by fear. §† So He got into the boat and returned. §††

³⁸ Now the man from whom the demons had gone out had started begging Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹ "Return to your house and recount how much God has done for you." So he went his way and proclaimed all over town how much Jesus had done for him. §‡

A desperate father

⁴⁰ Now it happened, when Jesus returned, that the crowd welcomed Him, because they were all waiting for Him. §††⁴¹ And then, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue; he fell down at Jesus' feet and started begging Him to come to his house, ⁴² because he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying.

A desperate woman

Now as He was going, the crowds were pressing against Him. ⁴³ And a woman—suffering with a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent her whole livelihood on physicians, but could not be healed by any—⁴⁴ approaching from behind touched the border of His garment; and immediately the flow of her blood stopped! ⁴⁵ So Jesus said, "Who touched me?" §† When all denied it, Peter and those with him said: "Master, the people are pressing against you and crowding in, and you say, 'Who touched me?'" §††⁴⁶ But Jesus said, "Someone *DID* touch me, because I noticed power going out from me." ⁴⁷ Now when the woman saw that she could not hide, she came trembling, and falling down before Him she told Him in the presence of all the people §§† the reason why she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately. ⁴⁸ So He said: "Courage, daughter, your faith has healed you. Go into peace." §§‡

Jesus raises a dead girl

⁴⁹ While He was still speaking, here came someone from the synagogue ruler's house, saying to him: "Your daughter has died. Don't bother the teacher." ⁵⁰ But upon hearing it Jesus reacted by saying to him, "Don't be afraid; just believe and she will be healed." ⁵¹ When He arrived at the house, He allowed no one to

§† The loss of all those pigs was a severe economic blow. §†† And apparently He never went back; they had had their chance. §‡ 'How much God' becomes 'how much Jesus', which amounts to the same thing. The man witnessed to such good effect that many in that area believed. §†† If you go around doing what Jesus did, you become public property. §† He was referring to a purposeful touch. §‡ Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "and you say, 'Who touched me?'" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §§† That was not easy, but she was desperate. §§‡ Again, 'into' not 'in'. Her life was now going to be different. Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "courage" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

go in except Peter, John, James, the father of the child, and her mother. ⁵² Now all were weeping and mourning for her; but He said, "Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping." ⁵³ They started ridiculing Him, knowing that she had died. ⁵⁴ So He put them all outside, and [†] grasping her hand He called, saying, "Child, arise!" ⁵⁵ Then her spirit returned, and she got right up! And He directed that she be given something to eat. ^{††56} Her parents were astonished, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened. [‡]

Jesus sends out the Twelve

9 Then He called the Twelve together and gave them power and authority over all the demons, ^{††} and to cure diseases; ² and He sent them to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick. ³ And He said to them: "Take nothing for the journey—neither staffs [‡] nor knapsack nor bread nor money, neither have two tunics apiece. ⁴ Whatever house you enter, stay there, and depart from there. ⁵ But as many as do not receive you, when you depart from that town, shake off even the dust from your feet as a testimony against them." ⁶ So they set out and went around, village by village, evangelizing and healing everywhere.

Herod is troubled

⁷ Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all the things being done by Him; and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, ⁸ and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the ancient prophets had arisen. ⁹ But Herod said, "John I beheaded; so who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he started trying to see Him. ^{†††}

Jesus feeds about 5,000 men

¹⁰ When the Apostles returned they reported to Him all that they had done. Then He took them and withdrew privately to a deserted place belonging to a town called Bethsaida. ^{†††11} But the crowds, being aware, fol-

[†] Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "put them all outside, and" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{††} Nothing like being practical! [‡] Of course that would be difficult, because all the people who knew the girl had died would see her going about normally, and would want an explanation. ^{††} "Over all the demons"—evidently, during their tour no demon resisted them, which contrasts with Luke 9:40. ^{‡‡} Perhaps 15% of the Greek manuscripts have 'staffs' as singular, to be followed by most modern versions. In Matthew 10:10 it is 5%. But to put the singular here and in Matthew contradicts Mark 6:8, where all texts have "only a staff". In Luke and Matthew the vast majority of the Greek manuscripts read "neither staffs", which does not contradict Mark—the case of the staffs is analogous to that of the tunics; they were to take only one, not several. ^{†††} But apparently he never succeeded until the very end, and even then only thanks to Pilate (Luke 23:6-12). ^{††††} Instead of "a deserted place belonging to a town called Bethsaida", 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have "a town called Bethsaida" (to be followed by

lowed Him. So He received them and started speaking to them about the Kingdom of God, and He cured those who needed healing.

¹² Now when the day began to decline, the Twelve approached and said to Him, "Dismiss the crowd, so that they may go to the surrounding villages and their farms, lodge and find food; because we are in a deserted place here." ¹³ But He said to them, "You feed them!" [§] So they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we go and buy food for all this crowd" ¹⁴ (there were about five thousand *MEN*). But He said to His disciples, "Make them recline in groups of fifty!" ¹⁵ They did so, making them all recline. ¹⁶ Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven He blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude. ¹⁷ So they all ate and were filled, and twelve baskets of the pieces they left were taken up. ^{§†}

NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). Problem: the eclectic text currently in vogue, along with the modern versions that follow it, has Jesus and company going into the town of Bethsaida, but in verse 12 the disciples say they are in a deserted area; thus a contradiction is introduced. The eclectic text here is also at variance with itself in the parallel passages. In Matthew 14:13 all texts have Jesus going to a deserted place, and in verse 15 the disciples say, "the place is deserted... send the crowd away to the towns." In Mark 6:31-32 all texts have Him going to a deserted place, and in verse 35 the disciples say it is a deserted place, etc. So the eclectic text not only makes Luke contradict himself, but sets him against Matthew and Mark—and this on the basis of only half a percent of the manuscripts! But there is more to the story. From the parallel accounts it appears that He embarked at Capernaum. From John 6:23 we learn that the destination was near Tiberias. Capernaum and Tiberias are both on the western side of the Sea of Galilee, but there is a large bay between them; so they went over several miles of water. The crowd was not about to let Jesus get away. Mark makes clear that they ran along the shore—the faster runners stayed even with the boat and were waiting on the shore when the boat put in. The others were spread out behind for several miles (like in a marathon) and kept arriving. Any late starters would see the stragglers and could easily follow the action. Apparently He immediately started to heal the sick and went on to teach (Matthew 14:14, Mark 6:34). But just where was it? John says it was near Tiberias, but Luke 9:10 says it was "a deserted place belonging to a town called Bethsaida". I assume that the place was indeed near Tiberias but did indeed belong to Bethsaida—either it had been deeded to the town somehow or the family that owned it was based in Bethsaida. Any near neighbors could not use it, so it was basically untouched—a great place for a picnic. After the feeding, Mark 6:45 says that "He made His disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida". So why did Jesus send the disciples to Bethsaida? Perhaps it was to give an accounting to the owner of the place where the multitude was fed—15,000 people can make quite a mess. (I suspect that Jesus had permission to use the place when He wanted to get away, but no one had foreseen such a crowd as that.) From Matthew and Mark I gather that from Bethsaida Jesus went directly to Gennesaret, spending the minimum time necessary in Bethsaida. [§] Please, with what?! The only way the disciples could have obeyed this command would be by a miracle similar to what Jesus proceeded to perform. But they were not up to it. Are we? ^{§†} The collecting was probably done by others, and in any case that leftover bread was used by others.

Jesus ministers on the basis of His impending death

“You are the Christ!”

¹⁸ Now it happened, as He was alone praying, that the disciples joined Him, and He questioned them, saying, “Who do the crowds say I am?” ¹⁹ In answer they said, “John the Baptizer, but others say ‘Elijah,’ while others that one of the ancient prophets has arisen.” ²⁰ Then He said to them, “But you, who do you say that I am?” In answer Peter said, “The Christ [†] of God!” ²¹ But He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one, ²² saying, “The Son of the Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.”

To gain is to lose, to lose is to gain

²³ Then He said to everyone: “If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, ^{††} and follow me. ²⁴ Because whoever desires to ‘save’ his life will waste it, but whoever ‘wastes’ his life for my sake, *HE* will save it. ^{‡25} Further, what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, yet wastes or forfeits his very self? ²⁶ Yes, whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, the Son of the Man will be ashamed of Him, whenever He comes in the glory—His, and the Father's, and of the holy angels. ^{‡‡27} However, I tell you truly: there are some standing here who will certainly not taste death until they see the Kingdom of God!”

Peter, John and James see the ‘Kingdom’

²⁸ Now about eight days after these words, it happened that He took along Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹ And as He prayed, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing dazzling white. ³⁰ And then, two men started talking with Him, who were Moses and Elijah; ³¹ they appeared in glory and were explaining His ‘departure’, that He was about to bring to fruition in Jerusalem. ^{‡‡}

³² Now Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; but becoming fully awake, they saw His glory, and the two men who stood with Him. ³³ Then it happened: as they were parting from Him, Peter said to Je-

[†] Since they were speaking Hebrew, he said ‘Messiah’. ^{††} Some 13% of the Greek manuscripts add ‘daily’, as in most versions.

[‡] What the Lord is talking about is the potential one's life represents. The only way not to throw away or waste your life is to live for the Kingdom. ^{‡†} Revelation 21:8 says that a coward does not enter the Kingdom. In Matthew 10:33 Jesus said that He will deny before the Father whoever denies Him before men. To cave in under pressure is definitely not to be recommended. ^{‡‡} Evidently they communicated the details of the game plan.

sus: “Master, it is good for us to be here” and “Should we make three shelters: one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah?” ^{‡‡†}—not knowing what he was saying. ³⁴ But as he was saying this a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they became afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ And a *Voice*^{‡‡‡} came out of the cloud, saying: “This is my beloved [§] Son. Listen to Him!” ³⁶ When the Voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. (They kept quiet and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.) ^{§†}

A violent demon

³⁷ Now it happened on the next day, when they came down from the mountain, ^{§††} that a large crowd met Him. ³⁸ And then, a man from the crowd called out, saying: “Teacher, I beg you, look upon my son, for he is my only begotten. ³⁹ And oh, a spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams, and it convulses him with foaming, and it hardly departs from him, destroying him! ⁴⁰ And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.” ⁴¹ Then in answer Jesus said: “O unbelieving and perverse ^{§‡} generation, how long shall I be with you and put up with you (pl)? Bring your (sg) son here!” ⁴² But while he was still coming the demon threw him down and convulsed him. Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father. ⁴³ Everyone was amazed at the majesty ^{§††} of God.

Jesus foretells His death, again

But while all were marveling at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, ⁴⁴ “Let these words sink into your ears, because the Son of the Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men.” ^{§†45} But they did not understand this saying; indeed it was concealed from them, ^{§‡} in order that they should not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about it.

He who is least will be great

⁴⁶ Then an argument started among them as to which of them would be the greatest. ⁴⁷ So Jesus, perceiving the reasoning of their heart, took a little child and had him stand beside Him, ⁴⁸ and said to them:

^{‡‡†} So how did Peter know who they were? ^{‡‡‡} Peter never forgot that VOICE (2 Peter 1:16). In effect, the Father was rebuking Peter for speaking out of turn. The Voice [§] Instead of ‘beloved’, perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have ‘chosen’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{§†} Jesus commanded them not to mention anything until after the resurrection (Mark 9:9). ^{§††} They spent a night up there. ^{§‡} Why “perverse”? To reject the truth and the evidence is to be perverse. This word was presumably directed to the disciples, who should have known better by now. So how about us—are we living on the basis of the truth and the evidence? Really? ^{§‡†} Why ‘the majesty’? I don't know. ^{§†} Moses and Elijah had delivered the game plan, and Jesus immediately starts warning the disciples. ^{§‡} Concealed by whom? Presumably not by God, as attested by the immediately following argument.

"Whoever receives this little child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me receives Him who sent me. Further, he who is least among all of you, he will be great."

John changes the subject

⁴⁹ Then John reacted by saying, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us." ⁵⁰ So Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid, because he who is not against us is for us." [†]

A Samaritan village

⁵¹ Now it happened, as the days for His Ascension approached, ^{††} that He set His face to go to Jerusalem, ⁵² and He sent messengers ahead of Him. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, so as to prepare for Him. ⁵³ But they did not receive Him, because He was heading for Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ Well, when His disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven and consume them, just like Elijah did?" ^{‡55} But He turned and rebuked them saying: "You do not know of what sort of spirit you are. ⁵⁶ Further, the Son of the Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save." ^{‡‡} And they went to another village.

The cost of discipleship

⁵⁷ Now as they journeyed on the road, it happened that someone said to Him, "Lord, ^{‡‡} I will follow you wherever you go." ⁵⁸ So Jesus said to him, "The foxes have dens and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of the Man has no place to lay His head." ^{‡‡‡}

⁵⁹ Then He said to another, "Follow me!" But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." ⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the Kingdom of God." ^{‡‡‡}

[†] Instead of 'us is for us', perhaps 20% of the Greek manuscripts have 'you is for you'. ^{††} Why did Luke put "ascension" rather than 'death' or 'resurrection'? I don't know, but I find it interesting. *Herb's* 12:2 says that He endured the cross because of the joy that was set before Him. [‡] About 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "just like Elijah did" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). No wonder Jesus called them 'sons of thunder' (Mark 3:17). ^{‡†} Some 27% of the Greek manuscripts omit "saying: 'You do not know of what sort of spirit you are. Further, the Son of the Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save'", to be followed by most modern versions. The 73% includes the best line of transmission, which I follow. ^{‡‡} Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "Lord" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{‡‡†} Jesus does not offer comfort and a 'good time'. ^{‡‡‡} Dear me, how unfeeling! Those who are not committed to Christ and His Kingdom are as good as dead, and a true disciple of Jesus must not allow himself to be held back by such. Of course such an attitude will not be understood by the 'dead', but the disciple needs to side with the Kingdom. What if that father had lived for another ten years? If you put off doing God's will for things like that, you may wind up never doing it.

⁶¹ And another also said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first allow me to bid farewell to those who are at my house." ^{‡‡‡} But Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to 'the plow' and looks back is suitable for the Kingdom of God." ^{‡†}

Jesus sends out the Seventy ^{‡††}

10 Now after these things, the Lord appointed seventy ^{‡†} others also, and sent them two by two ahead of Him to every town and place where He Himself was about to go. ² Then He said to them: "The harvest is indeed great, but the workers are few; therefore pray to the Lord of the harvest that He may send out workers into His harvest.

³ "Go! Yes, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. ⁴ Do not carry a purse, nor a knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road. ^{‡††5} Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' ⁶ If a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Remain in that same house, eating and drinking what they offer, because the worker is worthy of his wages. Do not move around from house to house. ^{‡†}

⁸ "And into whatever town you enter, and they receive you, eat the things that are set before you. ⁹ Heal the sick therein and say to them, 'The Kingdom of God has come near to you.' ¹⁰ But into whatever town you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say: ¹¹ 'Even the dust of your town that clings to us we wipe off against you. Nonetheless know this, that the Kingdom of God has come near to you.' ¹² I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that town.

Jesus gives the example

¹³ "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! Because if the mighty works that were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. ¹⁴ Nevertheless it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Judgment than for you. ¹⁵ And you, Capernaum, who are 'exalted to heaven', will be brought down to Hades.

[‡] If you go back to say goodbye, they will cry and carry on and do all they can to make you change your mind. ^{‡†} Again, the Lord is calling for total commitment. ^{‡††} Whereas the Twelve had been sent two by two to Galilee, the Seventy were sent to Judea. ^{‡‡} Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, add "two" (as in NIV, LB, TEV, etc.), (also in verse 17). ^{‡††} I assume that the Lord assigned a specific town to each pair, and they were instructed to get there as fast as they could. ^{‡†} Now why would anyone think of moving around? Presumably they would be thinking of better food or more comfort. Such an attitude would certainly detract from the Message.

¹⁶ "He who listens to you listens to me, and he who rejects you rejects me; [†] but he who rejects me rejects Him who sent me!"

The Seventy return and report

¹⁷ Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" ¹⁸ So He said to them: "I watched Satan fall like lightning out of heaven. ^{††19} Take note, I am giving [‡] you the authority to trample on snakes and scorpions, ^{‡†} and over all the power of the enemy, ^{‡†} and nothing at all may

[†] To represent Christ is a great privilege, but also a great responsibility. ^{††} A most interesting comment! Clearly Jesus is referring to a time before His incarnation—He knew He was Jehovah the Son.

[‡] Instead of 'am giving', perhaps 2.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have 'have given' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.)—a serious error. Jesus said this perhaps five months before His death and resurrection, addressing the seventy (not just the twelve). The Lord is talking about the future, not the past; a future that includes us! ^{‡†} The Lord gives us the authority to "trample snakes and scorpions". Well now, to smash the literal insect, a scorpion, you don't need power from on High, just a slipper (if you're fast you can do it barefoot). To trample a snake I prefer a boot, but we can kill literal snakes without supernatural help. It becomes obvious that Jesus was referring to something other than reptiles and insects. I understand Mark 16:18 to be referring to the same reality—Jesus declares that certain signs will accompany the believers (the turn of phrase virtually has the effect of commands): they will expel demons, they will speak strange languages, they will remove 'snakes', they will place hands on the sick. ("If they drink..." is not a command; it refers to an eventuality.) But what did the Lord Jesus mean by 'snakes'? In a list of distinct activities Jesus has already referred to demons, so the 'snakes' must be something else. In Matthew 12:34 Jesus called the Pharisees a 'brood of vipers', and in 23:33, 'snakes, brood of vipers'. In John 8:44, after they claimed God as their father, Jesus said, "You are of your father the devil". And 1 John 3:10 makes clear that Satan has many other 'sons'. In Revelation 20:2 we read: "He seized the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is a slanderer, even Satan, who deceives the whole inhabited earth, and bound him for a thousand years." If Satan is a snake, then his children are also snakes. So then, I take it that our 'snakes' are human beings who chose to serve Satan, who sold themselves to evil. I conclude that the 'snakes' in Luke 10:19 are the same as those in Mark 16:18, but what of the 'scorpions'? Since they also are of the enemy, they may be demons, in which case the term may well include their offspring, the humanoids [see my paper, "In the Days of Noah", available from www.prunch.org]. I am still working on the question of just how the removal is done. ^{‡‡} In Matthew 28:18 Sovereign Jesus affirms that He holds "all authority in heaven and on earth", so He is clearly competent to delegate some of that authority to us. Now then, just how does "authority over all the power of the enemy" work, in practice? Authority controls power, but since we have access to God's limitless power (Ephesians 3:20), we should not give Satan the satisfaction of our using his (and he could easily deceive us into doing things we shouldn't). We should use our authority to forbid the use of Satan's power, with reference to specific situations—in my experience, we must be specific. (I have tried binding Satan once for all until the end of the world, but it does not work; presumably because God's plan calls for the enemy's continued activity in this world. We can limit what the enemy does, but not put him completely out of business, or so I deem.) But just how should we go about it? In the armor described in Ephesians 6 we find "the sword of the Spirit" (verse 17). A sword is a weapon for offense, although it is also used for defense. The Text tells us that this sword is "the $\rho\eta\mu\alpha$ of God"— $\rho\eta\mu\alpha$, not $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$. It is God's Word SPOKEN, or applied. Really, what good is a sword left in its sheath? However mar-

harm you. ²⁰ However, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." ^{‡‡‡}

Jesus worships His Father

²¹ In that same hour Jesus exulted in His spirit ^{‡‡‡} and said: "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and have revealed them to 'infants'. Yes, Father, because it pleased you to do so."

²² And turning to the disciples He said: [§] "All things have been entrusted to me by my Father; also, no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, AND to whomever the Son may choose to reveal Him." ²³ Then turning to His disciples ^{§†} privately He said: "Blessed are the eyes that are seeing the things that you see; ²⁴ for I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you are seeing but did not, and to hear what you are hearing but did not." ^{§††}

How to inherit eternal life

²⁵ And then, a certain lawyer stood up to test Him, saying, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ So He said to him: "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" ²⁷ In answer he said: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and, your neighbor as yourself." ^{§†28} So He said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live!" ²⁹ But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ^{§††}

velous our Sword may be (Hebrews 4:12), to produce effect it must come out of the scabbard. The Word needs to be spoken, or written—applied in a specific way. In the Bible we have many examples where people brought the power of God into action by speaking. Our world began with a creative word from God—spoken (Genesis, 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26; and see Hebrews 11:3). Moses did a lot of speaking. Elijah spoke (1 Kings 17:1, 18:36, 2 Kings 1:10). Elisha spoke (2 Kings 2:14, 21, 24; 4:16, 43; 6:19). Jesus did a great deal of speaking. Ananias spoke (Acts 9:17). Peter spoke (Acts 9:34, 40). Paul spoke (Acts 13:11; 14:3, 10; 16:18; 20:10; 28:8). In short, we need to speak! ^{‡‡†} Yes indeed, nothing compares to having your name written in heaven! ^{‡‡‡} Most versions capitalize 'Spirit' and just over 3% of the Greek manuscripts state overtly, 'the Holy Spirit', but I take it that Jesus exulted in His own spirit. [§] Some 10% of the Greek manuscripts omit "And turning to the disciples He said" (as in most versions), which confuses the quote. Jesus changes from addressing His Father to addressing the disciples. The clause is repeated at the beginning of verse 23, but 'privately' is added. ^{§†} Should we understand this as referring to the Twelve, or does it include the Seventy? I don't know, but there were probably others as well who were following along. ^{§††} Yes indeed, the Twelve had a privilege not shared by anyone before or since, although 'disciples' may include more than the twelve. ^{§‡} See Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18—to include the 'neighbor' he had to quote from a different book. Notice that Jesus agreed with him. ^{§††} Notice that the man skipped the most important part of his answer, about loving the Lord.

The good Samaritan

³⁰ By way of reply Jesus said: "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and as it chanced he ran into robbers, who after having stripped and wounded him, departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by coincidence a certain priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, † and passed by on the other side. ³³ But a certain Samaritan, †† as he traveled, came by there, and upon seeing him was moved with compassion; ³⁴ and going to him he bound up his wounds, applying oil and wine. Then he placed him on his own mount, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and should you spend more, I will repay you when I return.' ³⁶ So which of these three, would you say, was 'neighbor' to him who ran into the robbers?" ³⁷ He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." So Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise!" ‡

Martha and Mary

³⁸ Now it happened as they traveled that He entered a certain village; † and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. ††³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, who actually sat at Jesus' feet listening to His words. ⁴⁰ Well Martha was distracted with much serving; so coming up she said: "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Do please tell her to help me!" ⁴¹ But in answer Jesus said to her: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and agitated about many things, ⁴² but only one is needed. ††† However, Mary has chosen the good part, which will not be taken away from her."

A model prayer

11 Then it happened, when He finished praying in a certain place, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples." ² So He said to them: "Whenever you pray, say: Our Father who is in the heavens, your name must be revered. ††† Your Kingdom must come. Your will must be done on earth as it is in heaven. §

† The priest maintained his distance, but the Levite at least went close to the man for a better look, but then did nothing about it.
 †† The Lord's choice of a 'Samaritan' was doubtless deliberate, since the Jews looked down on them. ‡ Anyone who has been hit with a calamity is a candidate for needing a 'neighbor'. What with floods, tornados, earthquakes, etc. there are plenty of candidates.
 †† Bethany. †† Martha was presumably older than Mary. ††† Apparently Martha was preparing a major meal, and the Lord told her that something simple would be fine. Although we may sympathize with Martha, Jesus defended Mary. ††† The verbs are Imperative, not Subjunctive, which is why I render 'must' rather than 'may'.

³ Give us day by day our daily bread.

⁴ Also, forgive us our sins,

because we also forgive everyone indebted to us.

AND, do not lead us into testing,

but deliver us from the malignant one." §†

A request at midnight

⁵ Then He said to them: "Who among you will have a friend and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, ⁶ because a friend has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷ and he will answer from within and say, 'Don't bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give to you?' ⁸ I say to you, even if he will not get up and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as many as he needs.

⁹ "So I say to you: ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ Because everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. §††† And which father among you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if §† a fish, will he give him a snake instead of a fish? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will he give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" §††

A divided house

¹⁴ Then He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. As a result, when the demon had gone out the mute spoke! And the crowds marveled. ¹⁵ But some of them said, "It's by Beelzebul, §† the ruler of the demons, that he casts out demons." ¹⁶ While others kept asking Him for a sign from heaven, testing.

§ Why 'must'? I take the point to be that we are not trying to overcome any reluctance on God's part; we are declaring our personal commitment to these things. When I declare that God's Kingdom must come, I am agreeing to whatever part I am supposed to have in bringing it about. §† Most modern versions, following a mere 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, seriously truncate this prayer by omitting: "Our ... who is in the heavens ... Your will must be done on earth as it is in heaven ... but deliver us from the malignant one." Some versions, like NIV and NASB, have a footnote saying that "some manuscripts" add this material. How can any honest person use 'some' to refer to 99% (1,600 X 16)? 'The malignant one' refers to Satan. §†† I take it that the Lord is speaking generically here; He is not promising a 100% success rate. §† Just four known Greek manuscripts (0.2%), of objectively inferior quality, demonstrably so, omit "bread will give him a stone? Or if" (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §†† Does this apply to true believers who have the indwelling Holy Spirit? Did this 'rule' change at Pentecost? If not, how does it apply to us today? Since 'ask' is in the present tense, perhaps it was occasion by occasion. §† The familiar spelling 'Beelzebub' was presumably brought over from the Latin, since all the Greek manuscripts have 'Beelzebul' (with variations).

¹⁷ But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against itself falls. ¹⁸ So if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand?—since you say I cast out demons by Beelzebul! ¹⁹ Further, if I am casting out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? † Therefore they will be your judges. ²⁰ But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, surely the Kingdom of God has come upon you.

²¹ "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own dwelling, his possessions are safe. ²² But when someone stronger than he attacks, he overcomes him, takes away all his armor in which he trusted, and distributes his spoils.

²³ "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. ††

An empty house

²⁴ "Whenever an unclean spirit goes out from a man, ‡ it passes through waterless places seeking rest; and not finding any it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came out.' ²⁵ And coming it finds it swept and put in order. ²⁶ Then it goes and picks up seven other spirits, more malignant than itself, and they go in and live there; so the last state of that man becomes worse than the first." ††

True blessedness

²⁷ And then, as He was saying these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!" ²⁸ But He said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it!" ††

Jonah is a sign

²⁹ Now as the crowds were increasing, He began to say: "This is a malignant generation. It keeps wanting a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ³⁰ Just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of the Man be to this

† I find this question to be intriguing. Jesus is evidently saying that their sons do indeed cast out demons, so why don't they also censure their sons? Or is the implication that Satan's servants can appear to be casting out demons? †† Notice that the Lord does not allow for neutrality; either you are for Him, or against Him. Even what we do is not neutral; if we are not gathering, we are scattering. ‡ The Lord does not say why the spirit left. If it had been expelled by someone who knew how to send it to the Abyss, it could not come back. †† Although we certainly have the authority to expel demons from people, if the person we help does not then commit himself to Jesus, he remains an empty house, vulnerable to something worse. We need to deal fairly with people, explaining what is involved. †† Since the Text declares the Virgin Mary to be blessed, Jesus was not denying that blessedness. To hear and obey God's Word is even more blessed. The basic meaning of the verb I translated 'obey' is to guard or protect. I wonder if there is a special blessing for those who defend God's Word.

generation. ³¹ The queen of the South will be raised up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and she will condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and indeed a greater than Solomon is here. ³² The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation, and they will condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. †††

Light inside the body

³³ "No one, having lit a lamp, puts it in hiding or under a basket, but on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light. ³⁴ The lamp of the body is the eye. †† Therefore, whenever your 'eye' is good, your whole body is illuminated. But when it is malignant, your body also is darkened. ³⁵ So see to it that the 'light' in you not be darkness. ³⁶ If then your whole body is full of light, not having any part dark, the whole will be illuminated, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light."

Jesus derides scribes and Pharisees

³⁷ Now as He spoke, a certain Pharisee invited Him to eat with him. So He went in and reclined. ³⁸ But the Pharisee, noticing that He did not first wash before the meal, was critical. ³⁹ So the Lord said to him: "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but your inside is full of greed and malignancy.

⁴⁰ Fools! Did not He who made the outside also make the inside? ⁴¹ Nevertheless, give what is possible as alms; then indeed all things are clean to you. ††

⁴² "But woe to you Pharisees! You tithe mint and rue and every herb, but you ignore justice and the love of God. *THESE* it was necessary to do, without leaving those undone. ⁴³ Woe to you Pharisees! You love the best seat in the synagogues, and greetings in the marketplaces. ⁴⁴ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hyp-

††† Notice that Jesus declares Himself to be greater than Solomon and Jonah (a king and a prophet). Notice also that He declares the historicity of the book of Jonah. ††† Of course we have two eyes, but the Text has "eye" in the singular. I take it that the reference is to the way we interpret what we see (which is our real 'eye')—two people, one pure and one vile, observing the same scene will give very different interpretations to it. 'Malignant' means aggressively evil. Someone with a malignant mind will give an evil interpretation to EVERYTHING he sees, and in consequence his being will be filled with unrelenting darkness. See Titus 1:15. § The leaders had already rejected Jesus and were planning to kill Him, so He knew this was not a friendly invitation. He accepted the invitation with the clear purpose to provoke a confrontation. †† At first glance this statement seems difficult, but because they were filled with greed, for them to give away as much as possible would represent a major change in their values. Zacchaeus offers a case in point: the Lord Himself declared that he was saved (Luke 19:8-9).

ocrites! † You are like unperceived graves, that people walk on without knowing it.”

Jesus derides lawyers

⁴⁵ Then one of the lawyers reacted and said to him, “Teacher, by saying these things you insult us also!”
⁴⁶ So He said: “Woe to you lawyers also! †† You load men down with burdens hard to carry, but you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. ⁴⁷ Woe to you! You restore the tombs of the prophets, it being your fathers who killed them. ⁴⁸ Thereby you witness to and approve of the deeds of your fathers; because they indeed killed them, while you restore their tombs. ⁴⁹ Also, because of this ‘the wisdom of God’ †† said: ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,’ ⁵⁰ so that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, ⁵¹ from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, †† who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation! †††⁵² Woe to you lawyers! You have taken away the key of knowledge; ††† you yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering!” [§]

⁵³ Well when He had said these things to them, ^{§†} the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge Him on vehemently and to cross-examine Him about many things, ⁵⁴ lying in wait for Him, trying to catch Him in something He might say, so that they might accuse Him. ^{§††}

Beware of hypocrisy

12 Meanwhile, when a crowd of thousands ^{§†} had converged, so that they were stepping on each other, He began to speak first to His disciples: “Guard yourselves from the ‘yeast’ of the Pharisees, which is

† Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.) †† Notice that Jesus makes no effort to conciliate them.

‡ The context suggests ‘restore’ rather than ‘build’, since those prophets had been dead for centuries; if a grave had not been adequately marked, there would be no way of knowing where to build.

†† In 1 Corinthians 1:24 Paul refers to Christ as ‘the wisdom of God’. In Matthew 23:34 Jesus said, “I send you prophets,” so here Jesus may be referring to Himself as ‘the wisdom of God’.

††† If the reference is to Zechariah the prophet, his death is not recorded in Scripture, but the temple was rebuilt in his day, so he could have died there. ††† Guilt accumulates. Often a subsequent generation pays. ††† Hosea 4:6 reads, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge ... Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.” Notice the awful price paid by the children! Are today’s ‘doctors of the law’ not guilty of the same thing? [§] They were really perverse. If they did not want to go in themselves, that was their choice; but to try to stop others was really perverse! ^{§†} Instead of “Well when He had said these things to them”, perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read “and when He left there” (as in NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.) ^{§††} Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “so that they might accuse Him” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.) ^{§‡} That is what the Text says, ‘thousands’.

††† In 1 Corinthians 1:24 Paul refers to Christ as ‘the wisdom of God’. In Matthew 23:34 Jesus said, “I send you prophets,” so here Jesus may be referring to Himself as ‘the wisdom of God’.

hypocrisy. ² There is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. ³ Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the ear behind closed doors will be proclaimed from the rooftops. ^{§††}

Don't fear assassins

⁴ “Further, I say to you, my friends: do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have nothing more that they can do. ⁵ Rather, I will advise you whom you should fear—fear Him who after He kills has authority to cast into Gehenna; ^{§†} yes indeed, fear Him! ⁶ Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? ^{§‡} Yet not one of them is forgotten before God. ⁷ Even the hairs of your head are all numbered! So do not be afraid; you are far more valuable than sparrows! ^{§§†}

You confess Christ, He'll confess you

⁸ “Also I say to you, whoever claims me before men, the Son of the Man will also claim him before the angels of God. ⁹ But whoever disclaims me before men will be disclaimed before the angels of God. ^{§§†10} Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of the Man, it can be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit it will not be forgiven. ¹¹ Now whenever they bring you before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how or what you will answer, or what you should say. ¹² Because the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you need to say.” ^{§§§}

Beware of materialism

¹³ Then someone from the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” ¹⁴ But He said to him, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter over you?” ¹⁵ Then He said to them, “Keep alert and guard against covetousness, because one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” ¹⁸

Parable of a rich fool

¹⁶ Then He told them a parable, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man produced well. ¹⁷ And he reasoned within himself saying, ‘What shall I do, because

^{§††} When you think about that does it make you feel uncomfortable? ^{§†} ‘Gehenna’ was a euphemism for Hell, or the Lake of Fire. One’s eternal destiny is far more important than a ‘premature’ physical death. ^{§‡} The Greek term here is *assaria* ^{§§†} Maybe that is why “the righteous are bold as a lion” (Proverbs 28:1). [How many ‘lions’ do you know?] ^{§§‡} Revelation 21:8 includes the ‘cowardly’ among those destined for the Lake of Fire. When persecution comes for being a Christian, the cowardly will cave in and disclaim the Lord. ^{§§§} This advice is presumably for martyrs, not preachers, but don’t you wish that more preachers would listen to the Holy Spirit?

¹⁸ Christians who live in materialistic societies tend to forget this important truth.

I have no place to store my crops?' ¹⁸ Then he said: 'This is what I will do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my produce and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul: Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and enjoy yourself!' ²⁰ But God said to him: 'Stupid! This very night your life is being taken back from you; † then who will get the things you have prepared?' ²¹ Just like that †† is he who accumulates treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

The mentality of the Kingdom

²² Then He said to His disciples: "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will wear. ²³ Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. ²⁴ Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storeroom nor barn, and God feeds them. You are far more valuable than the birds! ²⁵ And who among you can add one cubit to his height by worrying? ²⁶ So if you cannot do even such a little thing, why worry about the rest?"

²⁷ "Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; I say to you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of these. ²⁸ So if God so clothes the grass that today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into an oven, how much more you, O little-faiths! ²⁹ Do not concentrate on what you may eat or what you may drink; do not be anxious. ³⁰ All these things really occupy the nations of the world, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ Rather, concentrate on the Kingdom of God, and all these things will be provided for you. ‡

³² "Do not fear, little flock, because it pleased the Father to give you the Kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give to charity. Make for yourselves 'purses' that will not wear out, an unfailling treasure in the heavens, where a thief cannot approach, nor a moth destroy. ³⁴ Because where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ††

Watchfulness enjoined

³⁵ "Let your waists be belted and your lamps burning, ³⁶ and you yourselves like men waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding celebration, so that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. ³⁷ Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find watching when he comes. Assuredly I say to you that he will gird himself and have them recline, and will come and serve them. †††³⁸ And if he

† 'Taken back'—we have our life on loan, like a trust, and an accounting will be required. †† "Just like that" = "Stupid!" To be rich toward God is to invest in His Kingdom. ‡ Note that what is promised is just the basics—food, drink, covering. Everything we invest in the Kingdom will be on deposit in heaven. †† There is the crucial question: Where is your treasure? †† He is doubtless in a

should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those slaves.

³⁹ But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁰ Therefore you also be ready, because the Son of the Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." ††

⁴¹ Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, are you directing this parable to us, or to everyone?" †††⁴² So the Lord said: "Who then is the faithful and prudent steward whom his master will place over his household to give them the food allowance at the right time? ⁴³ Blessed is that slave whom his master will find so doing when he comes. ⁴⁴ I tell you truly that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁵ But if that servant should say in his heart, 'My master won't come for a while,' and should begin to hit the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, ⁴⁶ the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour that he does not know, and will cut him in two and appoint his portion with the unbelievers. †

⁴⁷ "That servant who knew his master's will, but neither got ready nor did according to that will, will be beaten with many blows. ⁴⁸ But he who did not know, yet did things worthy of blows, will be beaten with few. ††† Everyone to whom much has been given, from him much will be required; and to whom much was entrusted, of him much more will be asked.

Christ causes division

⁴⁹ "I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰ But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed! ⁵¹ Do you imagine that I came to provide peace on the earth? Not at all, I tell you, but rather division. ††⁵² Because from now on there will be five in one house divided: three against two and two against three. ⁵³ Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against moth-

very good mood, and for his servants to have stayed awake for hours when they wanted to be in bed, just so they could receive him when he came—he probably figures they need some refreshment. ††† Everyone who has predicted a date so far has had to eat humble pie. But being ready all the time is a different matter. The trouble is, it's hard to stay 'ready' all the time. ††† The Lord's answer is indirect, but it includes everyone. † He was director of food services; if he proved faithful and competent there, he would be made general director. †† What is involved here is two deaths: physical (cut in two) and spiritual—the 'portion' of unbelievers is the Lake of Fire. ††† Note that even sins done in ignorance are punished. However, the more one knows, the more severe the punishment. †† So why is He called the 'Prince of Peace'? On several occasions, after healing someone, He said, "Go into peace" (not

er, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." †

Discern the time

⁵⁴ Then He also said to the crowds: "Whenever you see a cloud rising from the west, immediately you say, 'A rainstorm is coming,' and so it does. ⁵⁵ And whenever a south wind blows, you say, 'It will be hot,' and it happens. ⁵⁶ Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky and of the earth, so how can you not discern this time? ^{†57} Also why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right? ‡

Pay your debts on time

⁵⁸ "When you are going with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him, † lest he drag you to the judge, the judge deliver you to the bailiff, and the bailiff throw you into prison. ⁵⁹ I tell you, you will by no means get out of there until you have paid the last penny."

Repent or perish

13 Now at that time there were some present who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Herod had mixed with their sacrifices. ² So in answer Jesus said to them: "Do you suppose that those Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered such things? ³ Not at all, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all likewise perish! ⁴ Or those eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell and killed them; do you suppose they were worse offenders than all others living in Jerusalem? ⁵ Not at all, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all likewise perish!" ‡

Parable of a barren fig tree

⁶ Then He told this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷ So he said to the gardener: 'Look, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree and have not found any. Cut it down; just why must it waste the soil?' ⁸ But in answer he said to him, 'Sir, let it be this year also, until I dig around it and apply fertilizer, ⁹ in case it produces fruit—but if not, then cut it down.'" †††

† This is precisely true. †† To be able to discern what God is doing requires intimate relationship with Him. ‡ Good question!

†† The point seems to be that the 'adversary' has exhausted all other means of getting his money back; which would indicate a serious flaw in the character of the 'debtor'. †† We never know when a tornado or earthquake may come our way; the best thing is to walk with God, and thus not have to fear a sudden exit. ††† The Lord's use of 'three years' is doubtless deliberate; He may well have been referring to His own ministry in Israel. In that event the owner would be the Father, and He Himself would be the gardener. The three years of public ministry He had already spent had not produced the desired fruit.

Jesus heals a woman bound by Satan

¹⁰ Now as Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath, ¹¹ He saw a woman there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years—she was bent over and could not straighten up. ¹² So He called her over †† and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity!" ¹³ He placed His hands on her and immediately she was made straight and started glorifying God.

¹⁴ But the ruler of the synagogue reacted with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, and he said to the crowd, "There are six days in which one should work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath." ^{§15} So the Lord answered him and said: "Hypocrites! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it away to water? ¹⁶ So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan [§] kept bound during eighteen long years, be freed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" ¹⁷ When He said these things all His adversaries were put to shame, while all the crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things that were being done by Him.

Two parables

¹⁸ Then He said: "What is the Kingdom of God like, and to what shall I compare it? ¹⁹ It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden; and it grew and became a sizable tree, and the birds of the air perched on its branches."

²⁰ Again He said: "To what shall I compare the Kingdom of God? ²¹ It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into three measures of flour, until it was all leavened."

The narrow gate

²² He was traveling through various towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. ²³ Then someone said to Him, "Lord, are the ones being saved few?" So He said to them: ²⁴ "Exert yourselves to enter through the narrow gate, because many, I say to you, will try to enter and not manage it. ²⁵ When once the master of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' and in answer he will say to you, 'I do not know you; where are you from?' ²⁶ then you will begin by saying, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.' ²⁷ But he will say: 'I tell you, I do not know

††† In a synagogue the women were separated from the men, so He called her over to the men's side. § Of course the woman had not come to be healed; she came to worship God. It was the Lord's initiative, so the ruler's complaint was really directed at Him. §† By using the enemy's proper name, Jesus is declaring that it was actually Satan who was behind the problem.

where you are from. Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity.' †

²⁸ "There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, but you yourselves being thrown out. ²⁹ They will even come from the east, the west, the north and the south, and recline in the Kingdom of God. ³⁰ Yes indeed, there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last."

A word for Herod

³¹ On that same day some Pharisees approached saying to Him, "Get out of here and go away, because Herod wants to kill you." †³² He said to them: "Go tell that 'fox', 'Take note, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third I will be perfected.' ³³ Nevertheless I must keep going today and tomorrow and the day following, because it is not credible that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem!

Jesus laments over Jerusalem

³⁴ "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, she who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, like a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing! ³⁵ So then, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you that you will definitely not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" ‡

Jesus heals a man with dropsy

14 Then it happened, when He entered the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they were watching Him closely. ² And then, there in front of Him was a man who had dropsy! †³ And Jesus reacted by saying to the lawyers and Pharisees, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" ⁴ But they kept silent. So He took hold of him, healed him, and let him go. ⁵ Then He addressed them saying, "Which of you, if a son † or an ox falls into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?"

† The Lord is stating plainly that there are many who think they are in the Kingdom, but actually are not. †† Those Pharisees may just have been trying to scare Jesus. The metaphor 'fox' was doubtless understood by His hearers, but we have since lost the relevant cultural information. ‡ See Psalm 118:26. John 10:22-39 probably happened between verses 33 and 34 here. That 'Feast of Dedication' would have fallen on a Monday, December 17, 29. Here Jesus leaves Jerusalem, to return only at the 'triumphal entry'. †† It seems scarcely credible that such a person could have gotten in there by accident. The Pharisees were desperately looking for some way to accuse Him. †† Instead of 'son', some 26% of the Greek manuscripts have 'donkey' (as in TR, AV, NKJV). The 74% includes the best line of transmission, which I follow.

⁶ And they could not answer Him regarding these things.

A lesson about humility

⁷ Then He told a parable to those who were invited, having observed how they kept trying for the best places, saying to them: ⁸ "Whenever you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not recline in the place of honor, in case someone more honorable than you has been invited by him; ⁹ then he who invited you both will come and say, 'You, give this man place!' and then, with shame, you start to take the lowest place. †¹⁰ Rather, whenever you are invited, go and recline in the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will have honor in the presence of your fellow guests.

¹¹ Because everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." ††

¹² Then He said directly to His host: "Whenever you give a dinner or a supper, do not invite your friends, nor your brothers, nor your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. ¹³ But whenever you make a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; ¹⁴ and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you—you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." §

An unusual banquet

¹⁵ Well when one of the fellow-recliners heard these things, he said to Him, "Blessed is he who will eat dinner §† in the Kingdom of God!" §†¹⁶ So He said to him: "A certain man prepared a great banquet and invited many. ¹⁷ And at meal time he sent his slave to say to those who were invited, 'Come, because everything is now ready.' ¹⁸ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him: 'I bought a field, and I need to go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' ¹⁹ Another said: 'I bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' ²⁰ Yet another said, 'I have married a wife, and so I cannot come.' ²¹ So that slave came and reported these things to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' ²² And the slave said, 'Master, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.' ²³ Then the master said to the slave: 'Go out to the roads and hedges §† and make people come in,

†† Of course; everyone else has been trying for the best place he can get, so by that time the only one left is the lowest! ††† This truth is repeated several times in Scripture. § You cannot take it with you, but you can send it on ahead. §† Instead of 'dinner', perhaps 20% of the Greek manuscripts have 'bread' (as in most versions). §†† Now there you have a nice, safe, pious-sounding statement! I suppose he was trying to change the subject. §† Hedges were used to delimit fields, and there would often be a path along

so that my house may be filled. ²⁴ For I tell you that none of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet!" †

Jesus ministers (mainly) in Perea

Jesus defines discipleship

²⁵ Now large crowds were traveling with Him, and turning He said to them: ²⁶ "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ And whoever does not carry his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

²⁸ "Further, which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and calculate the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹ This so he does not lay a foundation without being able to finish, and all who see it begin to ridicule him, ³⁰ saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish!'

³¹ "Or what king, going to engage another king in battle, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet the one coming against him with twenty thousand? ³² And if not, while the other is still far away he sends a delegation and asks for terms for peace.

³³ "So likewise, any of you who does not renounce all his own possessions cannot be my disciple. †³⁴ Salt is good; but should the salt become insipid, with what can it be seasoned? ³⁵ It is fit for neither soil nor fertilizer; it is thrown out. ‡ He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Parable of a lost sheep

15 Then all the tax collectors and 'sinners' were getting close to Him to hear Him. ² Well the Pharisees and the scribes started complaining, saying, "This man welcomes 'sinners' and eats with them." ³ So He told them this parable, saying: ⁴ "What man among you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not abandon the ninety-nine in the wild †† and go after the lost one until he finds it? ⁵ And upon finding it he joyfully puts it on his shoulders. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors,

the outside of the hedge. First the slave was sent into the city, then out to the countryside. † Perhaps 45% of the Greek manuscripts add, "for many are called, but few chosen". †† Notice that three times Sovereign Jesus says, "cannot be my disciple", and the 'cannot' is a strong negative. Jesus demands first place in our lives and hearts—above family, material things, our very selves. ‡ We followers of Christ are supposed to be 'salt' and 'light' in this world. To abdicate these functions is to become useless, and to be thrown out. 'Neutrality' is not a valid option. †† Notice that the 99 are left in the wild, not a sheepfold. So what happens if a wolf comes upon the 99 while the shepherd is off looking for the stray? I confess that I never liked this parable, for that reason.

saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost!' ⁷ I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous ones who have no need of repentance. ‡

Parable of a lost coin

⁸ "Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ And when she finds it, she calls together her friends and neighbors saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I lost!' ¹⁰ Just so, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." ††

Parable of a lost son

¹¹ Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. ¹² And the younger one said to the father, 'Father, give me the appropriate share of the estate.' So he divided the property between them. ¹³ Not many days later the younger son, having converted it all, journeyed to a distant country; and there he squandered his wealth living dissolutely. ¹⁴ But when he had spent it all, there was a severe famine throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ Then he went and attached himself to a citizen of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ††¹⁶ He would gladly have filled his stomach with the carob pods [§] that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. ^{§†17} But when he came to himself he said: 'How many of my father's hired servants have an abundance of bread, while I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, ¹⁹ and I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired servants.'

²⁰ "So he got up and went to his own father. But while he was still a good ways off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion—he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him! ²¹ Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his slaves: 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. ²³ And bring in and kill the fatted calf, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ because this son of mine was dead and came to life; he was lost and is found!' So they began to celebrate.

†† If God prefers sinners, what is the point of being righteous? I suppose the point to be that no one is so righteous that they need no repentance. Since we are all sinners, we all need to repent—and when we do so, God is happy. ††† God rejoices in the presence of the angels. ††† For a Jew, that would be about as low as one could get. § I suppose those pods were not edible for a human being, or he could doubtless have managed a few. §† Besides the economic crisis, he was a foreigner, and a stupid one at that. Why throw good money after bad?

²⁵ “Now his older son was in the field; and as he came approaching the house he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷ He said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’ ²⁸ So he became angry and refused to go in. Then his father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But in answer he said to the father: ‘Just look at how many years I have been serving you without ever transgressing your commandment; yet you never gave me even a young goat that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ ^{††31} So he said to him: ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. ³² But it was right that we celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and came to life; he was lost and is found.’”

Parable of a stupid steward

16 Then He said further to His disciples: “There was a certain rich man who had a manager, who was accused to him of wasting his goods. ² So he called him in and said to him: ‘What is this I hear about you? Render an account of your stewardship, because you can no longer be manager.’ ³ Then the manager said within himself: ‘What shall I do? My master is taking the management away from me. I do not have strength to dig; I am ashamed to beg ⁴—I know what I will do, so that whenever I am removed from the management they may receive me into their houses.’ ⁵ Summoning each one of his master’s debtors, he said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ ⁶ And he said, ‘A hundred baths of olive oil.’ So he said to him, ‘Take your bill and sit down quickly and write fifty.’ ⁷ Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ And he said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ So he said to him, ‘Take your bill and write eighty.’ ⁸ The master even ‘commended’ the dishonest manager, because he had acted shrewdly. The sons of this age are shrewder in their own generation than the sons of the Light. ^{††}

† Doubtless the servant had informed the father. †† The older brother’s attitude really wasn’t all that unreasonable. Why should the younger son be rewarded for his irresponsible conduct? The father was celebrating the recovery, not the irresponsibility. The fattened calf was for a special occasion, and the older son’s faithful service was routine. However, he probably did get a young goat, after that. ‡ Is this not stupid reasoning? Once he has lost his position, the others will have no reason to pay attention to him. †† According to the value system of the world it is ‘smart’ to take advantage of other people, but those who follow the Light must be different. Of course the master’s ‘commendation’ was sarcastic, since the dishonest manager still lost his job.

A bit of irony

⁹ “I even say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous mammon, so that whenever you fail, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings! ^{††10} He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much, and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. ¹¹ If therefore you have not been faithful with the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the genuine? ^{††12} And if you have not been faithful in what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? ¹³ No servant can serve two masters; either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon!” ^{††}

The Law will not fail

¹⁴ Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were also listening to all these things, and they were ridiculing Him. ¹⁵ So He said to them: “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. That which is exalted among men is an abomination before God. ^{§16} The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the Kingdom of God is being proclaimed, and every one is trying to force his way into it. ^{§17} But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the Law to fail.

¹⁸ “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery. ^{§††}

A rich man and beggar Lazarus ^{§†}

¹⁹ “Now there was a certain rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen, living in luxury every day. ²⁰ And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores, who had been placed at his gate, ²¹ just wanting to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table—why even the dogs would come and lick his sores! ^{§††22} In due time the beggar died and was carried away to Abraham’s bosom by the angels.

†† The use of sarcasm is not rare in the Bible, and here the Lord is clearly being sarcastic: getting into the eternal dwellings does not depend on ‘buying’ friends down here; it depends on pleasing the Owner up there. And of course, the dishonest friends will not even be there! Notice the reaction of the Pharisees in verse 14—I take it that verses 1-13 were mainly directed at them. ††† Monetary value is the ‘very little’, and spiritual value is the ‘much’, the ‘genuine’. ††† Verse 13 declares a terribly important truth. To embrace the world’s value system (humanism, relativism, materialism) is to reject God. Materialistic ‘Christians’ are really serving mammon (‘mammon’ includes more than just money). § There will not be any abomination in heaven—‘abomination’ is a strong term; do pause and ponder! §† No one gets into the Kingdom on his own terms. §†† Now there you have a plain statement! §† The Text does not state that this is a parable, so most probably it is not. §†† In fact the dogs were doing him a favor, since canine saliva is good for sores.

"The rich man also died and was buried. ^{†23} And in Hades he looked up and saw Abraham at a distance, and Lazarus very close to him. And being in torment, ^{‡24} he called out, saying, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; because I am tormented by this flame!' ^{‡25} But Abraham said: 'Child, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus had bad things; but now *HE*^{††} is being comforted, and you tormented. ^{‡26} And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can anyone from there cross over to us.' ^{‡27} Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, ^{‡28} because I have five brothers, so that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' ^{‡29} Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' ^{‡30} So he said to him, 'Oh no, father Abraham—if someone from the dead should go to them, they will repent!' ^{‡31} He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone should rise from the dead.'" [‡]

Don't offend, forgive

17 Then He said to the disciples: "Things that cause people to fall are bound to come, but woe to him through whom they do come! ^{‡2} It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to fall. ^{‡‡3} Watch out for yourselves: if your brother sins against you, ^{‡‡} rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. ^{‡4} Even if he sins against

† Note the contrast. Of course the beggar's body had been buried, but the person was taken to Paradise. Here we have an explicit statement of angelic activity, which, however, is absent from the rich man. †† The best line of transmission (30% of the Greek manuscripts here) has the emphatic pronoun 'HE', rather than 'here'. ‡ Several things in this account invite comment. Hades Sheol

‡† I find it interesting that he was concerned for his brothers; we can't say, "Better late than never", since it made no difference. ‡‡ Abraham states a disquieting reality: people who reject God's written revelation are self-condemned. Note also that Abraham did not say it would be impossible to send Lazarus, only that it would do no good. But it is clear that the lost cannot return, or the rich man could have gone himself. ‡‡† What is worse than a horrible, premature physical death? Spiritual death. Whoever destroys the faith of a 'little one' is self-condemned. What about all the professors who make it their business to destroy the faith of their students? ‡‡‡ Perhaps 4.5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "against you" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.), which changes the meaning of the verse.

you seven times in a day, and seven times in that day returns, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him." ^{‡5}

Faith like a mustard seed has

^{‡5} The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." ^{‡6} So the Lord said: "If you had ^{‡†} faith like a mustard seed *has*, ^{‡††} you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

The thanks a slave gets

^{‡7} "And which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he comes in from the field, 'Come at once and recline to eat?' ^{‡8} Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, and gird yourself and serve me until I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink?' ^{‡9} Does he thank that slave because he did the things commanded? I guess not! ^{‡†10} So likewise you, whenever you have done everything you were told to do, say, 'We are unworthy slaves, because we have only done what we were supposed to.'" ^{‡††}

Jesus cleanses ten lepers

^{‡11} Now as He was traveling toward Jerusalem, He went along between Samaria and Galilee. ^{‡12} And as He entered a certain village, ten men met Him—being lepers they stood at a distance. ^{‡13} They called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" ^{‡14} And paying attention He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." It happened that as they went they were cleansed! ^{‡15} Well one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, glorifying God with a loud voice; ^{‡16} then he fell on his face at His feet, thanking Him—and he was a Samaritan! ^{‡17} So Jesus reacted by saying: "Were not all ten cleansed? So where are the nine? ^{‡18} None were found to return and give glory to God except this foreigner!" ^{‡19} Then He said to him, "Get up and go; your faith has made you well." ^{‡†}

The coming of the Kingdom

^{‡20} Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said: "The Kingdom of God does not come with

‡ Dear me, that could get 'old'! But the Lord is emphatic; we must forgive! ‡† The manuscripts are evenly divided between 'had' and 'have'; I follow the best line of transmission. ‡†† What kind of 'faith' might a mustard seed have? Albeit so small, it reacts without question to the climactic circumstances, and grows to remarkable proportions. If we reacted similarly, without question, to the Holy Spirit's promptings, our spiritual 'climactic circumstances', we should indeed move mountains, literally. ‡‡ About 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "I guess not!" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡‡† If we were really committed to the master's project, we would do more. ‡‡ In all probability the priests would not have wanted to deal with a Samaritan, in any case, so the Lord just sends him on his way, relieving him of that duty.

observation; ²¹ nor will they say, 'Look, here!' or 'Look, there!' because indeed the Kingdom of God is within you." †

²² Then He said to the disciples: "Days are coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of the Man, and you will not see it. ††²³ And they will say to you, 'Look, here!' or 'Look, there!' Do not go along or follow. ²⁴ Because just like the lightning that lights the whole sky when it flashes, so also will the Son of the Man be in His day. ²⁵ But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. ²⁶ Also, just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it also be in the days of the Son of the Man. ²⁷ They were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸ Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building— ²⁹ but on the day Lot went out from Sodom, fire and brimstone rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. ³⁰ Even so will it be in the day when the Son of the Man is revealed.

³¹ "In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not go down to get them; and likewise he who is in the field, let him not turn back. ³² Remember Lot's wife! †††³³ Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever 'wastes' it will preserve it. ³⁴ I tell you: on that night there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. ³⁵ Two women will be grinding together; one will be taken and the other left." ††

³⁷ They reacted by saying to Him, "Where, Lord?" He said to them, "Where there is a carcass, there will the vultures also be gathered." ††

Parable of a persistent widow

18 And then He told them a parable, the point being that one needs to always pray and not lose heart, ² saying: "There was a judge in a certain town who did not fear God nor regard man. ³ But there was a widow in that town, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' ⁴ And for a while he

† They were probably thinking of the Messianic Kingdom, that will indeed have a concrete starting point, but the Lord does not give them that information. He does go on to say to the disciples that the onset will be sudden. In the meantime, the King's true subjects have the Kingdom in their hearts, which presumably did not include those Pharisees, so 'within you' would be a generic statement.

†† I suppose He is referring to His physical presence among them.

‡ The Lord affirms the historicity of the pillar of salt. †† Perhaps 20% of the Greek manuscripts have verse 36: "Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left". I would say that this paragraph deals with the Rapture. In that event, Jesus is addressing those who are left behind, but who had expected to go. I believe that immediately after the Rapture the forces of evil will be unleashed to take complete control. Anyone who is going to refuse the 'mark' had better head for the hills. ††† A spiral of vultures in the air can be seen at quite a distance, and indicates a carcass on the ground.

refused; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God nor regard man, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will defend her, so that her endless coming doesn't wear me out!'"

⁶ Then the Lord said: "Hear what the unjust judge said. ⁷ And will not God get justice for His elect who are crying out to Him day and night, indeed being patient with them? ⁸ I tell you that He will get justice for them quickly. ††† However, when the Son of the Man comes, will He actually find *THE* faith on the earth?" †††

Parable of a Pharisee and a publican

⁹ Then He told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised the rest: ¹⁰ "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and started praying to himself like this: 'God, I thank you that I am not like all the rest—robbers, unjust, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I tithe all that I get.' ¹³ The tax collector, staying a good ways off, did not even venture to look up to heaven, but started beating on his chest, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' ¹⁴ I say to you that this one went back home justified rather than that one; because everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

You enter the Kingdom like a child does

¹⁵ Then they even started bringing their babies to Him, that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. ¹⁶ But Jesus summoned them and said: "Allow the little children to come to me, and do not hinder them; because the Kingdom of God is of such. ¹⁷ I tell you assuredly, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God the way a little child does ††† will by no means enter it."

An upright, rich ruler

¹⁸ A certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁹ So Jesus said to him: "Why do you call me good? No one is good except one—God. †††²⁰ You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and your

††† God's 'quickly' doesn't always seem that 'quick' to us. ††† The Text clearly has 'THE faith', referring to the sum of Truth that makes up the biblical Faith. The Lord's question is precisely to the point. Aside from the generalized apostasy that characterizes 'Christian' churches today, how many 'conservative' pastors are genuinely committed to the objective authority of the biblical Text? § This is the sort of 'prayer' that does not get past the ceiling, so he was just talking to himself. §† To render 'as a little child' misses the point; obviously an adult can be saved. A little child believes literally and completely. §†† Jesus is not denying that He is good, but the man is not addressing Him as God. Had the man done so, there would have been no objection.

mother.”²¹ And he said, “All these I have kept from my youth.”²² Well upon hearing these things † Jesus said to him, “You still lack one thing: sell all you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”²³ But when he heard this he became very sad, because he was extremely rich. ††

Riches tend to keep people out of the Kingdom

²⁴ When Jesus saw that he became sad, He said: “How difficult it is for those who have riches to enter the Kingdom of God! †²⁵ It is actually easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle †† than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God!”²⁶ So the hearers said, “Who then can be saved?”²⁷ And He said, “The things that are impossible with men are possible with God.”

²⁸ Then Peter said, “Notice that we have left all and followed you!”²⁹ So He said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the Kingdom of God,³⁰ who will not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.”

Jesus declares His coming death and resurrection—third time

³¹ Then He took the Twelve aside and said to them: “Take note, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all the things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of the Man will be fulfilled:³² He will be betrayed to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon,³³ and they will scourge and kill Him. And on the third day †† He will rise again.”³⁴ But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden

† From the parallel account in Matthew 19:16-22 we learn that the man actually said more than is recorded here. †† The Lord had put His finger on the one he was not keeping; he was not loving his neighbor as himself. † The parallel passage in Mark (10:24) clarifies that it is those who trust in riches. How many rich people do you know who do not trust in their riches? (That clarification is omitted by less than half a percent of the extant Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, as in the eclectic text currently in vogue.)

†† Jesus refers to a literal camel and a literal needle, which of course is “impossible with men”, as He goes on to say in verse 27. †† Referring to the time between Jesus’ death and resurrection, Luke (and Matthew and Mark) has ‘(on) the third day’; but Mark also has ‘after three days’, while Matthew also has ‘three days and three nights’; John has ‘in three days’. Due to these seeming differences, there are those who insist that Jesus died on Thursday, not Friday, or even on Wednesday. There is general agreement that the resurrection happened on Sunday. Both ‘(on) the third day’ and ‘in three days’ allow for a Friday crucifixion, as the Church has generally understood. In John 20:26 we read, “after eight days” Jesus appeared to the disciples again, with Thomas present; this was the next Sunday, so only seven days had elapsed—Jews (and Brazilians) include the day at both ends. So ‘after three days’ also allows for a Friday crucifixion. I take it that ‘three days and three nights’ was an idiomatic expression synonymous with ‘after three days’. So Jesus died on a Friday.

from them, ††† and they did not know what was being said.

A blind man near Jericho

³⁵ Then it happened, as He approached Jericho, ††† that a certain blind man was sitting alongside the road begging.³⁶ Hearing a crowd going by, he asked what it was.³⁷ So they told him that Jesus the Natsorean[§] was passing by.³⁸ Well he shouted, saying, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”³⁹ Those who led the way started reproving him, to shut him up; but he kept calling out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”⁴⁰ So Jesus stopped and ordered that he be brought to Him. When he got close He asked him, saying,⁴¹ “What do you want me to do for you?” So he said, “Lord, that I may see again!”^{§†42} Then Jesus said to him: “See again! Your faith has made you well.”⁴³ And immediately he did! and he followed Him, glorifying God. And all who witnessed it gave praise to God.

Zacchaeus

19 He entered and started passing through Jericho.^{§††2} A man named Zacchaeus was there—he was a chief tax collector, and he was wealthy!³ He was trying to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, because he was short.⁴ And running on ahead he climbed up into a sycamore tree, in order to see Him, since He was about to pass by there.⁵ And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down quickly, because today I must stay at your house.”^{§†6} So he came down quickly, and received Him joyfully.⁷ But when they saw it, they all started complaining, saying, “He has entered to lodge with a sinful man!”

⁸ Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Indeed, Lord, I herewith give half of my goods to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone, I restore fourfold.”^{§†9} So Jesus said about him, “Today salvation has happened in this house, †† in that he also

††† ‘Hidden’ by whom? ††† Luke has Jesus approaching Jericho, while Matthew and Mark have Him leaving it. In Jesus’ day there were two Jerichos, the old one that had been rebuilt, and a new one, about a kilometer away. What better place to beg than between the two towns? Jesus had left the old Jericho and was going toward the new one. For further discussion, please see the Appendix: “Entering or leaving Jericho?”. § That is correct, ‘Natsorean’, not Nazarene. The reference is to Isaiah 11:1—Jesus was the ‘Branch-man’, the Messiah, as the blind man clearly understood, since he addressed Him as ‘Son of David’. For further discussion, please see the Appendix: “‘Prophets’ in Matthew 2:23”. §† The man had not been born blind. Do you find it to be curious that Jesus asked him what he wanted? Was it not obvious? God knows what we need before we ask, but we must ask! §†† This would be the new Jericho. §† Jesus called him by name. How did He know that? Might that have contributed to the man’s conversion? §†† The man knew his Bible; see Exodus 22:1. §† Yes indeed, that was a complete change of direction!

is a son of Abraham; ¹⁰ because the Son of the Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Parable of a despised king

¹¹ Now as they heard these things, He continued with a parable, because He was near Jerusalem and they were supposing that the Kingdom of God was on the verge of being revealed. ¹² So He said: "A certain nobleman went to a distant country to receive for himself a kingdom and return. ¹³ He called ten of his slaves, gave them ten 'minas', and said to them, 'Conduct business until I come.' ¹⁴ But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' ¹⁵ It happened that he did receive the kingdom, and upon returning he ordered that those slaves to whom he had given the money be called to him, to know who had gained what by trading. ¹⁶ So the first one came and said, 'Master, your mina earned ten minas!' ¹⁷ He said to him: 'Super, you good slave! Because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities!' ¹⁸ And the second one came and said, 'Master, your mina made five minas.' ¹⁹ Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' ²⁰ Then a different one came, saying: 'Master, here is your mina, that I kept laid away in a piece of cloth ²¹ —I feared you because you are a hard man, removing what you did not place, and reaping what you did not sow.' ²² So he said to him: 'I will judge you out of your own mouth, you wicked slave! You knew that I am a hard man, removing what I did not place, and reaping what I did not sow. ²³ Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, and upon coming I would have collected it with interest?' ²⁴ And to those standing by he said, 'Take the mina from him and give it to him who has the ten minas.' ²⁵ (They even said to him, 'Master, he *already* has ten minas!') ²⁶ 'Indeed I tell you, to everyone who has, more will be given; † but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. ²⁷ But as for those enemies of mine who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them in front of me!'" †

† This seems to have been a fixation in their minds that kept them from understanding the Lord's repeated warnings that He was about to be killed. †† How long would it take to multiply an investment ten times? Probably quite a while! That the man had to go to a distant country strikes me as unusual, and after he got there he may not have received the kingdom right away. The parable clearly relates to our Lord's absence and Return. We need to do the best we can with what He has given us. ‡ There is a sense in which blessing is earned; the more you do, the more you get. In John 12:26 Sovereign Jesus said, "If anyone serves me, my Father will honor him." †† The man had accepted the description given by the third slave, and here he demonstrates that he really is a 'hard' man, but don't forget that he rewarded the faithful slaves. And don't forget Revelation 19:15!

The last week

The 'Triumphal Entry'

²⁸ Having said these things, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ When He drew near to Bethphage ‡ and Bethany, at the mountain called 'of Olives', it happened like this: He sent two of His disciples, ³⁰ saying: "Go to the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no man ever yet sat. Untie and bring it. ³¹ And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this to him: 'The Lord needs it.' "

A steed for the King

³² So those who were sent went and found it just like He told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" ³⁴ So they said, "The Lord needs it." ††³⁵ Then they brought it to Jesus; and throwing their own clothes on the colt, they placed Jesus on it. ³⁶ And as He went along people were spreading their clothes on the road.

Rejoicing and praising

³⁷ Then, as He was approaching the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, ³⁸ saying: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD! ††

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

A sour note

³⁹ Some of the Pharisees said to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" ⁴⁰ In answer He said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the very stones would cry out!"

Jesus weeps over Jerusalem

⁴¹ Now as He approached, observing the city He wept over it, ⁴² saying: "If you, yes you, especially in this your day, had known the things pertaining to your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ Yes, the days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you; indeed they will surround you and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴ And they will raze you, and your children within you, to the ground—they will not leave in you one stone upon an-

‡ Some 44% of the Greek manuscripts have 'Bethphage' (as in most versions), but the 56% includes the best line of transmission, which I follow. In any case, it is a mere matter of spelling. †† It seems to me obvious that this had been prearranged. ††† See Psalm 118:26.

other—all because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.” †

Jesus cleanses the temple—second time

⁴⁵ And upon entering the temple He began to drive out those who were selling and buying in it, ^{††46} saying to them, “It is written: ‘My house is a house of prayer,’ ‡ but you have made it a ‘den of robbers!’” ††

⁴⁷ And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes, as also the leaders of the people, were trying to destroy Him, ⁴⁸ but could not figure out how to do it, because all the people were hanging on His words.

Jesus' authority questioned

20 Now it happened on one of those days, as He was teaching and evangelizing the people in the temple, that the priests † and scribes came to Him with the elders ² and addressed Him, saying, “Tell us by what authority you are doing these things; or who is he who gave you this authority?” ³ But in answer He said to them: “I also will ask you one thing; yes, tell me: ⁴ the baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?” ⁵ So they reasoned among themselves, saying: “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ ⁶ But if we say, ‘From men,’ all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet.” ⁷ So they answered that they did not know where it was from. ⁸ And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.” ††

Parable of some perverse tenants

⁹ Then He began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard, leased it to farmers, and went away on a long journey. ¹⁰ At the proper time he sent a slave to the farmers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the farmers flogged him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹ Again he sent a different slave; so they flogged him also, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. ¹² And again he sent a third; but they wounded him also and threw him out. ¹³ Then the owner of the vineyard said: ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; hopefully they will respect him when they see him.’ ††¹⁴ But when the farmers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying: ‘This is the heir. Come, let's kill

† The implication would appear to be that if they had recognized it, their history would have been different. †† Comparing the parallel accounts, this happened the next day. Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “and buying in it” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡ See Isaiah 56:7. †† See Jeremiah 7:11. †† Some 16% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘high priests’ (as in most versions). ††† Well, of course, they knew that both John and Jesus were of God—they just did not want to repent and change their way of life. ††† Presumably this would never occur in real life, but the Lord was aiming this directly at them, knowing what they would do to Him and what the Owner would do to them.

him, so that the inheritance may become ours.’ ¹⁵ So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What therefore will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶ He will come and destroy those farmers and give the vineyard to others.” Having heard it they said, “May it never be!”

¹⁷ Then He looked directly at them and said: “What then is this that is written:

‘A stone that the builders rejected, the same became the cornerstone?’ §

¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but on whomever it should fall—it will crush him!” §†

¹⁹ The chief priests and the scribes wanted to lay hands on Him right then, but they were afraid §††—they knew He had spoken this parable against them.

To Caesar, Caesar's; to God, God's

²⁰ Keeping a close watch on Him, they sent spies, who pretended to be innocent, so that they might latch on to something He said, so as to hand Him over to the power and the authority of the governor. ²¹ So they questioned Him, saying: “Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right, and you do not show favoritism but teach the way of God in truth. §†²² Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”

²³ But He perceived their craftiness and said to them: “Why are you testing me? §††²⁴ Show me a denarius—whose image and inscription does it have?” In answer they said, “Caesar's.” ²⁵ So He said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.” ²⁶ They were unable to latch on to His word in front of the people; and marveling at His answer they kept silent.

Sadducees deny resurrection

²⁷ Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, approached and questioned Him, ²⁸ saying: “Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's married brother dies childless, then his brother should take the widow and produce offspring for his brother. ²⁹ Now there were seven brothers: the first took a wife and died childless; ³⁰ then the second took the widow and HE died childless; §†³¹ then the third took her, in fact all seven in sequence—they all died childless. ³² Finally, last of all, the woman died also. ³³ Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife will she be, since all seven had her?” §†

§ See Psalm 118:22. §† Those are our two options: fall on Jesus and be broken, or be crushed in judgment. §†† For ‘they were afraid’, some 35% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘they feared the people’ (as in most versions). §‡ They were really almost too obvious. §†† Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “Why are you testing me?” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §† Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “the widow and he died childless” (as in NIV,

³⁴ So in answer Jesus said to them: “The people of this age marry and are given in marriage; ³⁵ but those who are considered worthy [†] to attain to that age, to the resurrection from among the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage. ³⁶ Because they cannot die anymore, ^{††} being like angels—they are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. ³⁷ But that the dead are raised, Moses indeed revealed about the Bush when he recorded: ‘The LORD, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.’ ^{‡38} So He is not the God of the dead, but of the living—to Him all are alive.” ³⁹ Then some of the scribes answered and said, “Teacher, you spoke well.” ⁴⁰ And they no longer dared to question Him further.

Is the Christ David's Son?

⁴¹ Then He said to them: “How is it that they say that the Messiah ^{‡†} is David's Son? ⁴² Why David himself affirms in the book of Psalms,

‘The LORD said to my Lord: sit at my right hand ⁴³ until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’ ^{‡†}

⁴⁴ Since David calls Him ‘Lord’, how then is He his Son?”

Jesus denounces the scribes

⁴⁵ Then, in the hearing of the people, He said to His disciples: ⁴⁶ “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces, and the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts; ⁴⁷ who ‘devour’ widows’ houses, ^{‡††} and for a show make long prayers. These will receive more severe judgment.”

A lesson in giving

21 Looking up He saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasure chest. ² But He also saw a certain poor widow putting in two mites. ³ So He said: “I tell you truly that this poor widow put in more than all of them; ⁴ because all these others put in gifts for God out of their abundance, but she, out of her destitution, put in all she had to live on.” ^{‡††}

NASB, TEV, etc.). ^{§‡} Whenever someone comes up with a hypothetical situation, be careful; there is probably a hidden agenda.

[†] “Those who are considered worthy”—an interesting concept!

^{††} If no one dies, there is no need to produce new generations.

[‡] See Exodus 3:6. ^{‡†} The Greek Text has ‘Christ’, but since they were speaking Hebrew, the Lord certainly said ‘Messiah’. ^{‡††} See Psalm 110:1. ^{‡†††} Presumably, when the man died the widow no longer had the means to clear any debt; so they would just take over the house and put the widow out in the street. ^{‡††††} It is a fact of life; people who are poor are often more generous, more willing to share, than those who are rich. But in this case the widow was probably calling out to God for help. Perhaps 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “for God” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

Jerusalem will be destroyed

⁵ Then, as some were admiring the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, ⁶ “These things that you see—the days will come in which not one stone will be left upon another that will not be thrown down.” [§]

The Olivet Discourse

⁷ So they asked Him, saying: “Teacher, so when will these things be?” and “What will be the sign when these things are about to happen?” ^{§†8} So He said: “Be careful, so as not to be deceived, because many will come in my name saying: ‘I am’ and ‘The time is at hand.’ Therefore do not go after them. ⁹ But whenever you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; because these things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.”

Things will get bad, really bad

¹⁰ Then He said to them: “Nation will be raised up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. ¹¹ And there will be severe earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful events and great signs from heaven. ¹² But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors on account of my name. ¹³ But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. ¹⁴ So settle it in your hearts not to practice giving a defense beforehand; ¹⁵ because I will give you ^{§††} a mouth and wisdom such that all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or withstand. ^{§†16} You will be betrayed even by parents and relatives, friends and ‘brothers’; and they will put some of you to death. ¹⁷ And you will be hated by all because of my name. ^{§††18} (Not even one hair of your head will be wasted ^{§†19}—you must secure your souls by your endurance.)

Jerusalem will be destroyed

²⁰ “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that her desolation is at hand. ²¹ Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let those who are in the city get out, and let those who are in the country not enter her. ²² Because

[§] This was fulfilled in 70 AD ^{§†} There are two questions: “When these things?” and “What the sign?” The answer to the first is given in Luke 21:20-24. The answer to the second begins here in verse 8. ^{§††} To do this He has to be alive! ^{§‡} This was true of Stephen; they couldn't answer him, so they killed him. ^{§†††} This is already happening around the world. Those who defend biblical values are hated. ^{§†} I have to take this by faith. We have to work and war by faith, since we are often not allowed to see the results. I take it that the Lord is assuring us that nothing we do for Him will be wasted. But we must ‘hang in there’.

these are days of vengeance, that all the written things may be fulfilled. ²³ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those nursing babies in those days! There will be great distress in the land, and wrath to this people. ²⁴ Yes, they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. †

Christ will return to the earth

²⁵ “There will be signs in sun, moon, and stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, at the roaring and tossing of the sea; ^{††26} men fainting from fear and expectation of the things coming on the inhabited earth—because the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ^{‡27} Then they will see the Son of the Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ Now when these things begin to happen, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

Parable of the fig tree

²⁹ Then He told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. ³⁰ Whenever they are already budding, you see and know by yourselves that summer is now near. ³¹ So you also, whenever you see these things happening, know that the Kingdom of God is near. ³² I tell you assuredly, this generation ^{††} will certainly not pass away until all has happened. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away. ^{‡‡}

Watch and pray

³⁴ “But keep a watch on yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness, and cares of life, and that Day come upon you suddenly. ³⁵ Because it will come like a trap upon all those who dwell on the surface of the whole earth. ³⁶ So be watchful all the time, praying that you may be counted worthy ^{‡‡†} to escape all these things ^{‡‡} that are about to happen and to stand before the Son of the Man.”

† Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD

†† ‘The sea’ is sometimes used as a metaphor for the human population. ‡ See Revelation 12:7-12. †† ‘This generation’ has received various interpretations. Personally I suppose it refers to the generation that was alive in 1967 (by now everyone in that ‘generation’ is at least 48 years old). ‡‡ Sovereign Jesus declares that His words have eternal validity, and are therefore on a par with God’s written revelation (see Psalm 119:89). ‡‡† Instead of ‘counted worthy’, less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have ‘be able’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡‡‡ If ‘to escape all these things’ refers to the Rapture, then only those who are ‘counted worthy’ will go up.

His daily routine

³⁷ In the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called ‘of Olives.’ ³⁸ Then early in the morning all the people would come to Him in the temple to hear Him.

Judas joins the plot against Jesus

22 Now the feast of unleavened bread, which is called ‘Passover’, drew near. ² And the chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to kill Him, because they feared the people. ³ Then Satan entered Judas ^{§†} (the one surnamed Iscariot), who was numbered among the Twelve. ⁴ So he went off and conferred with the chief priests and officers about how he might betray Him to them. ⁵ They were glad, and agreed to give him silver coins. ⁶ So he promised, and started looking for an opportunity to betray Him to them, without a crowd.

The last night

Preparation for the last Passover

⁷ Then came the day of unleavened bread, in which it was necessary to kill the Passover lamb. ⁸ And He sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.” ⁹ So they said to Him, “Where do you want us to prepare?” ¹⁰ He said to them: “Note, upon entering the city a man carrying a jar of water ^{§††} will meet you; follow him into the house which he enters. ¹¹ Then you must say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you: Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ ¹² He himself will show you a large upper room, ^{§‡} all furnished; make preparations there.” ¹³ So off they went and found things just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.

They eat the Passover

¹⁴ When the hour had come, He reclined, and the twelve ^{§††} apostles with Him. ¹⁵ Then He said to them: “I have fervently desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ I tell you further that I will not eat of it again until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.” ¹⁷ And taking a cup He gave thanks and said: “Take this and share it among yourselves. ^{§†††} I tell you further

§ The trouble was that the people were being so impressed by Jesus that they felt threatened. §† Note that Judas acted under satanic inspiration. §†† This would presumably be rather unusual, since fetching water was normally done by women. §‡ Obviously this had all been arranged ahead of time. The owner was doubtless a believer, and the large upper room was presumably chosen with a view to the use that would be made of it later, as well. §†† A mere handful (0.5%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “twelve” (as in NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.). §† This ‘cup’ was not

that I will not drink again † of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God comes.”

Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper

¹⁹ Then, after the meal, He took bread, gave thanks, broke and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”
²⁰ He also took the cup, saying: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you.”

The betrayer is present

²¹ “But alas, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table! ²² To be sure, the Son of the Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!” ††²³ (They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who was about to do this.)

Wanting to be ‘the greatest’ is not a valid option

²⁴ Now there had actually been a discussion among them as to which of them seemed to be greater. ²⁵ So He said to them: “The kings of the nations lord it over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors’. ²⁶ But not so with you—rather let the greater among you become as the younger, and he who leads as he who serves. ²⁷ Who is greater, the one reclining or the one serving? Is it not the one reclining? Yet I am among you as the one who serves. ²⁸ However, you are those who have continued with me in my trials. ²⁹ And I bestow on you a kingdom, just as my Father bestowed one on me, ³⁰ so that you may eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom; also you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel!” ††

Peter will deny Him

³¹ Then the Lord said: †† “Simon, Simon! Indeed Satan has asked for you (pl) so as to sift you like wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you (sg) so that your faith not fail completely; ††† so you, when you have recovered, ††† strengthen your brothers.” ³³ But he said to Him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death!” ³⁴ So He said, “I say to you, Peter, no rooster can crow today before you deny three times that you know me!” §

part of the ‘Lord's Supper’; I don't know what the purpose may have been. † To suck a swallow or two from a sponge would not qualify as ‘drinking’. †† Judas had crossed the line of no return. † The gentle reproof is tempered with a word of appreciation. †† Then the twelve tribes must still exist! God knows who and where they are. I wonder who will take the Iscariot's place. Note that there will be eating and drinking in the future Kingdom. †† A mere handful (0.5%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “Then the Lord said” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ††† The Lord prayed for Peter, but evidently not for the Iscariot. ††† The KJV reads ‘converted’, which is a misleading translation. § This was the second warning; the first is recorded in John

“Buy a sword”

³⁵ Then He said to them, “When I sent you without money bag, knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?” And they said, “Nothing.” ³⁶ So He said to them: “But *now*, he who has a money bag should take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword must sell his garment and buy one. §†³⁷ Because I say to you that this which is written must still be fulfilled in me: ‘And he was classed with the lawless’; §†† and because the things concerning me have an end.” ³⁸ So they said, “Look, Lord, here are two swords.” And He said to them, “It is enough.”

Gethsemane

³⁹ Then going out He went to the Mount of Olives, as His custom was, and His disciples followed Him. ⁴⁰ When He came to the place, He said to them, “Pray, so as not to enter into temptation.” ⁴¹ Then He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down and prayed, ⁴² saying, “Father, if you would just remove this cup from me—nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done!” ⁴³ Then an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. ⁴⁴ And being in anguish He prayed with total concentration; §† then His sweat became like clots of blood, falling to the ground. §††⁴⁵ When He rose up from prayer and came to the disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. ⁴⁶ He said to them: “Why do you sleep? Get up and pray, that you may not enter into temptation!”

Betrayal and arrest

⁴⁷ But while He was still speaking—wow, a crowd; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them! He approached Jesus to kiss Him (he had given them this sign, “Whomever I kiss, it is he”). §†⁴⁸ So Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of the Man with a *KISS*?”
⁴⁹ When those who were around Him saw what was about to happen, they said to Him, “Lord, shall we

13:37-38. For a complete discussion of Peter's denials, please see the Appendix: “How many times did Jesus say Peter would deny Him?”. §† If you are obviously armed, this tends to slow down those who would otherwise attack you or take advantage of you. It is better yet to have spiritual power. §†† See Isaiah 53:12. §‡ I believe that Hebrews 5:7 refers to this moment. To transpire blood is normally fatal, so Jesus came close to dying there in the garden. But He had to get to the cross, so the Father sent an angel to strengthen Him. The sleeping disciples did not observe this, so Luke received this information ‘from Above’ (Luke 1:3). §‡† The eclectic Greek text currently in vogue places verses 43-44 within double brackets (based on 1.3% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality), thereby denying that Luke wrote them. These verses contain important information that should not be questioned on such a feeble basis. §† Some 45% of the Greek manuscripts, including the best line of transmission (that I follow), have, “he had given them this sign, ‘Whomever I kiss, it is he’”. Every other version I have seen follows the 55%.

strike with the sword?"⁵⁰ And a certain one of them struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear!^{†51} But Jesus reacted by saying, "Allow at least this!" and touching his ear He healed him.^{††}

⁵² Then Jesus said to the chief priests, officers of the temple, and elders who had come against Him: "Have you come out with swords and clubs as against a bandit?⁵³ When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour; even the authority of the darkness!"[‡]

Peter denies Jesus

⁵⁴ Then they seized, took and brought Him to the house of the high priest, with Peter following at a distance.⁵⁵ Now when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them.⁵⁶ Then a certain servant girl, seeing him sitting by the fire, looked intently at him and said, "This man also was with him."^{‡57} But he denied Him, saying, "Woman, I do not know him!"

⁵⁸ After a little while another saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"⁵⁹ Then after about an hour had passed, another started insisting, "Surely this fellow also was with him, because he is a Galilean."⁶⁰ But Peter said, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" And immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster^{‡‡} crowed.

⁶¹ And the Lord turned and looked directly at Peter;^{‡‡‡} then Peter remembered the Lord's word, how He had said to him, "Before a rooster crows, you will deny me three times."⁶² And going outside he wept bitterly.

Guards mistreat Jesus

⁶³ The men who were guarding Jesus started mocking and beating Him.⁶⁴ And having blindfolded Him they would hit His face and^{‡‡‡} ask Him, saying: "Prophecy! Who was it who struck you?"^{§65} And they kept saying many other insulting things to Him.

† "THE servant of the high priest"—presumably this man was leading the expedition. We know from John 18:10 that his name was Malchus. †† We know it was Peter (John 18:10), and if the Lord had not healed that ear, things would probably have been nastier for Peter in the 'courtyard'. ‡ This was Satan's hour, being part of the Father's Plan; 'the darkness' refers to Satan's kingdom; 'your hour' means that they were part of that kingdom. ‡† I wonder how the girl knew that! ‡‡ Instead of 'a' rooster, perhaps 3% of the manuscripts have 'the' rooster (as in TR, AV, NKJV). ‡‡† I take it that here the Lord broke the Satanic spell, and Peter could think normally again. ‡‡‡ Perhaps 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "they would hit His face and" (as in NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.). § Those men were cowardly and perverse, but probably acted under demonic influence.

Crucifixion day

Jesus judged by the Council

⁶⁶ As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both the chief priests and scribes, came together and brought Him before their council, saying,⁶⁷ "If you are the Messiah, tell us." But He said to them: "If I tell you, you simply will not believe.⁶⁸ But if I also question you, you will neither answer nor release me.^{§†69} Hereafter the Son of the Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God."⁷⁰ Then they all said, "Are you then the Son of God?" So He said to them, "You say it because I AM!"⁷¹ Then they said: "What further testimony do we need? We ourselves have heard it from his mouth!"^{§††}

Jesus taken to Pontius Pilate

23 Then the whole crowd of them rose up and led Him to Pilate.² And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar,[§] declaring himself to be Christ, a king."³ So Pilate questioned Him, saying, "Are you the king of the Jews?" In reply He said to him, "You said it!"⁴ Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man."^{§‡5} But they insisted, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee even to here."

Jesus taken to Herod

⁶ When Pilate heard 'Galilee',^{§†} he asked if the man was a Galilean.⁷ Upon learning that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem during those days.⁸ Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was really pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see Him, having heard so many things about Him; and he was hoping to see some miracle performed by Him.⁹ He questioned Him with many words, but He gave him no answer.^{§‡10} On their part, the high priests and scribes stood by, vehemently accusing Him.¹¹ Then Herod and his soldiers, after ridiculing and mocking Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate.¹² (That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each

§† Jesus tells them that He knows, and they know, that what they are doing is a farce. §†† They were condemning Him for blasphemy, but to do that they had to reject the obvious truth that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. §‡ This was a plain lie. §‡† It is necessary to read the parallel passages to get a fuller picture of what happened. It becomes clear that Pilate did not want to crucify Jesus. For a fuller discussion, please see the Appendix: "Poor Pilate—wrong place, wrong time". §‡ Perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "Galilee" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §‡ Herod was irrelevant; it was Pilate who had the authority to crucify.

other—previously having been at odds with each other.) †

Pilate sentences Jesus

13 Then Pilate, having called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, 14 said to them: “You have brought this man to me as one who misleads the people, and yet, having examined him in your presence, I have found no guilt in this man as to those things of which you accuse him. 15 Further, neither did Herod (for I sent you on to him); †† indeed, nothing deserving of death has been done by him. 16 I will therefore flog and release him.” 17 (It was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast.) ‡

18 But they all cried out together, saying: “Away with this one! Release to us Barabbas!”— 19 who had been thrown into prison for a certain insurrection in the city, and for murder. 20 Then Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, †† addressed them again. 21 But they just kept shouting: “Crucify! Crucify him!” 22 For the third time he said to them: “But what evil has this man done? I have found no reason for death in him. I will therefore flog and release him.” 23 But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified! And their voices, especially of the chief priests, †† prevailed. 24 So Pilate decided to grant their demand. 25 He released the one who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

Jesus is crucified

26 Now as they led Him away, they conscripted a certain Simon of Cyrene (coming in from a field), and put the cross on him to carry it behind Jesus. †††27 A considerable crowd of people followed Him, including women who were also mourning and lamenting Him. 28 So Jesus turned to them and said: “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; rather weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 Because indeed, the days are coming in which they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, even the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ †††30 Then they will begin ‘to say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills,

† An interesting ‘fringe benefit’. †† Instead of “for I sent you on to him”, some 12% of the manuscripts have ‘for he sent him back to us’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡ About 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit verse 17 entirely (as in NIV, NASB, LB, [TEV], etc.). †† Comparing the accounts it is very clear that Pilate wanted no part of killing Jesus, but when they said “you are not Caesar’s friend” he was beaten. †† A mere handful (0.5%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “especially of the chief priests” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ††† Whether or not Simon was already a disciple at this moment (he may have been prepared), he evidently became one. It appears that Jesus was having trouble carrying His cross. ††† For Jews to say this, things would have to get REALLY BAD.

“Cover us!” †31 For if they do these things in the ‘green tree’, what will happen in the ‘dry?’”

32 There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. 33 When they arrived at the place called ‘The Skull’, they crucified Him there; also the criminals, one on His right, the other on His left.

34 Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”; † while they were dividing up His clothes by casting a lot. 35 Meanwhile the people stood looking on. And especially the rulers among them were sneering, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself, if such is the Christ, the chosen of God!” 36 Yes, even the soldiers mocked Him, approaching and offering Him sour wine, 37 and saying, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself!”

38 In fact, above Him there was a written notice, in Greek, Latin and Hebrew letters: ††

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. †

39 Then one of the hanged criminals started berating Him, saying, “If you are the Christ, save yourself and us!” ††40 But the other reacted and rebuked him, saying: “Don’t you even fear God, since you are under the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward for our deeds; but this man did nothing wrong.” 42 Then he said to Jesus, “Please remember me, Lord, † when you come in your kingdom.” ††43 Jesus said to him, “I tell you assuredly, today you will be with me in Paradise.” ††

Jesus dismisses His spirit

44 Now it was about the sixth hour, †† and darkness came upon the whole land until the ninth hour. 45 Yes, the sun was darkened; also, the veil of the temple was

§ See Hosea 10:8. † The eclectic text currently in vogue (following less than 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality) places within double brackets the first half of verse 34: “Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing’”. In this way they deny that Luke wrote it, surely a perverse proceeding. †† A mere handful (0.5%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “written in Greek, Latin and Hebrew letters” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). † The soldiers were just going along with the ‘game’; after all, His stated crime was that He was ‘the king of the Jews’. †† According to Matthew 27:44 and Mark 15:32, both of them started out by reviling Him, but later one of them repented—they were on the cross for about three hours before the supernatural darkness, so there was time to observe Jesus, which caused one of them to change his mind. † Instead of “to Jesus, ‘Please remember me, Lord’”, perhaps 3% of the manuscripts have ‘Jesus, remember me’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.), which seriously weakens the man’s statement. † I find this statement to be impressive: the man is declaring that Jesus is the Messiah and will indeed inaugurate His Kingdom. Evidently the man knew the Bible; and his request was honored! †† For Jesus to say ‘today’, He knew the man would die before sundown, so He knew the man’s legs would be broken—otherwise he would most likely have lasted well into the night, which would have been ‘tomorrow’. ‘Paradise’ here refers to that half of Hades (Sheol in the OT) reserved for the righteous dead. Hades is the ‘halfway house’ where departed spirits await the final judgment. In Luke 16:22 it is called “Abraham’s bosom”. †† Luke uses Jewish time, so it was about noon.

torn in two. ⁴⁶ Then, after giving a loud shout, Jesus said, "Father, it is into your hands that I will commit my spirit." And having said this, He breathed out His spirit. †

Various reactions

⁴⁷ Well upon seeing what had happened, the centurion glorified God, saying, "Certainly this man was righteous!" ††⁴⁸ And the whole crowd that had gathered for the spectacle, when they saw what actually happened, went away beating their breasts. †⁴⁹ But all His acquaintances, including the women who had followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Jesus' body is buried

⁵⁰ Now then, there was a man named Joseph, a good and righteous man, a Council member ⁵¹ (but he had not agreed with their counsel and action), from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was waiting for the Kingdom of God: ⁵² this man went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. ⁵³ Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock, where no one had ever been laid. ††⁵⁴ It was a Preparation day; the Sabbath was drawing near. ⁵⁵ The women who had come with Him from Galilee followed along, and they saw the tomb and how His body was placed there. ††⁵⁶ Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

† Both Matthew and John state overtly that Jesus dismissed His spirit. In John 10:17-18 He had declared that no one could kill Him, He would lay down His own life. The cross did not kill Jesus, as the centurion recognized (see the next note). †† Any centurion would be a hardened soldier, who had seen no end of crucifixions. He knew that a cross killed by asphyxiation. Hanging from the hands, with the arms stretched out, pushes the diaphragm against the lungs so you cannot breathe. Nailing the feet was a sadistic procedure to prolong the agony—even though painful, the victim would push up so he could get a breath, until finally too worn out to do so. Breaking the legs would put an end to that expedient, and the person died within a few minutes, asphyxiated. Someone who is dying asphyxiated does not shout. Since Jesus gave a loud shout, but then immediately died, the centurion knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that the cross had not killed Jesus (later, when Joseph asks for the body, Pilate is surprised that Jesus could already be dead). But who can just tell his spirit to leave? Putting two and two together, the centurion concluded that Jesus was a supernatural being. Just so! † This was a cultural expression of sorrow and distress. †† Obviously the tomb had been prepared beforehand, and was a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:9, "He made His grave...with the rich at His deaths [plural]". Nicodemus had already placed a hundred pounds of spices in the tomb, before helping Joseph remove and carry the body (John 19:39). †† That is, they saw where the body was taken, but did not see inside, and obviously did not know about the 100 pounds of spices.

Resurrection Day

"He is not here, but is risen!"

24 Then on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb carrying the spices they had prepared, along with some others. ††² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but upon entering they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that wow, two men stood by them in dazzling clothing! ⁵ Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the ground, they said to them: †† "Why do you seek the living One among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He told you while still in Galilee, ⁷ saying, 'The Son of the Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'" ⁸ And they remembered His words. ⁹

The women report

⁹ Then they returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the Eleven, and to all the rest. ††¹⁰ They were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them, who told these things to the apostles. ¹¹ But their words seemed to them like nonsense, and they disbelieved them. ††¹² (But Peter had gotten up and run to the tomb, and stooping down he saw the linen strips lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.) ††

The 'Emmaus' incident

¹³ And then that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, which was about seven miles †† from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they were conversing with each other about all that had happened. ¹⁵ And then, as they were conversing and discussing, Jesus Himself came up and started going with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were restrained, in order that they not recognize Him. ¹⁷ So He said to them, "What words are these that you are exchanging with one another as you walk, and are gloomy?" ††

††† A mere handful (0.5%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "along with some others" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ††† "They" is masculine and "them" is feminine. † These were the women who had been providing for Jesus for some time, and they doubtless heard much of His teaching, including this statement. †† There were more people in the upper room than just the Eleven. ††† They had already been 'burned', their hopes dashed, and were not in a hurry to be 'taken in' again. †† According to John's account, this had already happened earlier, so Luke gives it out of sequence. ††† Literally, 'sixty stadia'. †† Instead of "...walk, and are gloomy?" a mere handful (0.5%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have "...walk? And they stood gloomy." (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

¹⁸ Then the one whose name was Cleopas [†] answered and said to Him, “Are you the only one living in Jerusalem who doesn’t know the things that have happened there in these days?” ¹⁹ He said to them, “What things?” So they said to Him: “The things concerning Jesus the Natsorean, how the man was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how the chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. ²¹ And we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel! ^{††} Further, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. ²² Moreover certain women of our group astonished us—arriving early at the tomb, ²³ and not finding his body, they came saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. ²⁴ And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb [‡] and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see.”

²⁵ Then He said to them: “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the Prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it really not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?” ²⁷ And beginning from Moses, and then all the Prophets, He explained to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. ^{††}

²⁸ Then they approached the village where they were going, and He made as though He would keep going. ^{‡‡29} But they constrained Him, saying, “Stay with us, because it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.” So He went in to stay with them. ³⁰ And then, as He was reclining with them, He took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ^{‡‡31} Then their eyes were opened ^{‡‡‡} and they recognized Him; and He became invisible to them. ³² They said to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked to us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?” [§]

The two report

³³ So they got up forthwith and returned to Jerusalem, where they found the Eleven gathered together; also those with them, ³⁴ who said, “The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” ^{§†35} Then

[†] The other person is not identified, but presumably it could have been his wife. ^{††} They were looking for the Messianic Kingdom right then. [‡] Although in verse 12 above Luke mentions only Peter, Cleopas makes clear that more than one went, as is recorded in John 20:2-10. ^{††} He declares Himself to be the Messiah. I do wish that explanation had been recorded! ^{‡‡} And He would have, if they hadn’t restrained Him. ^{‡‡‡} He was a guest, but He took charge. ^{‡‡‡} They had been supernaturally hindered from recognizing Him, up to that point. [§] Don’t you know that was so! To this day, if Jesus talks to you, your heart burns. ^{§†} There were others in the room besides the Eleven, some near the door. So when the two burst in, all exited with their news, the others ‘prick their balloon’—“Oh, we already know about that”. Has human nature changed?

they described what happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Jesus appears to the Eleven

³⁶ As they were saying these things, indeed, Jesus ^{§††} Himself stood in their midst, and He said to them, “Peace to you.” ³⁷ But they, terrified, supposed they were seeing a ghost, and were becoming fearful. ³⁸ And He said to them: “Why are you troubled?” and “Why do doubts arise in your hearts?” ³⁹ Look at my hands and feet; it is I myself! Feel me and see; a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.” ⁴⁰ And saying this He showed them His hands and His feet. ⁴¹ But as they were still disbelieving and marveling, because of the joy, He said to them, “Do you have any food here?” ⁴² So they gave Him a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb. ^{§†43} And taking it He ate in their presence. ^{§††}

⁴⁴ Then He said to them, “These are the words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything that is written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me must be fulfilled.” ^{§†45} Then He opened their understanding so as to comprehend the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ And He said to them: “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary ^{§†} for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, ^{§§†} beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ Take note, I am sending the Promise of my Father upon you; but you must stay in the city of Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on High.” ^{§§†}

Jesus ascends to Heaven

⁵⁰ He led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up His hands He blessed them. ⁵¹ And it happened, as He was blessing them, that He left them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² Worshiping Him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy; ⁵³ and they were continually in the temple, ^{§§§} praising and ¹⁸ blessing God. Amen. ¹⁹

^{§††} A mere handful (0.5%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “Jesus” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{§‡} Less than 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “and some honeycomb” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{§††} It is easy to criticize them for being so slow to believe, but would we have done any better? Note that Christ’s glorified body, that could just pass through a wall, was palpable—it had flesh and bones (but perhaps not blood). The food that He ate presumably did not go through a normal process of digestion. ^{§†} The Lord recognizes the three divisions of the Old Testament. ^{§‡} A mere handful (0.5%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “and thus it was necessary” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{§§†} The Gospel is for all nations, and it must include REPENTANCE! ^{§§‡} “Until you are clothed with power from on High”—what are the implications of this for us today? Without God’s power, what difference can we make in this world? ^{§§§} Jesus had declared that God had abandoned that temple, so why did they still go there? It was a logical place to evangelize Jews, if that was their object. It was also the

largest meeting place in town, presumably. But subsequent events show clearly that they still regarded it as 'God's house', a special place for worshiping. I would say that this became a snare to them. 18 A mere handful (0.4%) of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "praising and" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). 19 Some 50% of the Greek manuscripts have a colophon that says, "published fifteen years after the ascension of Christ". For 50% of the MSS to have this information probably means that the tradition is ancient. If this information is correct, then Luke was

'published' in 45/46 AD. The same sources have Matthew published seven years earlier (38/39) and Mark five years earlier (40/41), while John was 'published' thirty-two years after the ascension, or 61/62 AD. Not only were the authors eyewitnesses of the events, but many others were still alive when the Gospels appeared. They could attest to the veracity of the accounts, but could also be the source of textual variants, adding tidbits here and there, or 'correcting' something that they remembered differently.

John

Prologue

1 In the beginning was the Word, [†] and the Word was with God, ^{††} and the Word was **God**. ^{‡2} He Himself existed in the beginning with God. ³ All things came to be by Him; that is, apart from Him not even one thing that has come into being came to be. ^{‡‡4} In Him was **LIFE**, and the Life was the Light of mankind. ^{‡‡‡5} Now the Light shines in the darkness, ^{‡‡‡} and the darkness has not overcome it. ^{‡‡‡}

[†] *In the beginning (of this world, or perhaps this universe) He already existed. But why the 'word'? If we take the word as the basic unit of verbal communication, and even representing that communication, then we have an important figure. Jehovah the Son in human form becomes the ultimate communication of God to the human race. †† The idea seems to be that He was face to face with God (the Father), in His presence. Actually, the Text has "the God"—since the Greeks had any number of gods, the New Testament writers usually refer to Jehovah as THE God. In verse 2 the Text also has "the God". ‡ The New World Translation (of the JWs) renders "a god". They defend their choice because the noun 'God' occurs without the definite article, and the absence of the article in Greek has the effect of the indefinite article in English—hence 'a god'. However, another frequent use of the absence of the definite article (in Greek) is to emphasize the quality inherent in the noun—in this case 'God*

^{‡‡} This passage, along with Hebrews 1:10 and Colossians 1:16, makes clear that although the Trinity was doubtless involved in the creation of this planet it was Jehovah the Son who was the primary agent. ^{‡‡} In what sense can 'the life' be 'the light'? In John 8:12 the Lord said, "I am the Light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in the darkness but will have the Light of the Life." Only as we participate in the Life that Christ offers do we have access to the Light. Without His Life we walk in the darkness. ^{‡‡†} The word here translated 'darkness', and another closely related word, are frequently used of both physical and moral/spiritual darkness. The latter is associated with Satan's kingdom, in fact characterizes it, while the light characterizes Christ's kingdom. Presumably the "darkness" here is moral/spiritual—Satan's kingdom. ^{‡‡‡} To this day: in Matthew 5:14 Jesus said to His disciples, "You are the light of the world"—as long as there are followers of Jesus here, there is moral/spiritual light in the world.

John—a witness to the Light

⁶ There was a man, sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ This man came as a witness to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the Light but was to testify about the Light— ⁹ the true Light which illumines everyone who comes into the world. ^{§10} He was in the world, the world that came into being by Him, yet the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own things, yet His own people did not receive Him. ¹² But, as many as did receive Him, ^{§†} to **THEM** He gave the right to become children of God, ^{§††} to those who believe into His name: ^{§†‡13} who were begotten, not by blood, nor by the desire of the flesh, nor by the will of a man, ^{§††} but by **GOD**. ^{§†}

Jesus—the Only-begotten

¹⁴ So the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we observed His glory, glory of an Only-begotten,

[§] *In what sense can we say that everyone is "illumined" since we are all born with an inclination to sin, and most people die lost? Perhaps the answer lies in Romans 1:19-20. One of the expressions of the Life is the material creation that surrounds us—everyone has the light of the creation; there must be an incredibly intelligent and powerful Cause, and since we are persons He must be more so. We also believe that each human being is born with a conscience. §† 'Receive', not 'accept'—if you 'accept' something it is inferior, or is offered by someone who is socially inferior; superior people or things are 'received'. If you merely 'accept Jesus' that Jesus can't save you; he is less than you are. §†† No one is born a child of God (God has no grandchildren); you may **BECOME** one by receiving Christ. Presumably 'receiving' is a conscious act. Each of my two children did this when four years old. §‡ Never does the Text read 'believe IN' (Greek εν) Jesus or His name; always it reads 'believe INTO' (Greek εις). People believe in Santa Claus, the Easter bunny, the goodness of man, or whatever, but it makes no difference in their lives. Many millions of people say they 'believe in Jesus', but it makes no difference in their lives either. You have to believe INTO Him—commitment and identification are involved, that go along with the change in location, from being outside to being inside. As Jesus Himself said in John 6:53-56, you have to "eat" His flesh and "drink" His blood. If you eat something your body assimilates it, it becomes part of you. §‡† "The will of a man" seems obvious enough—many, perhaps most, people are born because a man decides he wants children. "The desire of the flesh"—many others are born because a man and a woman are carried away by physical attraction, whether or not they are planning to have a child. "By blood"—the best sense I can make out of this is to assume that it refers to levirate marriage; a man fertilizes his brother's childless widow to produce an heir for that brother, precisely because of the BLOOD relationship between them. §† For a human being to be begotten physically a man must implant the seed of life, and to be begotten spiritually God must implant the seed of the Life.*

† from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ John testified about Him and called out saying: “THIS is He of whom I said, ‘The One coming after me is now ahead of me, because He existed before I did.’” ¹⁶ Now we have all received from His fullness, yes, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ Because the Law was given through Moses; †† the Grace and the Truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. The Only-begotten Son, †† who exists in the bosom of the Father, HE has interpreted Him. ††

John the Baptizer performs his office

¹⁹ Now this is John's testimony, when the Jews †† sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” ²⁰ He confessed, he did not deny but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” ††²¹ So they asked him, “What then, are you Elijah?” And he says, “I am not.” † “Are you ‘the Prophet?’” †† “No,” he answered. ²² So they said to him: “Who are you?—so that we may give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about

† Jesus was very literally God's 'only-begotten' Son. Since the Holy Spirit fertilized the virgin Mary, Jesus was literally begotten by God, but He is the only one in all human history who was begotten in that way. †† Why “because”? What does the Law have to do with verse 16? We are not accustomed to associate the Law with grace, but as a revelation from God to men would it not be a manifestation of His grace? Of course the Son of God incarnate was a much greater manifestation of that grace—“grace upon grace”. † “The life”, “the light”, “the grace”, “the truth”—these things the Lord Jesus Christ offers us. In contrast Satan offers death, darkness, hate and the lie. Hey, I don't know about you, but I'm with Jesus! †† Instead of “the only begotten son” (as in over 99.5% of the Greek manuscripts), some five manuscripts (of inferior quality, objectively so) have “an only begotten god”, while another two (also inferior) have “the only begotten god”. Since the absence of the definite article (in Greek) can have the effect of emphasizing the inherent quality of the noun, the second reading could be rendered “only begotten GOD”—this alternative has appealed to many evangelicals who see in it a strong affirmation of the deity of Christ. But if the God-part of the Christ was begotten in the womb of the virgin Mary, then He is not eternally preexistent; and in that event Christ could not be God the Son, one of the three persons of the Trinity. Notice the precision in Isaiah 9:6—“unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given.” Jehovah the Son was given, not born. Notice further that the context is about the Incarnation, not the Son's eternal preexistence. But in any case, why follow seven manuscripts of demonstrably inferior quality against 1,700 better ones? The original and therefore true reading is certainly “the only begotten Son”. †† Instead of “interpret” one could render ‘explain’, ‘describe’, ‘give a report about’... I connect this statement to verse 1—the WORD shows us who the Father really is. As Jesus said to Philip, “He who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). ††† John uses “the Jews” to refer to the religious leaders, the hierarchy. ††† “Christ” in Greek is a translation of the Hebrew “Messiah”. The people were looking for the Messiah. † Note that John declares that he is not Elijah. The point of their question relates to Malachi 4:5, where Elijah is the forerunner of the Messiah. But the context in Malachi is the second coming, not the first. John performed the function at the first coming that Elijah, literally, will perform at the second. John came “in the spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1:17—the angel Gabriel cites Malachi), but was not Elijah. †† “The Prophet” is presumably a reference to Deuteronomy 18:15—the Jews figured that this prophecy refers to the Messiah, and so do we.

yourself?” ²³ He said, “I am ‘the voice of one calling out: “Make the LORD's road straight in the wilderness,” just as the prophet Isaiah said.” ††

²⁴ Now those who had been sent were from the Pharisees. ²⁵ So they asked him saying, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor ‘the Prophet?’” ²⁶ John answered them saying: “I baptize with water, but among you stands One whom you do not know. ²⁷ He is the One coming after me who is now ahead of me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.” ²⁸ These things happened in Bithabara, †† across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

“Behold the Lamb of God!”

²⁹ The next day John sees Jesus coming toward him and says: “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ††³⁰ This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who is now ahead of me, because He existed before I did.’” ³¹ I did not know Him; but so that He should be revealed to Israel, that is why I came baptizing with water.”

³² And John testified saying: “I observed the Spirit coming down like a dove out of heaven, and He rested upon Him. ††³³ Now I did not know Him, †† but He who sent me to baptize with water, HE said to me, †† The

†† The reference is to Isaiah 40:3. Hebrew poetry, and prose, makes heavy use of parallel or synonymous statements. From the context in Isaiah it seems clear that “in the wilderness” goes with the verb “make straight”, not “call out”. But why a straight road in the wilderness? Any road facilitates the movement of people and goods, but a straight road through accidented terrain is a major asset. (Actually, Isaiah 40:3-4 describes the construction of a modern superhighway.) John was the voice, but it was the people who had to make the road. So how about us? Are we supposed to be making such a road, and if so, how? At the very least we should be proclaiming biblical values to the world by every available means. † Some 65% of the Greek manuscripts read “Bethany” instead of the familiar “Bethabara” (I follow the best line of transmission in reading ‘Bithabara’, with 25% of the Greek manuscripts, while ‘Bethabara’ has 10%), but in either case we do not know the precise location. HOWEVER, many Bible maps place ‘Bethabara’ near Jericho, on the west side of the river, but the Text states plainly that it was “across the Jordan” (=on the east side). A combination of such maps plus the true reading sets up an apparent contradiction or error in the text, which is actually in the map. †† A tremendous statement! The Sacrifice to end all blood sacrifices is now physically present in the world. †† John was six months older than Jesus, so he is affirming that Jesus had a prior existence. Since a mere man cannot have a prior existence, John is affirming Jesus' divinity. †† John does not record the baptism of Jesus, as such, but we know from the other Gospels that this incident took place at that baptism. Nor does John record Jesus' confrontation with Satan in the wilderness. In general, John does not repeat information available in the other Gospels. (John wrote after the other Gospels had been in circulation for well over a decade.) †† This is curious. John and Jesus were related, and their mothers were close, so it seems improbable that they would never have met as boys or youths. Perhaps John means as the Messiah—until His baptism Jesus gave no overt demonstration that He was the Messiah. (However, given the circumstances surrounding both Mary and Elizabeth, I suppose it is possible that the two boys never met.) †† Notice that the Baptizer affirms that God spoke to him directly, in audible or distinguishable words, which he

One upon whom you see the Spirit coming down and resting—this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’^{†34} So I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”^{††}

Jesus begins His public ministry

³⁵ Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples. ³⁶ And seeing Jesus walking by, he says, “Look, the Lamb of God!” ³⁷ The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸ So turning and observing them following [‡] Jesus says to them, “What do you want?” So they said to Him, “Rabbi” (which translated means ‘Teacher’), “where are You staying?” ³⁹ He says to them, “Come and see.” So they went and saw where He was staying, and stayed with Him that day—it was about the tenth hour. ^{††40} One of the two who heard John and followed Him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. ⁴¹ He first finds his own brother Simon and says to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated ‘Christ’). ⁴² And he led him to Jesus. Looking at him Jesus said, “You are Simon, the son of Jonah; ^{‡‡} you will be called Cephas” (which is translated ‘Stone’). ^{‡‡†}

quotes. God spoke like that 2000 years ago, and He continues to do so. † In John’s baptism, John is the agent; in Christ’s baptism, Jesus is the agent; the baptism where the Holy Spirit is the agent is distinct from these. In John’s baptism the substance used for the ritual was water; in Christ’s baptism the substance used is the Holy Spirit. In John’s baptism the person got wet but then dried off, so presumably the real point of the exercise was a spiritual transaction; how much more, then, in Christ’s baptism. I am inclined to link Christ’s baptism (He is the agent) with John 4:13-14 and 7:38-39. “Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I

^{††} That is what he said, “THE Son of God” (actually, ‘the Son of the God’), which here probably means that there is only one. John clearly identifies and presents the Messiah to the populace. He performed his office. [‡] Presumably Jesus waited for them to catch up, so He was observing them during that time. His purpose in passing by there was precisely to attract those two men (so I imagine), and He was doubtless aware when they started out after Him. ^{††} This is significant. John uses Roman time, so this is 10 a.m. Which means that Jesus spent most of the day with just those two men. You had better believe they were talking the whole time. Jesus knew they would be two of His disciples and was already investing in them—to such good effect that the next day they bring in two more. The Text does not clarify whether or not they spent the night as well. ^{‡‡} The Text says, “THE son of Jonah”. Since Peter obviously had at least one brother, he was not an only son. Perhaps we should understand that Peter was the firstborn. Perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts (of objectively inferior quality) read “John” for “Jonah” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{‡‡†} Cephas

Nathanael

⁴³ The next day He decided to go to Galilee, so He finds Philip ^{‡‡} and says to him, “Follow me.” ⁴⁴ (Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter.) ⁴⁵ Philip finds Nathanael and says to him, “We have found the One of whom Moses in the Law—and also the prophets—wrote: Jesus the son of Joseph, from Natsareth.” ^{§46} So Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of NATSARETH?” Philip says to him, “Come and see!” ^{§†}

⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him and says about him, “*THERE*, a genuine Israelite in whom there is no deceit!” ⁴⁸ Nathanael says to Him, “From where do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, while you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” ⁴⁹ In answer Nathanael says to Him: “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” ^{§††50} Jesus answered and said to him: “You believe because I said that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater than these.” ^{§†51} And He says to him, “I tell you (pl) most assuredly, later on you will see the heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of the Man.” ^{§††}

^{‡‡‡} I cannot prove it, but I suspect that Philip was the second man, of John’s disciples, who spent the day with Jesus. If so, it seems unlikely that he and Andrew spent the night with Jesus, because in that event Jesus would not have to “find” him. [§] The Hebrew spelling of the town’s name comes over into English as ‘Natsareth’, not ‘Nazareth’. This is crucial to a correct understanding of Matthew 2:23 (please see the note there). ^{§†} “Come and see.” “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” In the final analysis you have to decide for yourself. Check it out. ^{§††} Wow, that was a real switch—from disdainful doubt in verse 46 to faith and submission in verse 49. What caused the change? A mature fig tree’s branches reach to the ground and form a curtain—there is a clear space around the trunk that is cool and private [I have been there]. It was a great place to be alone with God. But for Jesus to see Nathanael there (there were probably hills in between as well) meant that He was supernatural. That statement convinced Nathanael that he was looking at the Messiah, and he immediately declared allegiance. Of the four Gospels, only John uses the name ‘Nathanael’, the others do not; they all use the name ‘Bartholomew’, while John never does. Since Nathanael was one of the apostles, evidently (John 21:2), we may conclude that we have two names for the same person. ^{§‡} The demonstrative pronoun is plural but ambiguous as to gender. Since I would expect the singular (presumably it was the single statement that caused Nathanael’s belief) the plural leaves me in doubt. Is it greater things or people, or both? ^{§††} So far as I know, we have no record of when this took place, but no doubt it did. Jesus addressed Nathanael in particular, “He says to HIM”, but used the plural, “ye”, about seeing the heaven opened. “The Son of the Man” appears to be a phrase coined by the Lord Jesus to refer to Himself; the Text does say “the son of the man”, which does not make very good sense in English, at first glance, but if “THE man” refers to pristine Adam and “THE son” to an only pristine descendant, it makes great sense. It seems to indicate a perfect human prototype, like Adam was before the fall—the human side of the God-man.

Water into wine

2 On the third day [†] a wedding took place in Cana of Galilee, and Jesus' mother was there. ² Now both Jesus and His disciples had been invited to the wedding. ^{††3} So when the wine had given out, Jesus' mother says to Him, "They don't have any wine!" ⁴ Jesus says to her: "What is that to you and me, woman? [‡] My time has not yet come." ^{††5} His mother says to the servants, "Do whatever He may tell you." ^{‡‡}

⁶ (Now there were six stone waterpots set there, according to the purification rites of the Jews, containing 20 or 30 gallons each.) ⁷ Jesus says to them, "Fill the pots with water." So they filled them to the brim. ^{†††8} So He says to them, "Now, draw some out and take it to the master of ceremonies." So they took it. ⁹ Well, when the master of ceremonies tasted the water ^{†††} that had become wine—he did not know where it came from, but the servants who had drawn the water knew—he calls the bridegroom ¹⁰ and says to him: "Everybody serves the good wine first, then, when people are intoxicated, the inferior. *YOU* have kept the good wine until now!"

[†] Counting from when? 1:19-28 happened on one day; 1:29-34 happened the next (2nd) day; 1:35-42 happened the next (3rd) day; 1:43-51 happened the next (4th) day. So the third day here must count from the last day mentioned (1:43-51), although it could (and in Jewish thought probably did) include it. The wedding started that day, but such weddings often lasted several days (and the wine would run out toward the end, if it did). Jesus and His disciples (four?) probably had about an 80-mile walk, 55 miles up the Jordan valley (relatively smooth and straight) and 25 of rougher terrain. Since they did all their traveling on foot, and were therefore used to it, they could easily make the distance in two days. ^{††} The disciples had been invited in their own right, before they were disciples. [‡] Jesus was not being disrespectful; this was a normal form of address. ^{††} I conclude from 1:43 that Jesus was at that wedding on purpose, and probably had an idea of what would happen. Perhaps He was testing His mother's faith, and maybe her determination. However, as He declares, He was not yet ready to really go public—He would do that in Jerusalem, as recorded in 2:13-25. He would start with a bang, right in the Temple! ^{††} Mary was evidently in a position to issue orders, which leads me to suspect that she was the mother of the bride, which would also explain why Jesus made a special effort to get there. From verse 12 below, it appears that the whole family was there. ^{†††} That was a lot of water! If it was toward the end of the festivity, there would presumably be a great deal of wine left over. Such excellent wine would bring a good price; perhaps Jesus chose this way to give the new couple a financial boost. ^{†††} Wine has color and smell, as well as flavor—I wonder at what point the water took on those characteristics. Perhaps it was only as the servant handed the goblet to the master, so that the servants had drawn and carried 'water'; they obeyed what seemed to them to be a strange order.

¹¹ This, the first of the miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee and revealed His glory; [§] and His disciples believed into Him.

¹² After this He went down to Capernaum—He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples—but they did not stay there many days. ^{§†}

The first cleansing of the Temple—Passover, 27 AD

¹³ Now the Jewish Passover was near, so Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And in the Temple He found people selling oxen and sheep and doves, also the money-changers at work. ¹⁵ When He had made a scourge out of cords, He drove all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen; ^{§††} and as for the moneychangers, He overturned the tables and scattered the coins.

¹⁶ And to the dove-sellers He said: "Get these things out of here! Stop turning my Father's House into a marketplace!" ¹⁷ Then His disciples remembered that it stands written, "Zeal for Your House consumes me." ^{§†}

¹⁸ So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do you show us, since you do these things?" ^{§††19} Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, ^{§†} and in three days I will raise it." ^{§†20} So the Jews said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and *YOU* will raise it in three days?!" ²¹ But He was speaking about

[§] Jesus "revealed His glory". In what sense? As Jehovah the Son He was the Creator of this world. Transforming water into wine was an act of creation. The chemical components that distinguish wine from water had to be created on the spot, and mixed with the water. This "first miraculous sign" was simply tremendous—it revealed Jesus as Creator. However, although presumably all the guests drank of this new wine, being tipsy they may not have realized what went on. Only the disciples, the servants, and of course Mary, knew what had really happened. Apparently this miracle was not broadcast at that time—like Jesus said, not yet. (Neither Matthew, Mark nor Luke were there, but John, the author of this Gospel, probably was; in which case we have an eyewitness account [John and James were partners with Peter and Andrew; so since Peter and Andrew were invited they probably were too].) ^{§†} The next verse tells us that the Passover was near. The Passover was one (probably the most important) of the three festivals during the year when every God-fearing male had to present himself at the temple in Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 16:16). Often the whole family would go, so perhaps the whole group mentioned in verse 12 went on to Jerusalem. Jesus had just come up from Judea, only to turn around and go back, which gives us some indication of the importance of the wedding in Cana. That Joseph is not mentioned at all leads one to suspect that he had died by now. ^{§††} The impression I get is that it was mainly the animals that He drove, not the people; in the next verse He commands the dove-sellers to remove them, presumably still in the cages. ^{§‡} See Psalm 69:9. ^{§††} The commerce going on in the Temple was crooked, and was under the direction of the religious leaders. What Jesus did was an affront, a direct challenge to their authority. He got their attention! From this moment on they knew about Jesus! What He did was so unexpected, so outrageous, that the Jews did not know how to react. Maybe some were just a little afraid He might be the Messiah. (And just maybe a few of them had been there 18 years before and listened to a certain twelve-year-old Boy.) ^{§†} The Lord gives an unexpected meaning to "this temple", metaphoric, but this prophecy was literally fulfilled. ^{§‡} Since Jesus was referring to His own body, once He was dead how could He do this? His spirit did not die, and at the right moment returned to the body and raised it, uniting with it once again (and in so doing He glorified it).

the temple of His body. ²² Therefore, when He was raised from among the dead His disciples remembered that He had said this; so they believed the Scripture, even the word that Jesus had spoken. [†]

²³ Now while He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed into His name, observing the signs that He was doing. ^{††24} But as for Jesus Himself, He did not entrust Himself to them, [‡] because HE knew all men²⁵ and that He had no need that anyone should testify about man, because He Himself knew what was in man. ^{‡‡}

Jesus and Nicodemus

3 Now there was a man among the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ² The same went to Jesus at night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that you have come as a teacher from God, because no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” ³ Jesus answered and said to him, ^{‡‡} “Most assuredly I say to you, unless someone is begotten from Above, ^{‡‡‡} he is not able to see ^{‡‡‡} the kingdom of God.” ⁴ Nicodemus says to Him: “How can a man be begotten, being old? He can’t enter his mother’s womb a second time and be born, can he?” ⁵ Jesus answered: “Most assuredly I say to you, unless someone is begotten by water [§] and Spirit he is not able to ENTER the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which has been begotten by the flesh is flesh, and that which has been begotten by the Spirit is spirit. ^{§†7} Do not be perplexed that I said

[†] Note that my rendering, “They believed the Scripture, even the word that Jesus had spoken”, has the effect of equating His word with Scripture. More precisely, the Lord’s statement in verse 19 was repeated as an accusation three years later, as recorded in Matthew 26:61 and 27:40, and Matthew’s Gospel had already been circulating as Scripture for decades when John wrote. If this line of reasoning is correct, then John is calling Matthew ‘Scripture!’ (Of course there was an interval of a number of years (eight) between the resurrection and the publishing of Matthew’s Gospel, but perhaps some did not ‘remember’ until they saw it written down.) I am not aware of any OT prophecy that could be in view here. ^{††} I take it that it was at this point that the Lord really began to heal on a large scale. He forced the religious leaders to take notice of Him in more ways than one. Nicodemus refers to these signs. [‡] I would suggest that our Lord offers us an important example here: He did not entrust Himself to just anybody, even believers. He will command His followers to keep on forgiving those who sin against them, especially ‘brothers’. To forgive does not equal to trust! ^{‡†} As Creator He would indeed know what was in man. ^{‡‡} He does not waste time with the compliment, although it was true enough, but goes directly to a serious theological question. ^{‡‡†} The basic meaning of the Greek word here, ἀνωθεν, is ‘from up/above’. A lot of people who say that they have been ‘born again’ have never been begotten from Above. ‘Begotten’ refers to the cause; ‘born’ refers to the result—I take it that the Lord is talking about the cause. ^{‡‡‡} Is ‘see’ just a synonym for ‘enter’ in verse 5 below, or is a difference intended? [§] Why ‘water’? Some have understood this to refer to water baptism, but it seems more likely to me that it refers to the Word (see Ephesians 5:26, John 15:3, John 17:17). As it says in Romans 10:17, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” ^{§†} In 1:13 it is “begotten by God”, here “begotten by the Spirit”, in 3:3 and 7 “begotten from Above”—I take it that the expressions are synonymous. Without God’s direct participation no one is saved.

to you, ‘You (pl) need to be begotten from Above.’

⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you (sg) hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who has been begotten by the Spirit.” ^{§††}

⁹ Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?” ^{§†10} Jesus answered and said to Him: “You are THE teacher of Israel, ^{§††} yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹ Most assuredly I say to you, we speak what we know and testify to what we ^{§†} have seen, but you (pl) do not receive our testimony. ^{§†12} If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I should tell you the heavenly? ¹³ No one has gone up into Heaven except the One who came down out of Heaven—the Son of the Man, who is in Heaven. ^{§†14} Also, just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, ^{§††} just so the Son of the Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ so that everyone who believes into Him should not be wasted, ^{§§§} but should have eter-

^{§††} Notice that the Lord is saying here that it is *we*

^{§‡} His philosophical orientation was based on keeping the Law, on human responsibility. Jesus introduces the divine factor, declaring it to be indispensable. ^{§††} The Lord used the definite article with ‘teacher’, which I understand to mean that Nicodemus was the number one teacher at that time. ^{§†} Why “we”? Jesus begins the verse with “I” and begins verse 12 with “I”; so to whom does the “we” refer? Is it the ‘plural of majesty’, as some say? Perhaps He is including one or both of the other members of the Trinity—actually, it is probably the Father; see John 12:49-50. (This is early in His public ministry and He does not yet have a recognized group of disciples traveling with Him.) ^{§‡} He had doubtless been teaching, as well as performing miracles, during those days. ^{§§†} About 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “who is in Heaven” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). Presumably those copyists could not figure out how Jesus could be on earth and in Heaven at the same time, so they altered the Text. But let us stop and think about what this verse says—Jehovah the Son came down out of Heaven all right, but when did He go up? If “the Angel of Jehovah” in the OT was Jehovah the Son, as I believe, then He had been back and forth many times. In John 5:19 Jesus said that He could only do what He saw the Father do—so when and how could Jesus see the Father? Even though Jehovah the Son was in the human body of Jesus Christ, evidently there was some sense in which He was also in Heaven; He existed there. Well, that is what John 1:18 says, “who exists in the bosom of the Father.” ^{§§‡} See Numbers 21:8-9. Once bitten, the only way to avoid an early death was to look at the bronze snake. Similarly, the only way to avoid wasting your life is to believe into Jesus. ^{§§§} Less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit “should not be wasted but” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The phrase is repeated in verse 16, but this is a conversation between two Jews and it is standard Hebrew procedure to repeat things. But why do I render “be wasted” instead of “perish”? Well, what do you think “perish” means? It cannot mean ‘to die’, because Christians die. It cannot mean ‘to suffer’, because Christians suffer, etc. Although the Greek verb here, ἀπολλύμι, is used in contexts of decay, loss, ruin, destruction, death, I take it that the core idea is ‘waste’—the potential of a person or thing is wasted, does not come to fruition. The potential that your life represents, the reason why you exist, can only be realized if you believe into Jesus—otherwise you will be wasted.

nal life. ¹⁶ Because God loved the world so much that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes into Him should not be wasted, but should have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world in order to condemn the world, ^{††} but so that the world might be saved through Him. ¹⁸ The one believing into Him is not condemned, but the one not believing has already been condemned, [‡] because he has not believed into the name ^{††} of the only begotten Son of God.

¹⁹ “Now this is the *basis* for the condemning, that the Light has come into the world, ^{††} but the people loved the darkness rather than the Light, because their deeds were malignant. ²⁰ For whoever practices evil hates the Light and does not come to the Light, so that his deeds may not be exposed. ^{†††21} But whoever does the truth comes to the Light so that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they are done in God.”

John the Baptizer testifies again

²² After these things Jesus, with His disciples, went into the Judean countryside, and there He spent time with them ^{†††} and baptized. ²³ Now John also was baptizing in Aenon, near Salem, because there was plenty of water there. [§] And *people* were coming and being baptized; ²⁴ for John had not yet been thrown into prison.

²⁵ Then some of John's disciples had an argument with a Judean about purification. ²⁶ So they came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, the One who was with you across the Jordan, about whom you have testified—well, here He is baptizing, and everyone is flocking to Him!” ^{§†27} John answered and said: “A person can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from

[†] The opposite of ‘eternal life’ is not ‘non-eternal life’, it is ‘eternal death’. But ‘death’ does not mean ‘cease to exist’—the human spirit, the image of the Creator, is immortal, it exists forever. There are but two destinies for the human being—unending life or unending death. The central idea in ‘death’ is separation; physical death means the spirit is separated from the body; spiritual death means the spirit is separated from the Creator, forever. The essence of ‘life’ is to be in communion with the Creator, so we can start enjoying our eternal life right here, right now. ^{††} The world was already condemned; the Son came to offer a way out. [‡] Since we are sinners by inclination and by choice, we are already under condemnation; the only way out is to believe into the Lord Jesus. ^{††} “Believe into the name” = “believe into Him”; a person's name represents that person.

^{††} The light makes itself available, comes into our area, announces the address, but we must take the initiative to go to that light. ^{†††} In John 7:7 Jesus said, “The world cannot hate you, but does hate me, because I testify about it that its works are malignant”, and in 8:12 He said, “I am the Light of the world”. Those who love darkness generally hate Jesus. ^{†††} Again, He was investing in those men (not yet the full twelve). [§] To this day there is plenty of water in the Ajalon valley, some 15-20 miles WNW of Jerusalem (Salem is an ancient name for Jerusalem; see Genesis 14:18 and Hebrews 7:1)—perhaps that is where it was. I take it that Jesus and John were in the same area, at this point. ^{§†} I imagine that the ‘argument’ mentioned in verse 25 had to do with the efficacy of the two baptisms.

Heaven. ^{§††28} You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent ahead of Him.’

²⁹ He who has the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands by and hears him, has great joy at the bridegroom's voice. So this my joy has been fulfilled. ³⁰ He must increase, but I must decrease. ^{§†}

³¹ “He who comes from Above is above all; he who is from the earth is earthly, and speaks of the earth. He who comes from Heaven ^{§††} is above all. ³² And to what He has seen and heard He testifies, yet no one receives His testimony. ^{§†33} The one who receives His testimony certifies that God is true. ³⁴ For He whom God sent speaks God's words, because God does not give the Spirit by measure. ^{§†35} The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. ^{§†36} The one believing into the Son has eternal life, but the one disobeying ^{§††} the Son will not see the Life, but the wrath of God will remain upon him.” ^{§§§}

Jesus and the Samaritans

4 Now when Jesus ¹⁸ knew that the Pharisees ¹⁹ had heard, “Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John” ² (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples), ³ He left Judea and went away into Galilee. ²⁰

⁴ Now He needed to go through Samaria; ²¹⁵ so He comes to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ²²⁶ Now Ja-

^{§††} John states a basic truth, which is why it is not good to boast (1 Corinthians 4:7). ^{§†} Now there we have an excellent example to follow; all of us should have the same attitude—“He must increase, but I must decrease”. ^{§††} “From Above” = “from Heaven”. John is talking about Jesus. ^{§†} So where did Jesus do this ‘seeing’ and ‘hearing’? In Heaven. ^{§†} The Text does not have “to Him”, but in the context that is presumably to be understood. To the Son the Father gave the Spirit in full measure, but not to us—at least not in the same sense. ^{§§†} John obviously had a pretty good understanding of who Jesus was. ^{§§†} The Text has “disobeying”, not ‘disbelieving’. ‘Believing into’ has to do with commitment, with identification, with relationship. If you enter into a relationship with the Sovereign of the Universe, He is the Boss

^{§§§} There are differing opinions about where the Baptizer's speech ends—the rest would then be a commentary by the author, John. The verbs in the present tense in verse 32 tip the decision in favor of the Baptizer—John would have had to use a past tense. I take it that the Baptizer's speech goes through verse 35, at least. Verse 36 could be an editorial comment by John, but I see no reason in the Text for taking the verse away from the Baptizer. Notice the verb ‘will remain’; the only way out is to obey the Son. (Perhaps 50% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘remains’, instead of “will remain”, which does not change the impact of the statement.) ¹⁸ I follow the best line of transmission in reading “Jesus”, rather than ‘the Lord’, albeit with only 21.7% of the Greek manuscripts. ¹⁹ The ‘Judean’ in 3:25-26 was probably a Pharisee. ²⁰ This was a tactical withdrawal. I take it that Matthew 4:12 refers to the same withdrawal. Between John 3:36 and 4:1 the Baptizer was imprisoned. If the Pharisees knew something it would not be long before Herod knew it. It was not part of the Plan for Jesus to have to deal with Herod at this juncture. ²¹ He could have gone up the coast and avoided most of the mountains, but He “needed” to go through Samaria.

cob's well was there; so Jesus, being worn out from the journey, sat as He was by the well. It was about 6 p.m.

†

The woman

⁷ A woman of Samaria comes to draw water. Jesus says to her, "Give me a drink."⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)⁹ So the Samaritan woman says to Him, "How can *you*, being a Jew, ask a drink from *ME*, being a Samaritan woman?" (for Jews do not associate with Samaritans).¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to her: "If you knew the gift of God, and who is the one saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."¹¹ The woman says to Him: "Sir, you don't even have a bucket, and the well is deep; so where do you get this living water?"¹² You aren't greater than our father Jacob, are you? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock."¹³ Jesus answered and said to her: "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again,¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never ever thirst; ^{††} rather, the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water, welling up into eternal life."¹⁵ The woman says to Him, "Sir, give me this water! so that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

¹⁶ Jesus says to her, "Go, call your husband and come back here."¹⁷ The woman answered and said, "I don't have a husband." Jesus says to her: "You stated correctly that you do not have a *HUSBAND*,¹⁸ because you have had five husbands, and the one you have *NOW* is no husband of yours. You spoke the truth there!"

^{††19} The woman says to Him: "Sir, I perceive that you

Probably because the Father told Him to—it was harvest time in Sychar. ²² See Joshua 24:32. † Since John elsewhere always uses Roman time, I assume that he does so here as well. The Text has "the sixth hour". Many versions put "noon", which reflects Jewish time. But the Text says Jesus was worn out, which agrees better with a full day's walk than with a half day's walk. The distance between Salem and Sychar was probably about 35 miles, as the crow flies, but since the whole distance was over accidented terrain, the walking distance would be a good deal more. They had walked some 50 miles in twelve hours. Like the Text says, He was tired! And He was hot and thirsty. John emphasizes that as a human being He felt the full effects of the day. †† Here again the Lord gives a double meaning to a word—in verse 13 He uses "thirst" in a physical sense, but in verse 14 the sense has to be spiritual, since Jesus Himself experienced physical thirst. In verse 15 the woman sees only the physical sense. I personally do not find the spiritual meaning to be transparent. I have been serving the Lord for many years, but still experience spiritual thirst. I have to keep drinking. However, the 'water' being the Holy Spirit, any thirst will not be for lack of 'water'. ‡ That is what the Text says, "into eternal life". Eternal life is a quality of life, more precisely a life in communion with the Father. The picture is not necessarily of a geyser, water spouting up, but there has to be a constant flow. As our capacity increases the flow should also increase. Of course the water must be shared with others, or we become stagnant. †† Dear me! Would you say that Jesus was making a special effort not to hurt her feelings? But He knew what He was doing, as verse 29 makes clear. So how about us? Are we prepared to hurt people's feelings?

are a prophet.²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, while you (pl) say that the place where one must worship is in Jerusalem."²¹ Jesus says to her: "Woman, believe me, a time is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.²² You [Samaritans] worship what you do not know; we [Jews] worship what we do know, because the salvation is from the Jews. ^{‡‡23} But the time is coming, in fact now is, when the genuine worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. Really, because the Father is looking for *such* people to worship Him. ^{‡‡24} God is *SPIRIT*, ^{‡‡‡} and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

²⁵ The woman says to Him: "I know that Messiah is coming (who is called Christ). When *HE* comes He will explain everything to us."²⁶ Jesus says to her, "I am He, the one who is talking with you!"⁵

The disciples

²⁷ At that point His disciples arrived, and they were amazed that He was talking with a woman; yet no one said, "What do you want?"^{5†} or "Why are You talking with her?"²⁸ So the woman left her water jar, ^{5††} went her way into the town, and says to the men: ²⁹ "Come see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could

^{‡‡} Quite so. *The Lamb of God is a Jew, and the Old Testament canon came through the Jewish people (see Romans 3:2). For that matter, most (if not all—Luke [?]) of the New Testament was written by Jews as well. ‡‡† The Father "is looking" for those who will worship Him in spirit and truth. It may be that we have here a window on the reason why God created a race such as ours—persons in His image with the capacity to CHOOSE. God "is looking" for something, which means He does not have it, at least not automatically, nor in sufficient quantity. I take it that He wants to be appreciated for who He is, but to have meaning such appreciation cannot come from robots—it has to be voluntary. So He created a type of being with that capacity, but He had to take the risk that such a being would choose not to appreciate Him. Unfortunately, most human beings make the negative choice, and with that negative choice come all sorts of negative consequences. Ever since Adam humans are born with an inclination toward sin, so for someone to choose to appreciate God is definitely not automatic, nor even easy. No one can reasonably accuse God of having 'stacked the deck' in His own favor, of 'buying votes'—He seems to have done just the opposite. If a human being, against his natural inclination, chooses to appreciate God, then He receives what He is looking for. "In spirit and truth" presumably means that it cannot be faked, cannot be forced, cannot be merely physical, cannot be merely emotional (though both body and emotions can, and often will, be utilized). ‡‡‡ Again the lack of the definite article presents us with an ambiguity; the rendering 'a spirit' is possible. But as I indicate by the underlining, I understand that the quality inherent in the noun is being emphasized. § As recorded in the four Gospels, this is the first time Jesus declares bluntly that He is the Messiah, and He does it to a woman, and a Samaritan one at that! That woman had had her ups and downs, but was no dummy; that the people of the town listened to her indicates that she had influence. Jesus knew what He was doing. 5† A number of versions capitalize the 'You', as if the question would have been directed to Jesus, but it seems more likely to me that this first question would have been to the woman. 5†† That was nice of her; they could get water while she was gone. (It was also a clear indication that she intended to return.)*

this be the Messiah?"³⁰ So out they went from the town and started toward Him.

³¹ Now in the meantime the disciples were urging Him saying, "Rabbi, eat."³² But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about."³³ So the disciples started saying to one another, "Could someone have brought Him *something* to eat?"³⁴ Jesus says to them: "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to complete His work."³⁵ Do you not say, 'There are four months before the harvest comes?' Well I say, Look! Lift your eyes and observe the fields; they are white for harvest already!³⁶ Now he who reaps receives pay and gathers fruit into eternal life,[†] so that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.³⁷ Now the saying, 'One is the sower and another the reaper,' is true in this:³⁸ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labors."[‡]

The Samaritans

³⁹ Now many of the Samaritans from that city believed into Him because of the word of the woman, testifying that "He told me everything I ever did!"⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to Him they urged Him to stay with them; and He did stay there two days.

⁴¹ Many more believed through His own word,⁴² and they kept saying to the woman, "It is not just because of what you said that we believe, because we ourselves have heard *Him*,[‡] and we know that this One is truly the Messiah,[‡] the Savior of the world!"^{‡‡}

Jesus in Galilee

⁴³ So after the two days He departed from there and went on into Galilee.⁴⁴ (For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet does not have honor in his own country.)^{‡‡‡45} So when He came into Galilee the Galileans welcomed Him, having seen all the things that He did in

† The Lord was totally committed to the Father's will and game plan; His daily life revolved around it (it was His 'food'). In His excitement at seeing the plan for Sychar unfold He forgot His physical hunger. †† That is what the Text says, "into eternal life". Surely, Jesus is talking about harvesting souls, gathering them into the Kingdom—when someone is born from Above everyone who participated in the process is glad. ‡ "I sent you to reap" must refer to activity in the past, so I take it that the Lord is stating a general principle. ‡† As the italics indicate, "Him" is not in the Text; perhaps the addition confuses the picture. What do you suppose the disciples were doing during those two days? I bet the Samaritans were eager to hear all that they could about Jesus, what He had said and done—they kept the disciples busy! ‡‡ About 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "the Messiah" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡‡† All right! They got the message! ‡‡‡ I believe that the episode recorded in Luke 4:16-30 took place between verses 43 and 45 here, and verse 44 is an echo of Luke 4:24. From Sychar Jesus went directly to Natsareth, was rejected there, and proceeded to Cana. Verse 45 is a summary statement, after the fact. [Of course He was born in Bethlehem, Judea, but I doubt that He is referring to it as 'his own country'.]

Jerusalem, at the festival; for they too had gone to the festival.

Jesus heals at a distance

⁴⁶ So Jesus went again to Cana of Galilee,[§] where He made the water wine. Now there was a certain royal official whose son was sick in Capernaum.⁴⁷ When this man heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son,^{§†} for he was about to die.⁴⁸ So Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders you will not believe!"^{§††49} The official says to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!"⁵⁰ Jesus says to him, "Go; your son lives." Well the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and off he went.⁵¹ Now while he was still going down his slaves met him and reported saying, "Your son lives!"⁵² So he inquired of them the hour in which he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him."^{§‡53} So the father knew that it was at the exact hour in which Jesus told him, "Your son lives." Both he himself and his whole household believed.⁵⁴ Again, coming out of Judea into Galilee, Jesus performed this second miraculous sign.^{§††}

Jesus returns to Jerusalem—Passover, 28 AD

5 After these things there was the ^{§†} feast of the Jews, so Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

The pool of Bethesda

² Now in Jerusalem, by the Sheep Gate, there is a pool called Bethesda,^{§‡} in Hebrew, which has five

§ I suspect that He had a brother-in-law living there. §† The man was asking Jesus to make an emergency hike of some 25 miles (unless he was mounted and had brought an extra horse for Jesus; but He probably wasn't used to riding). Evidently he figured that the healer had to be physically present. §†† Again, Jesus is not exactly 'polite'. §‡ It is virtually certain that the official and his slaves used Roman time, in which case the cure took place at 7 p.m. It could not be 7 a.m. because the man would have met his slaves before noon and they would have said 'today', not 'yesterday' (verse 52). It could not be Jewish time for a similar reason—if Jesus healed at 1 p.m. the man would have met his slaves before sundown and they would have said 'today'. The man probably walked (unless he was mounted, but at night the horse would be held to a walk) during at least part of the night; the slaves would have started out at dawn; they probably met at a point much closer to Capernaum than to Cana. §‡† That is, He healed at a distance, just by His thought. Curiously, He was in Cana for both of them. §† The manuscript evidence is badly divided here, between 'THE feast' and 'A feast'—I take it that the best evidence is on the side of the definite article. In that event the feast was the Passover (with the other alternative it could still be the Passover), the second during Christ's public ministry; one and a half years are behind Him and there are two to go. For events between the first two Passovers see Mark 1:14-2:17, Luke 4:14-5:39 and Matthew 4:12-8:4. §‡ Fully 99% of the Greek manuscripts read the familiar 'Bethesda', and this name is attested by the 1st century Copper Scroll from Qumran. The so-called 'critical text' (UBS and N-A) serves up the pitiful 'Bethzatha', following just five Greek manuscripts (as in TEV, RSV, Jer., etc.). The UBS editors have introduced an

porches. ^{†3} In them a large number of sick people were lying—blind, lame, paralyzed—waiting for the moving of the water; ⁴ because an angel would go down from time to time into the pool and stir up the water ^{††}—then the first one to get in after the stirring of the water became well of whatever disease that was holding him. [‡]

The man selected for healing

⁵ Now there was a certain man there who had been sick for 38 years. ^{††6} Seeing this man lying there and knowing that he had already been sick a long time, Jesus says to him, “Do you want to get well?” ⁷ The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to throw ^{††} me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming another gets in before me.” ⁸ Jesus says to him, “Get up, pick up your pallet and walk!” ⁹ Immediately the man became well and picked up his pallet and started to walk! ¹⁰ But that day was a Sabbath, so the Jews said to the one who had been healed: “It’s the Sabbath! You aren’t allowed to carry the pallet.” ¹¹ He answered them: “The one who made me well—*HE* said to me, ‘Pick up your pallet and walk.’” ¹² So they asked him, “*WHO* is the man who said to you, ‘Pick up your pallet and walk?’” ¹³ But the man who was cured did not know who it was, because Jesus had disappeared, there being a crowd in the place. ^{†††}

historical error into their text on the flimsiest of evidence, even going against their favorites, ◇75 and B. † The pool is a rectangle (it is still there), so it has four sides—so where was the fifth porch? Across the middle, dividing the pool into two smaller ones. Instead of ‘porch’ one could use ‘portico’, ‘cloister’, ‘colonnade’—a COVERED walkway. †† The angel, whether good or bad, would presumably be invisible to the people, so this information must have been revealed to John. ‡ About 0.8% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit the last clause of verse 3 and all of verse 4 (as in NIV, NASB, LB, [TEV], etc.). But obviously all those people would not stay there (in discomfort) day in and day out, year in and year out, if nothing was happening. Obviously people got healed (from serious diseases), and verse 7 makes clear that it had to do with the stirring of the water—so why didn’t those manuscripts omit verse 7 as well? The UBS editions do us a considerable disservice by following a very small minority of manuscripts (perhaps 2%) and making the angel ‘of the Lord’. Since angels can be good or fallen, it seems most likely to me that the angel involved was fallen. A capricious, occasional healing condemned all those people to added suffering (being at the pool instead of the comfort of home), including the frustration and despair of those who never made it (like the man Jesus healed). A sadistic procedure is just like Satan. †† Wow!

†† That is right, “throw”. Hey, where a split second could make the difference no one is going to stand on ceremony—when the water started to move there would be a mad scramble; people would be thrown at the water, literally. (The demons would really enjoy themselves, seeing ‘the image of God’ humiliated in that way.) ††† Let’s stop and think about what Jesus did here. There were probably hundreds of sick people there—why did He only heal one

¹⁴ After these things Jesus found him in the temple and said to him: “See, you are well. Don’t sin any more, so that something worse doesn’t happen to you.”

^{†††15} The man went off and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

The Jews want to kill Jesus

¹⁶ So because of this the Jews began persecuting Jesus and trying to kill Him, [§] because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. ^{§†17} But Jesus answered them, “Until now, my Father works, I also work.” ^{§††18} So because of this they wanted to kill Him all the more, because He was not only breaking the Sabbath but was even saying that God was His own Father, making Himself equal with God!

Jesus addresses the Jews

He affirms His equality with the Father

¹⁹ Then Jesus answered and said to them: “Most assuredly I say to you, the Son is not able to do anything from Himself, except something He sees the Father doing; because whatever things *HE* does, precisely these the Son also does. ^{§†20} For the Father loves ^{§††} the Son and shows Him everything that He Himself is doing; and He will show Him *GREATER* works than these, so that you may marvel. ²¹ Now just as the Father raises the dead and gives life, just so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. ²² In fact the Father does not judge anyone but has committed all the judging to the Son, ^{§†23} so that all will honor the Son just as they honor the Father. [§] Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. ^{§§†}

††† The Lord seems to be implying that the former sickness was the result of sin. But he had been sick for 38 years, so he had paid a heavy price!

§ Less than 3% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit “and trying to kill Him” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §† The last recorded events before John 5:1 are in Luke 5:12-39. The healing of the paralytic had impressed the Jews, but then Jesus immediately went and ate with publicans; and verses 36-39 were against what the Jews represented. Here in John Jesus challenges their authority over the Sabbath. §†† Not only does Jesus not run and hide, He ‘ups the ante’—He claims to be God, as the Jews understood perfectly well (and which in their mind called for the death penalty, since they were not prepared to acknowledge that claim). §‡ I find this statement to be amazing, revealing and challenging. Jesus only did what He saw the Father doing; so how about us? I would say that my main ‘ministry’ problem is that I often don’t know what the Father is doing, and so I waste a lot of time and effort. §†† To my surprise the verb here is φημι, not αραταω—the Father is emotionally attached to the Son. Well, since we have emotions God must have had them first. God affirms that He has soul (Isaiah 42:1, Matthew 12:18, Hebrews 10:38). §† I suppose this means that it will be the Son who sits on the ‘great white throne’ (Revelation 20:11). §‡ Of course someone who does not honor the Father will not honor the Son either. §§† I take it that the Lord Jesus is saying that monothe-

The Son is the just Judge

²⁴ “Most assuredly I say to you that the one listening [†] to my word and believing on Him who sent me has eternal life; he will not go into judging but has moved out of the death into the Life. ^{††}

²⁵ “Most assuredly I say to you that a time is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of *THE* God, and those who listen will live. ^{‡26} Because just as the Father has life in Himself, just so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; ^{‡7} furthermore He gave Him the authority to pass judgment, because He is Son of Man. ^{‡28} Do not marvel at this, because a time is coming in which all those in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹ and will come out—those who did good things into the resurrection of life, ^{‡‡} but those who practiced evil things into the resurrection of condemnation. ³⁰ I am not able to do anything from myself. As I hear, I judge, and my judging is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the Father who sent me.

Four witnesses to Jesus

³¹ “If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid. ^{‡‡32} There is another who testifies about me, and I know that the testimony that He gives about me is true. ^{‡‡33} You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. ³⁴ Yet I do not accept the testimony from a man; but I say these things so that you may be saved. ^{§35} That man was a burning, shining lamp, and for a

*istic people (Jews, Muslims) who claim to honor the Father, but do not honor the Son, are not really doing so. (Perhaps that would not apply to those who have never heard about Jesus.) † Most versions render ‘hear’ instead of ‘listen’, both here and in the next verse, but from the context it seems clear that Jesus is not talking about sound striking the eardrum; He is talking about acting on the basis of what is heard. †† “The death” refers to Satan’s kingdom; “the life” refers to Christ’s kingdom (and they are the only alternatives in this world). ‡ It seems clear that the picture here is different from that in verses 28-29. Here Jesus says “now is”, so He is not talking about future judgment; so the dead here are spiritually dead, and those who listen to Him receive spiritual life. In verse 28 the reference is to the physically dead, who are raised to face the final judgment. ‡† We as human beings will be judged by another human being, someone who knows what it’s like. There is no definite article with either “Son” or “Man”, so this is not the title He normally used. ‡‡ Notice again the emphasis on *DOING*, because what you do reflects what you *really**

^{‡‡†} According to the Law at least two witnesses were required, so if Jesus had only His own word it would not be enough, would not be valid (even though He told the truth). ^{‡‡‡} I take it that this witness must be the Father, since in verse 34 Jesus discounts John the Baptizer. [§] Since Jesus has three supernatural witnesses—the Father, His own works and the Scriptures—He does not need John. I do not believe Jesus was angry with John or otherwise dissatisfied with his testimony; it is just that the Jews had already rejected John’s testimony about Jesus (as they had rejected Jesus Himself). As He says, He would like for them to turn around and be saved, so He organizes His argument in that attempt.

time you were willing to be glad in his light. ³⁶ But I have a greater testimony than John’s, because the works that the Father gave me to complete—the very works that I am doing—they testify about me that the Father has sent me. ^{§†}

³⁷ “Further, the Father who sent me has Himself testified about me. You have neither heard His voice nor seen His form at any time. ³⁸ Nor do you have His word abiding in you, ^{§††} because you do not believe on the very one whom *HE* sent. ³⁹ You examine the Scriptures because in them you think you have eternal life, yet they are the very ones that testify about me. ⁴⁰ But you are not willing to come to me so that you may have life. ^{§‡}

The Jews are accused by Moses

⁴¹ “I do not accept glory from people. ⁴² Rather I have come to know you, ^{§††} that you do not have the love of God in you. ⁴³ I have come in my Father’s name and you do not receive me; should another come in his own name, *HIM* you will receive. ^{§†44} How *CAN* you believe, who receive glory from men ^{§‡} and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? ^{§§†}

⁴⁵ “Do not suppose that I will accuse you before the Father. *Moses* is the one who accuses you, on whom you have set your hope. ⁴⁶ Because if you *really* believed Moses you would believe me, because he wrote about me. ⁴⁷ But since you do not believe his *WRITINGS*, how will you believe my sayings?” ^{§§‡}

Jesus is back in Galilee ^{§§§}

6 After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, or Tiberias. ¹⁸² And a huge crowd was fol-

^{§†} Nicodemus recognized this. ^{§††} The Lord declares their spiritual bankruptcy. For a religious leader to have never heard God’s voice is pretty poor, but much worse is to study God’s Word without its ever finding a place in your heart. ^{§‡} Jesus had proved that He was the Messiah, but He threatened everything that they stood for. ^{§††} That is what the Text says, “I have come to know”—presumably He is referring to knowledge gained by observation; they have clearly demonstrated in His presence that in fact they do not have God’s love. ^{§†} Might this be a prophetic reference to the Antichrist? ^{§‡} Here I follow what I consider to be by far the best line of transmission, although attested by less than 30% of the Greek manuscripts. ^{§§†} This is serious! Apparently one’s attitude toward glory affects his ability to believe. If the approval of people is more important to you than the approval of God, you probably will not believe into Jesus. ^{§§‡} The Lord is affirming the inspiration and authority of Moses’ *WRITINGS*; in effect He places them on a level with His own word, for which He claims eternal authority (Luke 21:33). ^{§§§} Almost a whole year has elapsed between chapters 5 and 6 here. For the events that transpired during that period see Luke 6:1-9:10, Mark 2:23-6:31 and the corresponding accounts in Matthew. ¹⁸ From the parallel accounts it appears that He embarked at Capernaum. (Matthew informs us that He had just heard of the Baptizer’s ignominious death and wanted to get away—perhaps to grieve and assimilate the news.) From John 6:23 we learn that the destination was near Tiberias. Capernaum and Tiberias are both on the western side of the Sea of Galilee, but there is a large bay between them; so they went over 6-8 miles of water.

lowing Him because they had seen His signs that He kept performing on the sick. ¹³ So Jesus went up on the mountain and sat down there with His disciples.

^{††4} (Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near.) [‡]

Food for 15,000 ^{††}

⁵ Then, raising His eyes and observing that a huge crowd was coming toward Him, Jesus says to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread so that these folks may eat?" ^{††6} Now He said this to test him, for He Himself knew what He was about to do. ⁷ Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread ^{†††} would not be enough for them, so that each of them could receive a little." ⁸ One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, says to Him, ⁹ "There is a little boy here who has five loaves of barley bread and two small fish, but what are they for so many?" ^{†††}

¹⁰ Then Jesus said, "Make the people recline." Now there was plenty of grass in the place; so the men reclined, about five thousand in number. ¹¹ Then Jesus took the loaves, and having given thanks He distrib-

[†] *The crowd was not about to let Jesus get away. Mark makes clear that they ran along the shore—the faster runners stayed even with the boat and were waiting on the shore when the boat put in. The others were spread out behind for several miles (like in a marathon) and kept arriving. Any late starters would see the stragglers and could easily follow the action. Apparently He immediately started to heal the sick and went on to teach (Matthew 14:14, Mark 6:34). But just where was it? John says it was near Tiberias, but Luke 9:10 says it was "a deserted place belonging to a town called Bethsaida". [Less than 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have "into a town called Bethsaida" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.), which makes Luke contradict himself (verse 12 says it was a deserted place) as well as the parallel accounts.] I assume that the place was indeed near Tiberias but did indeed belong to Bethsaida—either it had been deeded to the town somehow or the family that owned it was based in Bethsaida. Any near neighbors could not use it, so it was basically untouched—a great place for a picnic.*

^{††} *Comparing the other accounts, I take it that they had already spent quite a bit of time on the beach, and the afternoon was wearing away. Since verse 6 says He knew what He was going to do, I assume it was a deliberate move to get the crowd up where there was grass so they could sit down in relative comfort. [‡] I frankly do not see what connection this information has with the story, but it does give us a time frame. ^{††} Why 15,000? Well, Matthew 14:21 says plainly that there were about 5,000 men BESIDES WOMEN AND CHILDREN. In any crowd what is there usually most of? Since the context was not one of war (where there would be mostly men) I imagine there were at least 15,000 people there (like mothers with sick children). ^{†††} According to the other three accounts, the disciples had already suggested to Jesus that He send the people away to the surrounding towns to buy food. But let's stop and think. How many bread stores would a village have, and how much bread would a store still have on hand at 5 p.m.? If they could have gone to every store within a radius of 30 miles, I doubt that they would have found even 10,000 loaves available. The Lord's question shows that their suggestion was really a cop-out. ^{†††} How much bread can you buy with the wages for 200 days of manual labor? Probably an awful lot of it. But the crowd was so huge that Philip figured that even that much would not do it. [If a day's wage would buy 50 small loaves, for instance, that would make 10,000 loaves—more people than bread.] ^{††††} I think it must be understood that the boy handed them over willingly, so he participated in the miracle. We also must give to God willingly, and when we do we participate in the results.*

uted them to the disciples, and the disciples [§] to those who were reclining; so too with the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹² So when they were full He says to His disciples, "Collect the leftover fragments so that nothing be wasted." ^{§†13} So they collected and filled twelve baskets ^{§††} with fragments from the five barley loaves that were left over from those who had eaten.

¹⁴ Now then, having seen the miraculous sign that Jesus performed the men said, "This One really is the Prophet who is to come into the world." ¹⁵ So Jesus, perceiving that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, ^{§†} withdrew up the mountain again by Himself, alone.

Jesus walks on water

¹⁶ Now as an evening came on His disciples had gone down to the sea, ¹⁷ and getting into the boat they started to go across the sea toward Capernaum. ^{§††} Well it had been dark for a while and Jesus had not come to them. ^{§†18} Further, the sea was being agitated by a strong wind blowing. ¹⁹ Then, after they had rowed some three or four miles, ^{§†} they see Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat; and they were afraid. ²⁰ But He said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid!" ^{§§†21} Then they wanted to receive Him into the boat, ^{§§†} and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going. ^{§§§}

[§] *Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit the reference to the disciples here and have Jesus distributing directly to the crowd (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.), making John contradict the other three Gospels. ^{§†} Notice the care that nothing be wasted. A common human reaction would be, 'easy come, easy go'—since Jesus can make more any time He wants, why worry. But no, the Lord does not look at it that way. ^{§††} They were large baskets, probably borrowed from the fishing boats (see verse 23 below). The disciples probably had help with the collecting; and in any case, they did not keep that food. ^{§‡} Only John records this information, plus what is given from verse 22 on. I take it that at least up to verse 40 Jesus is basically dealing with the 'king-makers'. ^{§††} When they started out, the boat would be pointing toward Capernaum/Genesaret/Bethsaida; only as they went on would it become clear that their first destination was Bethsaida (Mark 6:45). ^{§†} This statement puzzles me. The author of this Gospel was in that boat. Did they really expect Jesus to come to them over the water? How? Evidently they did not expect Him to come walking. ^{§‡} The Text actually says 'twenty-five or thirty stadia'. In Matthew 14:24 over 99% of the Greek manuscripts have them "in the middle of the sea". If you draw a line from Tiberias to Bethsaida (see Mark 6:45) and put an X at four miles you will be in the middle of the widest part of the sea. Matthew further informs us that the wind was contrary and that Jesus came between 3 and 6 a.m. (the 4th watch). They had been on the water at least nine hours and most probably rowing most of that time (they were in a fishing boat, not a little rowboat). They were tired! From the parallel accounts it is clear that Jesus sent them on their way. He deliberately sent them into a difficult and trying situation. We need to understand that He may do the same with us. ^{§§†} Only Matthew records that Peter also took a little walk. ^{§§‡} They were ready for some help. ^{§§§} They were still some four miles from Bethsaida, so here we have another remarkable miracle—Jesus transported the boat those four miles instantaneously. There have been repeated references to crossing the sea, so the reading of the so-called 'critical text' in Luke 9:10 that places*

²² The next day the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea, † having seen that there was no other boat there except the one into which His disciples had entered, †† and that Jesus had not gotten into the boat with His disciples but only His disciples had gone away—²³ although other boats had come from Tiberias, ‡ near the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks—²⁴ so when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor His disciples were there, they got into the boats †† and went to Capernaum, looking for Jesus. †††²⁵ When they found Him on another side ††† of the sea they said to Him, “Rabbi, when ††† did you get here?”

The Bread of Life

²⁶ Jesus answered them and said: “Most assuredly I say to you, you are not seeking me because you saw miraculous signs, but because you ate the bread and were filled. ††²⁷ Do not work for the food that wastes away but for the food that endures into life eternal, which the Son of the Man will give you; †† because on HIM God the Father has set His seal.”²⁸ So they said to Him, “What should we do so that we may work the works of God?” †††²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them,

the feeding of the 5,000 in the town of Bethsaida is patently ridiculous. What would motivate the editors to print such a ridiculous reading in their text? † These were men who stayed on the scene; I assume that they bedded down on the grass right there, waiting for Jesus to come down from the mountain—these were decision makers, and they still wanted to make Jesus king. †† Around 4% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit “except the one into which His disciples had entered” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡ The point seems to be that only one boat came with Jesus, so when it left there was no other at His disposal. The boats from Tiberias doubtless returned home for the night (the town was not far and the owners would prefer to sleep in their beds). †† How many people could those boats carry? Probably less than a hundred, all told, but these were special people who had stayed on the scene for a reason. †† From Matthew and Mark I gather that from Bethsaida Jesus went directly to Genesaret; verse 59 below makes clear that the men found Him in Capernaum, which was close by. So why did Jesus send the disciples to Bethsaida? Perhaps it was to give an accounting to the owner of the place where the multitude was fed—15,000 people can make quite a mess. (I suspect that Jesus had permission to use the place when He wanted to get away, but no one had foreseen such a crowd as that.) ††† There is no definite article with ‘other side’, since it was just across the bay, not the other side of the lake. ††† “When”, not “how”. Surely, they knew that Jesus could have taken a back trail through the hills and made it on foot without difficulty. § He does not answer their question but goes to the heart of their problem—they want to make Him king for purely materialistic reasons. Certain kinds of people like free food; or maybe most people do; or maybe almost everybody does. †† Jesus will give the Life, but they have to work for the food that endures into that Life. So how do we “work for the food”? Most people have to work so as to have food to maintain their physical health and strength, and there are clear biblical strictures against laziness, so our Lord’s statement presumably has to do with priorities. ‘Making a living’ should not be our top priority; like Jesus, our top priority should be to do the Father’s will (Hebrews 10:7, John 4:34). What we build in ‘gold, silver, precious stones’ (1 Corinthians 3:12) will indeed “endure into” life eternal. ††† I do not think they listened very well; they answered according to their own ideas.

“This is the work of God, that you believe into the One whom He sent.” ††³⁰ So they said to Him: “Well then, what sign are you going to do so we may see and believe you? ††† What are you going to perform? †††³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the desert, just as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from Heaven to eat.’” ††

³² Then Jesus said to them: “Most assuredly I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from Heaven, but my Father gives you the TRUE bread from Heaven. ††³³ For the bread of God is the One coming down out of Heaven and giving Life to the world.” †††³⁴ Then they said to Him, “Lord, give us this bread always.” †††³⁵ So Jesus said to them: “I am the bread of the Life. Whoever comes to me will NEVER hunger, and whoever believes into me will NEVER thirst. †††³⁶ But, as I told you, you have actually seen me, yet you do not believe. ††³⁷ All that the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will NOT throw out; †††³⁸ because it is not to do my own will that I have come down out of Heaven, ††¹⁸ but the will of the One who sent me. ††³⁹ Now this is the will of the Father who sent me, that I should lose nothing out of all that He has given me, but should raise it ††¹⁹ up at the last day. ††⁴⁰ Again this is the will of Him who sent me, that everyone who ‘sees’ the Son and believes into Him may have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” ††²⁰

⁴¹ Then the Jews ††²¹ started complaining about Him, because He said, “I am the bread that came down out

†† If we want to serve or please God, the first step is to believe into Jesus. After we belong to Jesus we have the privilege of participating in God’s works. ††† These guys are hard to believe—they had seen Jesus multiply the bread and fish; how much more of a sign did they want? They had been so impressed that they wanted to make Him king. But instead of offering free food Jesus is now demanding commitment; so they start to backpedal. †† See Exodus 16:4, Nehemiah 9:15 and Psalm 78:24. †† Jesus said that ‘bread’ ‘gives life’. Bread was their staff of life; their physical life depended on it. Similarly, our spiritual life depends on Jesus. ††† This seems to be a bit of a change in attitude. They are vacillating. ††† I have underlined ‘never’ because Jesus was very emphatic. ††† “All that” is in the neuter gender and presumably includes more than people; but does it EXCLUDE people? “The one who” refers only to people. Jesus will not throw you out, but you can back out, decide to turn back. †† Here we have a plain statement: “I have come down out of Heaven”. We can either accept it or reject it; those who say that Jesus was merely a good man are rejecting it. †† The manuscript evidence is badly divided here, but I take it that the best line of transmission has “it” rather than “him” (neuter rather than masculine)—in the preceding clause, “nothing out of all” is definitely neuter. The ‘problem’ is the verb “raise”—if it is taken as raising the dead then the direct object should be masculine. But “raise” is much more general in use, being used for erecting a building, lifting something up, etc. There is a contrast between verse 39 (things) and verse 40 (people). Verse 39 joins other passages that indicate that during the Millennium the earth will be restored to conditions reminiscent of Eden (compare Romans 8:19-22). †† Since only His contemporaries could see Jesus physically, everyone else has to ‘see’ Him spiritually. But in verse 36 the Lord says that even though they were seeing Him physically, they were not believing—so even for the contemporaries the ‘seeing’ had to be spiritual. Jesus Himself will raise up His followers. †† I take it that up to verse 40 Jesus has

of Heaven.”⁴² And they were saying: “Isn’t this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? † So how can he say, ‘I have come down out of HEAVEN?’ ††

⁴³ So Jesus answered and said to them: “Stop complaining among yourselves. ⁴⁴ No one is able to come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, ‡ and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ †† Therefore everyone who listens and learns from the Father comes to me. ††⁴⁶ (Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God—HE has seen the Father.) ⁴⁷ Most assuredly I say to you: the one believing into me ††† has eternal life.

⁴⁸ “I am the bread of the Life. †††⁴⁹ Your fathers ate manna in the desert, and they died. ⁵⁰ This is the bread that comes down out of Heaven, so that anyone may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down out of Heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever. Actually, the bread that I will give is my flesh, ^{51†} which I will give on behalf of the life of the world.” ††

Chew flesh, drink blood

⁵² At that the Jews started quarrelling among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?!” ^{52†53} So Jesus said to them: “Most assuredly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of the Man and drink His blood, you do not have Life within your-

been interacting with the ‘king-makers’. The ‘Jews’ here probably represent the ruling hierarchy—since Jesus was in the synagogue there were others present besides the ‘king-makers’. † I wonder why they refer to JOSEPH’s parents. Of course they were assuming that Jesus was in fact Joseph’s son. †† Notice that they understood clearly that Jesus was claiming that He had come down out of Heaven. ‡ As Jesus pointed out to Nicodemus (see note at John 3:6), without God’s direct participation, no one is saved. But see the next verse. †† See Isaiah 54:13. †† In verse 44 Jesus emphasizes God’s sovereignty; here He emphasizes human responsibility. We can ‘listen and learn’, and then ‘come’. But in what sense is everyone ‘taught by God’? Everyone has the light of creation and is born with a conscience, at least. Perhaps there are other ways that God ‘teaches’. ††† About 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “into me” (as in NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.). But the object of one’s belief is of the essence; it is impossible to live without believing in something, so everyone believes. The reading of the so-called ‘critical text’ opens the door to universalism—the more so since the Lord is making a formal statement about how to be saved. ††† Since the Lord is obviously not claiming to be a loaf of literal bread, this is a figure of speech, a metaphor. Bread was their staff of life; they could not live without it. Jesus is our spiritual ‘staff of life’; we cannot live spiritually without Him. § I take it that this statement is in response to theirs in verse 31 above. §† Verse 49 presumably refers to physical death, while verse 50 refers to spiritual death. Notice the “anyone may eat”; this is an open invitation. §†† I take it that He is referring to His physical body, which represents the incarnation, with all that involved. §‡ “The life of the world”—wow! Well, according to Romans 8:19-23 the whole creation is groaning, waiting for redemption. §‡† They were being strictly literal, which could not be right—if they had started cutting Him up right there, they would have killed Him, and only those physically present could have eaten and drunk.

selves. ⁵⁴ Whoever chews ^{54†} my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, ^{54‡} and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵ Really, my flesh is genuine food and my blood is genuine drink. ⁵⁶ Whoever chews my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him. ^{56†57} Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so also the one who feeds ^{56‡} on me will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down out of Heaven. Whoever feeds on this bread of mine will live forever (in contrast to your fathers who ate the manna and died). ^{58†59} He said these things while teaching in a synagogue in Capernaum.

Jesus loses many followers

⁶⁰ Therefore, upon hearing this many from among His disciples said: “This word is hard! Who is able to hear it?” ⁶¹ So Jesus, knowing in Himself that His disciples were complaining about this, said to them: “Does this offend you? ⁶² What if you should see the Son of the Man going up to where He was at first? ^{62†63} The Spirit is the One who makes alive; the flesh does not benefit anything. The words that I speak to you are spirit, are Life. ⁶⁴ But there are some among you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the start who they were who did not believe, and who was betraying Him.) ⁶⁵ And He said, “That is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it has been granted to him by my Father.” ¹⁹

⁶⁶ From that time many of His disciples turned back and stopped going around with Him. ^{66†67} So Jesus said to the twelve, “You don’t want to go away too, do you?” ⁶⁸ So Simon Peter answered Him: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ Further, we have come to believe and to know that you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!” ^{69†70} He said to them: “Did I myself not choose you twelve? Yet one of you is a devil.” ⁷¹ He was referring to Judas Iscariot,

§† The verb here is different from the “eat” in verse 53. The verb here would typically be used of a cow munching fodder, but fodder is usually crunchy, so the munching is noisy. Because “munch” suggests noise, I have rendered “chew”. In verse 56 chewing is linked to abiding, something we need to do every day. §‡ The Roman Church takes this literally when they claim that during their Mass the priest actually converts the elements into flesh and blood (transubstantiation). But since John repeatedly records that it is by believing into Jesus, or His name, that one receives eternal life, then we should understand the eating and drinking here as metaphoric. §§† This reciprocal abiding takes place in the spiritual realm. §§‡ This is the same verb rendered “chew” above. §§§ Many of those who died in the wilderness died in rebellion against God, so the “died” here may refer to spiritual death as well. 18 I find this question to be curious. How does it apply to what He has been saying? 19 Verse 54 emphasizes human responsibility; verse 65 emphasizes divine sovereignty. 20 It is possible that Jesus used the language that He did deliberately, precisely to reduce the number of ‘hangers-on’. Too many people hanging around would get in the way, reduce efficiency. 21 Instead of “the Christ, the Son of the Living god”, perhaps 0.5% of the Greek MSS, of objectively inferior quality, read ‘the Holy One of God’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.)—obviously an inferior reading. 22 The root meaning of ‘devil’

son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

Passover, 29 AD

7 After these things Jesus continued to move about in Galilee, † since He did not wish to move about in Judea because the Jews were wanting to kill Him. ††

Jesus and His brothers

2 Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was near. 3 So His brothers said to Him: "Leave here and go up into Judea so your disciples also ‡ may see the works that you are doing, 4 because no one does anything in secret while he actually wants to be in evidence. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world!" 5 For not even His brothers were believing into Him. ††

6 So Jesus says to them: "My time is not here yet, but YOUR time is always available. ††† The world cannot hate you, but does hate me, because I testify about it that its works are malignant. †††† You guys go up to this feast; I am not going up yet ††† to this feast, because my time has not yet fully come." 9 So upon saying these things to them He stayed on in Galilee. §

is 'slanderer'; presumably Judas was a human being, so Jesus was not calling him a literal demon. † All of chapter six took place in Galilee, so why make a point of Jesus' continuing there? 6:4 says that the Passover was near, but 7:2 says that the Feast of Tabernacles was near—that is six months later. As a God-fearing male, Jesus had to go to Jerusalem for the Passover, so He must have gone, although none of the Gospels records it. I take it that He went without calling attention to Himself, and returned immediately to Galilee, for the reason given in the second half of the verse. †† Between 6:71 and 7:2 six months elapsed. For events that occurred during that period see Matthew 15:1-18:35, Mark 7:1-9:50 and Luke 9:18-50.

‡ These would have to be dwellers in Judea who were not following Jesus around. Since His statement about eating His flesh, the number of hangers-on was drastically reduced, giving the impression that He was losing popularity in Galilee. †† Well now, those brothers were not very nice, were they? I take it that they knew very well that the hierarchy was plotting to kill Jesus (it seems to me obvious that the Jews had researched Jesus' past and family, and had doubtless been working on His brothers), so they were trying to send Him to His death. With friends like that, who needs enemies? ††† I assume that He meant that they could repent and believe into Him at any time. †††† If we raise the standard of biblical values in the public arena, calling a spade a spade, the world will hate us too—try it and see! †††† Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit "yet" (as in NASB, TEV, RSV, etc.). The reading of the so-called 'critical' text has the effect of ascribing a falsehood to Jesus, since He did in fact go to the feast (and doubtless knew what He was going to do). Among the 97% are ⋄66,75 and B—since the UBS editors usually attach the highest value to ⋄75 and B, isn't it strange that they reject them in this case? § That is, His brothers started out on their way to Jerusalem and Jesus stayed behind, for the moment.

Jesus leaves Galilee—the last six months of His public ministry

10 Now when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He too went up, not openly but in secret like. 11 So the Jews were looking for Him at the feast and saying, "Where is he?" 12 And there was a lot of murmuring about Him among the crowds. Some were saying, "He is good"; others were saying, "On the contrary, he's deceiving the people." 13 However, no one was talking openly about Him for fear of the Jews.

Jesus teaches in the Temple

14 Now when the feast was already half over Jesus went up into the temple and started to teach. 15 And the Jews were marveling saying, "How is this man learned, not having been educated?" §†16 So Jesus answered them and said: "What I teach is not mine, but His who sent me. §††17 If anyone wants to do His will, §† he will know concerning the teaching, whether it is from God or whether I am speaking on my own. 18 Someone who speaks on his own is seeking his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him, HE is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Moses versus the Jews

19 "Did not Moses give you the Law? And yet not one of you keeps the Law! Why do you want to kill me?"

20 The crowd answered and said, "You must have a demon! Who wants to kill you?" §††

21 Jesus answered and said to them: "I did one work, and you all marvel. 22 Consider this: Moses gave you circumcision (not that it comes from Moses, but from the patriarchs), §† and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. 23 If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the Law of Moses won't be broken, are you angry at me because I made a whole man §† well

§† That is, He had never been to a recognized theological seminary, rabbinical school, or whatever. But He knew more than they did! (Which of course was hard for them to swallow.) §†† Jesus is evidently aware of what they are saying or thinking, since He addresses it. §† If we want to do, we will know. The Lord did not say, if we just want to know—we have to be committed to obey BEFORE we know what the order is. Once we are committed to obey, it is in God's own interest to talk to us. §†† The 'crowd' is made up of common people who are not in the know with a sprinkling of Pharisee types, the bosses. Jesus is really addressing the bosses, but the common people don't get it. §† It started with Abraham, 430 years before Moses. §† The Lord seems to be contrasting circumcision, which involves only a small part of the body, with His healing, which involved the whole body.

on the Sabbath? ^{†24} Stop judging on the basis of appearances, but judge the righteous judgment.”

Public opinion divided

²⁵ Now some of the Jerusalemites were saying: “Isn't this the man they are wanting to kill? ²⁶ Yet look! He is speaking openly and they are saying nothing to Him. Could it be true that the rulers know that this is really the Christ? ²⁷ On the other hand, we know where this man is from; but whenever the Christ comes nobody knows where He is from.” ^{††}

²⁸ So Jesus called out in the temple, teaching and saying: “You do know me, and you know where I am from. Yet I have not come on my own, but the One who sent me is true, whom you do not know. ²⁹ I *DO* know Him because I am from Him, and *HE* sent me.” ^{‡30} So they tried to arrest Him, yet no one laid a hand on Him because His hour had not yet come.

³¹ Now many of the crowd were believing into Him, and they were saying, “Whenever the Christ comes He won't perform more signs than these which this man has done, will He?” ³² The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things about Him, so the Pharisees and the chief priests sent operatives to arrest Him.

³³ Then Jesus said: “For a little while I am still with you, and then I go to the One who sent me. ³⁴ You will look for me and not find me; also, where I am *YOU* cannot come.” ^{‡‡35} So the Jews said among themselves: “Where does this fellow intend to go that we won't find him? He doesn't intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks, does he?”

³⁶ What word *IS* this that he spoke, ‘You will look for me and not find me’; also, ‘where I am *YOU* cannot come?’”

The last day of the Feast

³⁷ Now on the last and most important day of the Feast, Jesus stood up and called out saying: “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ The one believing into me, just as the Scripture has said, out from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.”

^{‡‡39} (Now He said this about the Spirit, whom those be-

† *Hey, the last healing on a Sabbath in Jerusalem, as recorded by John, happened a year and a half ago! In fact, none of the four Gospels records any activity by Jesus in Jerusalem during the year and a half since John 5. Jesus seems to be implying that they are still mad about that! †† If no one could know where the Messiah came from, how come the rulers were able to tell Herod that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem? The people had bought into a false idea. Verses 25-27 presumably record bits from various speakers. ‡ The Lord is very emphatic about His heavenly origin. Of course the Jews want to be rid of Him because He most definitely is not fitting into their scheme of things. I take it that there is divine intervention at work so they are not able to arrest Him. †† “Where I AM”—that is what the Text says. I imagine that the idea is the same as in John 3:13, “who is in Heaven”. He has just said in verse 33 that He is going back to Heaven. So, He is telling those Jewish leaders that they cannot go to Heaven! ‡‡ Just where does the Scripture say this, and why “rivers” (pl); wouldn't one be enough? Reference*

lieving into Him were going to receive, ^{‡‡‡} in that the Holy Spirit had not yet been *given* because Jesus had not yet been glorified.)

⁴⁰ So upon hearing this word many from the crowd began to say, “This One really is ‘the Prophet!’” ⁴¹ Others were saying, “This One is the Christ!” Others were saying: “Surely the Christ isn't coming out of *GALILEE*, is He? ⁴² Doesn't the Scripture say that the Christ comes out of the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?” ^{‡‡‡43} So there developed a division in the crowd because of Him. ⁴⁴ Further, some of them were wanting to arrest Him, but no one laid a hand on Him.

The operatives are empty-handed

⁴⁵ Then the operatives came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “*WHY* haven't you brought him?” ⁴⁶ The operatives answered, “No man ever spoke like this man!” ⁴⁷ So the Pharisees answered them: “You haven't been fooled too, have you? ⁴⁸ None of the rulers or the Pharisees have believed into him, have they? ⁴⁹ But this crowd that doesn't know the law is accursed!”

⁵⁰ Nicodemus (the one who came to Him at night, being one of them) says to them, ⁵¹ “Our law doesn't judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing, does it?” ⁵² They answered and said to him: “You aren't from Galilee too, are you? Search and see that no prophet has ever arisen out of Galilee.” ⁵³ So each one went to his own house. ^{§†}

Bibles will give a variety of suggestions, none of which really fit. I personally believe that the reference is to Ezekiel 47:1-12, and most especially to verse 9 where the Hebrew text has two rivers (or torrents)—when that river got to the Dead Sea it evidently divided, so as to go along both banks at once. Living water takes life and health wherever it goes. So how much living water is flowing out of me, or you? The secret of that water is given in verse 12: “their water flows from the sanctuary” (compare 1 Corinthians 6:19). ‡‡‡ When you believe into Jesus you receive the Holy Spirit. ‡‡‡ I smell a rat. In verse 27 above they claimed that no one knew where the Christ was coming from; now here they say it is Beth-lehem. I suspect that there were people planted in the crowd whose job it was to create confusion, and they felt no obligation to tell the truth. § A bit of an overstatement—Jonah was from Gath Hopher of Zebulun, north of Natsareth (2 Kings 14:25). §† Some 15% of the Greek manuscripts omit 7:53-8:11, including most of the early ones; but that means that 85% contain it, including the Latin tradition that dates from the 2nd century. Assuming (for the sake of the argument) that the passage is spurious, how could it ever have intruded here, and to such effect that it is attested by some 85% of the MSS? Let's try to read the larger passage without these verses—we must go from 7:52 to 8:12 directly. Reviewing the context, the chief priests and Pharisees had sent officers to arrest Jesus, to no avail; a ‘discussion’ ensues; Nicodemus makes a point, to which the Pharisees answer: (7:52) “Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee.” (8:12) Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world...” What is the antecedent of “them”, and what is the meaning of “again”? By the normal rules of grammar, if 7:53—8:11 is missing then “them” must refer to the “Pharisees” and “again” means that there has already been at least one prior exchange. But, 7:45 makes clear that Jesus was not there

The Light of the world at work

8 Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ¹² And at dawn He went again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; so sitting down He started to teach them.

A dirty deal

³ Then the scribes and the Pharisees bring to Him a woman caught in adultery; and placing her in the center ⁴ they say to Him: "Teacher, we found this woman committing adultery, in the very act. ⁵ Now in our law Moses commanded that such women are to be stoned; ^{††} so what do *YOU* say?" ⁶ They said this to test Him, so that they might have an accusation against Him.

But stooping down [‡] Jesus began to write on the ground with His finger, taking no notice. ⁷ But since they kept on asking Him, straightening up He said to them, "Let the one without sin among you throw the

Metzger also claims that "the style and vocabulary of the pericope differ noticeably from the rest of the Fourth Gospel"—but, would not the native speakers of Greek at that time have been in a better position than modern critics to notice something like that? So how could they allow such an "extraneous" passage to be forced into the text? I submit that the evident answer is that they did not; it was there all the time. I also protest their use of brackets here. Since the editors clearly regard the passage to be spurious they should be consistent and delete it, as do NEB and Williams. That way the full extent of their error would be open for all to see. Unfortunately, NIV, NASB, NRSV, Berkeley and TEV also use brackets to question the legitimacy of this passage. But why was the story omitted? Leading church father and theologian, Augustine (about AD

Saint Augustine: Treatises on

Marriage and Other Subjects

Living Water:

The Gospel of John—Logos 21 Version

[†] There is a basic three-way split in the manuscript attestation for these twelve verses (7:53-8:11)—the three major groups represent three lines of transmission that are both ancient and independent. It follows that where two agree against one, the two presumably retain the original reading. In these verses there are 25 places where two groups agree against one, six others where 2½ agree against ½, and just one place where each of the three major groups has its own reading. It happens that one of the three groups is always in the majority (in the 31 places), so it is the only one that is always right in those 31 places—so in the one place where there is a three-way split I follow that group, because it has the best credibility quotient. ^{††} According to Leviticus 20:10 both

[‡] Recall that He is sitting, so He just bends forward so as to reach the ground.

first stone at her." ⁸ And stooping down again He continued writing on the ground. ^{†††} Now upon hearing *this*, and being convicted by their conscience, they began to go out one by one, starting with the older ones down to the least. So only Jesus was left, with the woman in the center. [‡]

¹⁰ So straightening up, and not seeing anyone except the woman, Jesus said to her: "Where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" ¹¹ So she said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said to her: "Neither do I condemn you. ^{†††} Go, and from now on don't sin any more!"

Jesus dialogs with the Pharisees

¹² Then Jesus spoke to them again, ^{†††} saying: "I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows *ME* will *NOT* walk around in the darkness, [§] but will have the light of the Life." ^{††††} So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are testifying about yourself; your testimony is not valid."

¹⁴ Jesus answered and said to them: "Even though I testify about myself, my testimony is valid, because I know where I came from and where I am going. ^{†††††} But *YOU* do not know where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵ *YOU* are judging according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone. ¹⁶ Yet even if I do judge, my judging is valid, in that I am not alone *in judging*, but I and the Father who sent me *are together*. ¹⁷ It is written precisely in *YOUR* law that the testimony of two men is valid: ¹⁸ I am one testifying concerning myself and the Father who sent me testifies concerning me." ¹⁹ Then they said to Him, "Where is your father?" ^{††} Jesus answered: "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me you would also know my Father." ²⁰ Jesus spoke these words in the treasury, while teaching in the temple; yet no one arrested Him, because His time had not yet come. ^{†††}

^{††} A small minority of the manuscripts completes the verse with "the sins of each one of them". I, for one, would like to know what Jesus wrote, and I wouldn't be surprised if He wrote just that, but I take it that John did not record that phrase. ^{††} The center of what? The center of the crowd—the accusers had all left, but the crowd wasn't going any place! They hadn't seen a show like this for a long time! ^{†††} Jesus was not even a witness, and it required at least two witnesses to condemn; so of course He could not condemn her. But He makes clear that He does not condone her behavior.

^{††††} "Them" refers to the crowd, and "again" means that He resumes His teaching after having been so rudely interrupted. The interruption occupies verses 3-11, so we are referred back to verse 2. [§] "The darkness" = Satan's kingdom. ^{§†} There is a certain secret society that requires a candidate to declare that he is coming out of darkness in search of light. A Christian who does this is formally denying Jesus. ^{†††††} An interesting argument—why would His knowing His origin and destination validate His witness? I imagine that He is really referring to His identity; as God His witness is always valid. ^{§†} Their question is reasonable. Since Jesus is adducing His Father as a witness they want to know where they can find Him, to confirm the witness. But Jesus does not give a direct answer, as He usually did not, when dealing with Pharisees. ^{††††} Supernatural intervention is implied.

“you will die in your sins”

²¹ Then Jesus said to them again: “I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going you cannot come.” ^{†22} So the Jews said, “He won't kill himself, will he, since he says, ‘Where I am going you cannot come?’” ^{††23} He said to them: “You are from below; I am from Above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ^{‡24} That is why I told you that you will die in your sins, because if you do not believe that I am, ^{‡‡} you will die in your sins.” ^{‡‡25} So they said to Him, “Who ARE you?” And Jesus said to them: “Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. ^{‡‡26} I have many things to say and to judge about you, but He who sent me is true, and what I myself have heard from Him—these things I say to the world.” ^{‡‡‡27} They did not understand that He was speaking to them about the Father. ^{‡‡‡28} Then Jesus said to them: “When you lift up the Son of the Man, then you will know that I am [§] and that I do nothing from myself; but just as my Father has taught me, these things I speak. ^{§29} And the One who sent me is with me. The Father has not left me alone, because I always do the things that please Him.” ^{§†}

“the Truth will make you free”

³⁰ While He was saying these things many believed into Him. ³¹ So Jesus said to those Jews who had believed Him: “If you abide in my word, you really are my disciples; ^{§††32} and you will know the Truth, and the

† I wonder if the Lord is not referring to two future stages, short and long range. Since there are still six months to go until His death, He will go away from Jerusalem (He divided those six months between Judea and Perea) and they will be looking for Him, to kill Him. That is the short range. Long range—since they will not repent they will die lost and so not go to Heaven. †† But of course they could kill themselves too, and would die sooner or later in any case, so they would be together in Hades (on that hypothesis). ‡ Here we have a plain statement. ‡‡ Most versions supply a ‘He’, making the phrase “I am He”; but the Text just has “I am”. Any Jew would immediately think of Jehovah calling Himself ‘I am’. Having just said that He was from Above, and not of this world, it seems to me clear that Jesus is claiming to be Jehovah—but they just do not want to get the point. ‡‡ To “die in your sins” is to be spiritually lost. If they do not recognize Him as the Messiah, they are lost. They have already seen more than enough evidence, but have rejected it; since Jesus knows that they are not going to turn around, He states that they are lost. (Here it is ‘sins’ (pl) while in verse 21 it is ‘sin’ (sg); if a difference is intended I don't know what it is.) ‡‡‡ Again, Jesus links His teaching directly to the Father. ‡‡‡ But they should have—their blind spot may have been the result of supernatural interference. (In John 5:17-18 they had already understood that He was making Himself equal with God.) § With the supernatural darkness from 12:00 to 3:00, the earthquake, the torn veil, and later the report of the guards at the tomb, they would know for sure that they had crucified the Messiah. But they would not (perhaps could not) repent. Their doom was sealed. §† Presumably if we always did the things that please the Father He would not leave us alone either. I suspect that when we choose to do wrong the Father lets us fend for ourselves. §†† So what happens if we don't abide in His Word? And how can you abide in something that doesn't exist (for you)? There

Truth will make you free.” ^{§†33} They answered and said to Him: “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How can you say, ‘You will be made free?’” ^{§††34} Jesus answered them: “I tell you most assuredly that everyone committing sin is a slave of sin. ^{§†35} Now the slave does not remain in the household forever; the son does remain forever. ^{§†36} Therefore, if the Son should make you free, you really will be free. ³⁷ I know that you are descendants of Abraham, but you are wanting to kill me because my word finds no place in you. ^{§††38} On my part, I speak what I have observed with my Father, while on your part you do what you have observed with your father.” ^{§§†}

“your father is the devil”

³⁹ They answered and said to Him, “Our father is Abraham!” Jesus says to them: “If you were children of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham; ⁴⁰ but now you are wanting to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. ^{§§§} This sort of thing Abraham did not do! ⁴¹ You do the works of your father.” Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; ¹⁸ we have one Father—God.” ¹⁹⁴² So Jesus said to them: “If God were your Father, you would love me, because I came forth from God and I am here. ²⁰

are still thousands of languages spoken in the world that do not have even one verse of the Bible translated into them. How can speakers of such languages be true disciples of Jesus? I have actually heard some who claim they have been ‘baptized in the Spirit’ say they don't need the Bible, because the Holy Spirit speaks to them directly. Now why would the Holy Spirit speak to someone who disagrees with the Lord Jesus? In this connection, notice especially John 16:14-15. §† Free from what? Free from self, free from sin. §†† The ones who were believing were sprinkled throughout the crowd, but Jesus' opponents were still in the front row. I assume from verse 37 that it is the opponents who speak here in verse 33. They conveniently forget that they are under the Roman yoke. §† Apart from Jesus Christ every human being is a slave of sin. The only way out is to become a slave of Jesus Christ. The only true freedom available in this life is through submission to Him. §† A son becomes part of the genealogical record, a slave does not. Some versions capitalize “Son” here (as in the next verse), but I take it that Jesus is making a generic statement. However, in verse 36 it must be “Son”, because “make you free” is plural, referring to His hearers. §†† Their hearts were closed against His message. He was demanding a change of world view. §§† Jesus has affirmed several times that He could observe the Father, but in what sense could the Jews observe Satan? Our Lord's statement makes me curious. Perhaps the Jews were doing what they saw Satan doing (rather than seeing him physically). Some 10% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘heard from’ rather than ‘observed with’. §§§ Here Jesus identifies clearly the source of His teaching: ‘my Father’ equals ‘God’. ¹⁸ The Jews had doubtless done exhaustive research on Jesus. They knew that He was born within six months after the wedding of Joseph and Mary, and that He was born full size. [Recall that Jesus had been rejected by the people of Natsareth, so there were plenty of people who would be happy to ‘spill the beans’.] Assuming, as they did, that the father was human, whether Joseph himself or someone else, Jesus would be the result of fornication. So they here throw that information in Jesus' face. ¹⁹ Since Jesus has rejected their claim to Abraham, they now claim God! ²⁰ As John will write later, “he who does not love his brother

Further, I have not come on my own, but *HE* sent me. ⁴³ Why don't you understand what I say?—because you are not able to *really* hear my word. ¹⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, ^{††} and it is the desires of your father that you want to do. *HE* was a murderer [‡] from the beginning and has not stood in the truth, because there is no truth in him. ^{††} Whenever he speaks the lie he speaks from his own things, because he is a liar and the father of *lying*. ^{‡‡45} But since I speak the truth you do not believe me. ⁴⁶ Which of you convicts me of sin? ^{‡‡†} So if I speak the truth, why do you not believe me? ⁴⁷ The one who is of God hears God's words; that is why you do *NOT* hear, because you are not of God." ^{‡‡‡}

⁴⁸ So the Jews answered and said to Him, "We say that you are a Samaritan and have a demon [§]—are we wrong?" ⁴⁹ Jesus answered: "I do not have a demon; rather, I honor my Father, while you dishonor me. ⁵⁰ Yet I do not seek my glory; there *IS* One who seeks and judges. ⁵¹ Most assuredly I say to you, if anyone should keep my word he will never ever see death." ^{§†}

"before Abraham was, I AM"

⁵² So the Jews said to Him: "Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died and so did the prophets; yet *you* say, 'If anyone should keep my word he will never ever taste death!' ⁵³ Surely you aren't greater than our father Abraham, who died? ^{§††} And the prophets are dead. Who do you make yourself out to be?" ⁵⁴ Jesus answered: "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.' ^{§§55} Yet you have not known Him,

whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" (1 John 4:20). So anyone who loved the Father (not having seen Him) would certainly love the Son who was physically present and visible. Jesus keeps reiterating His divine origin. † Their 'father' had blinded their minds (2 Corinthians 4:4). Those Jewish leaders were "sons of the disobedience" if there ever were any, and Satan is actively at work in such people (Ephesians 2:2). †† 1 John 3:8 makes clear that in fact Satan has lots of other 'children'. ‡ They want to murder Jesus, showing thereby that they are worthy sons of their father. Satan instigated the death of the first couple, and may have influenced Cain to kill Abel. ‡† If there is no truth in Satan then I conclude that it is impossible for him to tell the whole, undistorted truth. He may tell a partial truth, etc., but always with the intent to deceive. ‡‡ So whenever we tell a lie we are doing Satan's thing. And whenever we accept a lie (like evolutionism, Marxism, Freudianism, humanism, relativism, etc.) we give Satan a foothold in our minds, which he usually turns into a stronghold. ‡‡† I suppose that the point here is that if they could point to any sin in His life this would raise a question about His character, and therefore about His credibility. But since they can't, His character is above question; so they should believe Him. ‡‡‡ Here is another plain statement. § A lot of people heard Jesus say that the leaders were not of God but of the devil. They did not want to swallow that in silence but they could not refute Him either, so they resort to 'ad hominum' argument. §† The Lord is unusually emphatic here. He is evidently referring to spiritual death, but the Jews took it as referring to physical death. Notice that He said "KEEP my word"—again the emphasis is on commitment and obedience. §†† Of course He was greater than Abraham, but they were wearing spiritual blinders. §‡ They have been refusing to un-

derstand repeated hints, so here Jesus makes a flat statement: His Father is God, Jehovah. Perhaps 30% of the Greek manuscripts have 'your God', making it an indirect quote. §‡† Their father is a liar; they are liars. Rather than being conciliatory, Jesus is definitely aggressive. If any of them are to be saved they have to start on the basis of abject surrender. §† What day was that? I suppose He is referring to the time that He, Jehovah the Son (the Angel of Jehovah), paid Abraham a personal visit. From the Record it is clear that Abraham knew very well that he was talking with Jehovah. Don't you know that was the high point in Abraham's life! Hey, just stop and think about what happened. §‡ This statement intrigues me. Jesus was thirty-three, and they had researched His past, so why did they say 'fifty'? Could it be that Jesus looked older than He was? I wonder if the heavy pressures of His life style and ministry did not take a toll on His physical body, making Him prematurely gray, as it were. §§† Here Jesus is openly, unmistakably claiming to be Jehovah. They are obliged to get the point, and not wanting to acknowledge Him they pick up stones. At this point to argue, as some have done, that Jesus was merely a good, moral man won't wash. Either He was God, as He claimed; or He was a charlatan, a megalomaniac; or He was demonized. The Jews at that time took the third option; I take the first. §§‡ Since certain situations demanded a stoning, there were doubtless piles of ammunition placed strategically around the temple premises. §§§ The familiar "hid Himself" is not the best rendering here. Jesus did not try to hide behind a pillar, or whatever. Obviously they would have seen Him and started stoning. He became invisible and simply walked out, passing right through the middle of them. About half a percent of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "going through the middle of them; yes, that's how He got away" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The 99.5% are doubtless correct, and supply an important detail.

⁵⁷ So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, ^{§‡} and you have seen Abraham?!" ⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I AM!" ^{§§†59} Then they picked up stones to throw at Him; ^{§§‡} but Jesus was concealed ^{§§§} and went out of the temple, going through the middle of them; yes, that is how He got away!"

The man born blind

9 Now as He was passing by He saw a man blind from birth. ² And His disciples asked Him saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, in that he was born blind?" ¹⁸³ Jesus answered: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ¹⁹⁴ I ²⁰ must accomplish the works of Him who sent me while it is day; night is

derstand repeated hints, so here Jesus makes a flat statement: His Father is God, Jehovah. Perhaps 30% of the Greek manuscripts have 'your God', making it an indirect quote. §‡† Their father is a liar; they are liars. Rather than being conciliatory, Jesus is definitely aggressive. If any of them are to be saved they have to start on the basis of abject surrender. §† What day was that? I suppose He is referring to the time that He, Jehovah the Son (the Angel of Jehovah), paid Abraham a personal visit. From the Record it is clear that Abraham knew very well that he was talking with Jehovah. Don't you know that was the high point in Abraham's life! Hey, just stop and think about what happened. §‡ This statement intrigues me. Jesus was thirty-three, and they had researched His past, so why did they say 'fifty'? Could it be that Jesus looked older than He was? I wonder if the heavy pressures of His life style and ministry did not take a toll on His physical body, making Him prematurely gray, as it were. §§† Here Jesus is openly, unmistakably claiming to be Jehovah. They are obliged to get the point, and not wanting to acknowledge Him they pick up stones. At this point to argue, as some have done, that Jesus was merely a good, moral man won't wash. Either He was God, as He claimed; or He was a charlatan, a megalomaniac; or He was demonized. The Jews at that time took the third option; I take the first. §§‡ Since certain situations demanded a stoning, there were doubtless piles of ammunition placed strategically around the temple premises. §§§ The familiar "hid Himself" is not the best rendering here. Jesus did not try to hide behind a pillar, or whatever. Obviously they would have seen Him and started stoning. He became invisible and simply walked out, passing right through the middle of them. About half a percent of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "going through the middle of them; yes, that's how He got away" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The 99.5% are doubtless correct, and supply an important detail. ¹⁸ Wait a minute—if being born blind was the result of the man's own sin (as they suggest), when did he commit it? In any case, Jesus rejects their basic premise. ¹⁹ Wow! Did you get that? Jesus is saying that it was part of the Plan—the man was born blind so that the Messiah could come along years later and give him sight. (Does that fit anywhere in your theology?) ²⁰ Perhaps half a percent of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read "we" for "I" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). Virtually the same handful of manuscripts also has "Him who sent us" (in this verse), but none of the versions mentioned goes along—a curious proceeding.

coming when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.” †

The man is healed

⁶ Upon saying these things He spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud on the blind man's eyes. †⁷ And He said to him, “Go wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, ‘Sent’). So he went and washed, and came away seeing!

⁸ Then the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind ‡ started saying, “Isn't this the man who sat begging?” ⁹ Others said, “This is he”; still others, “He is like him.” *HE* kept saying, “I'm the one!”

¹⁰ So they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?” ¹¹ He answered and said: “A man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.’ So when I went and washed, I saw!” ¹² Then they said to him, “Where is He?” He says, “I don't know.”

The man is excommunicated

¹³ They bring the man who was formerly blind to the Pharisees. ¹⁴ (Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.) †¹⁵ So once again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. So he said to them, “He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” †¹⁶ Then some of the Pharisees said, “This man cannot be from God, because he does not keep the Sabbath,” †† Others were saying, “How can a sinful man do such signs?” And there was a division among them. ¹⁷ So they address the blind man again, “What do *YOU* say about him, in that he opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.” †††

¹⁸ However the Jews did not believe concerning him that he was blind and received sight until they summoned the parents of the one who had received sight. ¹⁹ And they asked them saying: “Is this your son, whom *YOU* say was born blind? How then does he now see?”

† In Matthew 5:14 Jesus said to His disciples, “You are the light of the world”—so as long as we are here there is light, and so it isn't night yet. We had better get on with accomplishing the Father's works. †† How unhygienic! The dirt in the street or road would be mixed with manure and all sorts of other contaminants, and human saliva is worse than a dog's. So why did Jesus do it? I don't know. Apparently it was part of His game plan to use a variety of procedures. There are cultures today where the shamans use saliva to heal, and to them this incident is especially significant. ‡ Instead of “blind”, perhaps 10% of the Greek manuscripts read ‘a beggar’, as in most modern versions. †† 7:37 says “the last day of the feast”, which was Tuesday, Oct. 17, 29 (I believe). Chapter 8 took place the next day, Wednesday. Here we are told that the healing of the blind man happened on a Saturday. Since we are still in Jerusalem (verse 7—Siloam is there), it may well have been the first Saturday after the events of chapter 8. ††† The man's answer is almost rude in its brevity. I don't think he liked the Pharisees. ††† Of course they were defining the terms—it was the rules *THEY* had imposed on the Sabbath that were not being kept. ††† He is being cautious. I conclude from the context that he believed Jesus to be the Messiah, but like his parents he was aware of the risk involved (verse 22).

²⁰ So his parents answered them and said: “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹ but by what means he now sees we don't know, or who opened his eyes *WE* don't know. He is of age. Ask him. He will speak for himself.” ²² His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, because the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be Christ he would be barred from the synagogue.

²³ That is why his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

²⁴ So they summoned the man who had been blind a second time and said to him: “Give glory to God! *WE* know that this man is a sinner.” ²⁵ So *HE* answered and said: “That He is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I *DO* know, that having been blind I now see!” ²⁶ So they said to him again: “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” ²⁷ He answered them: “I already told you and you didn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? *YOU* don't want to become His disciples too, do you?” ²⁸ They reviled him and said: “*YOU* are that fellow's disciple, but *WE* are Moses' disciples. ²⁹ We know that God spoke to Moses; but this fellow—we don't know where he's from.” ³⁰ The man answered and said to them: “Why, this is remarkable—you don't know where He is from; yet He opened my eyes!

³¹ Now we know that God doesn't listen to sinners; †† but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, to him He listens. ³² Since time began it was never heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God he would not be able to do anything.” ³⁴ They answered and said to him, “You were totally born in sins, and you are teaching *US*?” And they expelled him. †

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had expelled him, and finding him He said to him, “Do you believe into the Son of God?” ³⁶ He answered and said, “And who is He, Lord, that I may believe into Him?” ³⁷ So Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him and He is the One who is speaking with you.” ³⁸ So he said, “Lord, I believe!” And he worshiped Him. ³⁹ And Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see, and those who ‘see’ may become blind.” †††

§ In their culture, to be barred from the synagogue was to be socially ostracized. † Beautiful! †† The poor Jews are in a pickle. The fact of an extraordinary work of creation (giving sight where there never was any) won't go away, yet they refuse to acknowledge the obvious explanation. [Sort of like the ‘scientists’ of our day who refuse to acknowledge the Creator.] †† Not precisely true. ††† He knew his Bible—Psalms 66:18. †† Jesus had already restored sight to many blind people, but evidently this was the first instance of giving sight to one *BORN* blind, congenitally blind. No one challenged the man's statement. The man's argument here is very strong; irrefutable, in fact. †† The Pharisees here demonstrate their moral and intellectual bankruptcy. They couldn't answer the man, he had bested them fair and square, so they resort to the cowardly tactic of expelling him. (“Totally born in sins”—like the disciples, the Pharisees figured there was a lot of sin involved, for the man to be born blind.) ††† Less than 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read “Man” instead of “God” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ††† In verse 5 of this chapter Jesus declared Himself to

⁴⁰ And some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words and said to Him, "WE aren't blind too, are we?" ⁴¹ Jesus said to them: "If you were 'blind' you would not have sin. But now you say, 'We see,' so your sin remains. †

Jesus the Shepherd

A true shepherd

10 "Most assuredly I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is a shepherd †† of the sheep. ³ To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ And whenever he takes out his own sheep he goes ahead of them, ‡ and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ But they will NOT follow a stranger; rather they will run away from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶ Jesus gave them this illustration, but they did not understand what He was telling them.

The Door

⁷ Then Jesus addressed them again: "Most assuredly I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who ever came before me are thieves and robbers, †† but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters *BY ME*, he will be saved, ††† and will go in and out and find pasture. †††† The thief comes only in order

be "the Light of the world". Light enables people to see—"so that those who do not see may see". But too much light blinds—"and those who 'see' may become blind". The Pharisees had 'spies' dogging Jesus wherever He went, and they speak up in the next verse (40). Romans 2:17-20 explains their attitude: Look, you declare yourself a JEW, and rest on the Law, and boast in God, ¹⁸

19

20

The light of the Law enabled them to see, up to a point, but the Light that Jesus offered blinded them, since they did not want to acknowledge it. † According to Romans 5:13, "sin is not imputed where there is no law", because it is the Law that defines what sin is (Romans 3:20). So those who are without the light of the Law are 'blind' in that sense, and their sin is not imputed. In contrast, the Pharisees prided themselves on having the light of the Law, to the point of being guides to the blind, but since they themselves did not obey the Law, their sin remained. †† "A shepherd"—the fold was communal, so the sheep belonged to a variety of shepherds. That is why each one had to call his own sheep by name (verse 3). The doorkeeper would know all the shepherds. ‡ He 'leads', not 'drives'. Going out they need to be led; only the shepherd knows where they are going. †† Although some 50% of the Greek manuscripts (also the three ancient versions) omit "before me", we are virtually obliged to understand this, in any case, since presumably Jesus means pretending to be the Messiah. Gamaliel refers to two possible candidates in Acts 5:36-37. ††† Any true servants of God, such as Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:25-38), would not be taken in by an imposter. †††† Jesus is THE

to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. ⁵ I have come so that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

The Good Shepherd

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. ¹² The good shepherd lays down his life on behalf of the sheep. ¹³ But the hired man, not being the shepherd and not owning the sheep, sees the wolf coming and abandons the sheep, and runs away; and the wolf snatches the sheep and scatters them. ¹⁴ Now the hired man runs away because he is a hired man and it does not matter to him about the sheep.

¹⁵ "I am the good shepherd, and I know my own sheep, and I am known by them. ¹⁶ Just as the Father knows me, I also know the Father, and I lay down my life on behalf of the sheep. ¹⁷ I also have other sheep, that are not of this fold; ¹⁸ I must bring THEM also, and they will listen to my voice; and there will be one flock, one shepherd.

¹⁹ "Because of this the Father loves me, in that I lay down my life so that I may take it up again. ²⁰ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. ²¹ I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father." ²²

²³ Therefore there was another division among the Jews because of these words. ²⁴ Many of them were saying: "He has a demon and is raving mad. Why do you listen to him?" ²⁵ Others were saying: "These are not the sayings of someone who is demonized. A demon cannot open blind people's eyes, can it?" ²⁶

doorway, the only means of access into eternal life, a truth He will emphasize again in John 14:6. ††† What does a sheep want? Protection and pasture. These Jesus offers, but since people are more complex than sheep, He offers abundant life. § The original thief is Satan. "The thief comes" VS "I have come"—since Jesus contrasts "the thief" with Himself, that thief is presumably Satan. Jesus calls him a murderer and a liar in John 8:44. A thief is usually a liar as well, and vice versa. §† Here Jesus changes the figure—as THE good shepherd He really cares about the sheep, to the point of dying for them. §†† "This fold" presumably refers to Israel, so the "other sheep" would be Gentiles. Paul develops this theme in Ephesians 2:11-22. §‡ This is important! The cross did not kill Jesus; He dismissed His spirit—see John 19:30 and Matthew 27:50. In Mark 15:39 the loud shout followed immediately by death convinced the centurion. He had seen many crucifixions and was doubtless hardened to it. He knew that a person on a cross dies from asphyxiation. The weight of the body pushes the diaphragm against the lungs and you cannot breathe. Nailing the feet was a sadistic procedure that prolonged the agony—rather than die they would push against the nail to get a breath. Finally, when too weak to do that they would die for lack of air. (That is why they broke the legs of the two thieves; they then died within a few minutes.) Obviously, if you are dying without air you cannot shout! The centurion knew that the cross had not killed Jesus. But what mere human can just tell his spirit to leave? 2 + 2 = 4. Jesus had to be the Son of God. §†† The whole procedure was part of the Plan. An ordinary human being can kill himself, all right, but cannot change his mind later and come back. To Jesus the Father gave the ability to reunite spirit and body—presumably a unique occurrence. §† So they thought, but on the basis of what happens in Spiritist and Satanist circles, it appears that if a demon

“My sheep hear my voice”

²² Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem; † and it was winter. ²³ And Jesus was walking about in the temple, †† in Solomon's porch. ²⁴ Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him: “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” ²⁵ Jesus answered them: “I did tell you, and you do not believe. ‡ The works that I do in my Father's name—these testify concerning me. ²⁶ But you do not believe because you are not among my sheep, just like I told you. ††²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ And I give them eternal life, and they will never ever be wasted; and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ††²⁹ My Father, who has given *them* to me, is greater than all; ††† and no one is able to snatch out of my Father's hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one.”

³¹ Therefore the Jews picked up stones ††† again to stone Him. ³² Jesus answered them: “Many good works I have shown you from my Father. For which one of them are you stoning me?” ³³ The Jews answered Him saying, “It is not for a good work that we are stoning you, but for blasphemy; precisely because *you*, being a man, make yourself God!” ³⁴ Jesus answered them: “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, you are gods?’ ³⁵ If He called them ‘gods’ to whom the Word of God came—and the Scripture cannot be broken ^{§†}— ³⁶ do you say ‘You are blaspheming’ to the One the Father sanctified and sent into the world because I said, ‘I am God's Son?’ ³⁷ If I am not doing the works of my Father,

causes blindness (which they can), the same or a stronger one can remove it. † Chapter 8 happened on Oct. 18, 29 (I think). Chapter 9 and 10:1-21 presumably happened shortly after. Here in 10:22 it is Dec. 17, 29—two months later. I suppose that Luke 10:1-14:24 occurred during those two months; which means that the seventy were sent out during the last six months of the Lord's earthly ministry. Their target was interior Judea, in contrast to the twelve, whose target was Galilee. †† It was probably cold and He was walking to stay warm. ‡ Quite right. Their ‘suspense’ was pretended; they simply did not want to acknowledge Him. So they twist and squirm. †† When was that? Probably two months before, as recorded earlier in this chapter. †† Being snatched is one thing; jumping out is another. You can't ‘snatch’ yourself, it must be done by an outside force, and no such force is greater than God. But, if you don't want to go to Heaven, you won't. Jesus puts it very plainly in John 15:6, “If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast out as a branch...” ‘Abiding’ is up to us; we are not forced to do it. If we choose not to, we are out. ††† About 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts (with variations), of objectively inferior quality, read “What my Father has given me is greater than all” (as in TEV, etc.). ††† The temple courts were paved and presumably swept with some regularity. So how come there were stones lying around? I imagine there were piles of stones, of the right size and strategically placed, precisely for moments like this one. (If stoning serious offenders is an obligation, you need to be prepared.) § The reference is to Psalm 82:6, where the speaker is God (verse 1). Jesus calls the Psalms ‘law’. §† The Lord inserts this as an aside, but it is an important statement in itself—Scripture cannot be broken. If we build our lives on God's Word we have a secure foundation, one that cannot be shaken. (Your faith in that Word may be shaken, but not the Word itself.)

do not believe me. ³⁸ But if I *AM* doing *them*, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in Him.” ^{§††}

³⁹ So they tried again to seize Him, but He escaped from their hand. ^{§†}

The last three months

⁴⁰ He went away again across the Jordan, to the place where John was baptizing at first; and He remained there. ⁴¹ And many came to Him and said, “Though John did not perform any sign, everything John said about this man was true.” ⁴² And many of *the people* there believed into Him. ^{§††}

Lazarus of Bethany ^{§†}

11 Now a certain man, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha, was sick. ² (It was the Mary who [later] ^{§†} anointed the Lord with myrrh and wiped His feet with her hair whose brother Lazarus was sick.) ³ So the sisters sent to Him saying, “Lord, please, the one you love is sick!”

Jesus lets Lazarus die on purpose

⁴ Upon hearing it Jesus said, “This sickness is not unto death but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” ⁵ (Now Jesus loved ^{§§†} Martha and her sister and Lazarus.) ⁶ So, when He heard that he was sick He stayed where He was two more days! ^{§§†7} Then after this He says to the disciples, “Let us go into Judea again.” ^{§§§}

⁸ The disciples say to Him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and you are going back there?” ⁹ Jesus answered: “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks during the day he doesn't stumble, because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰ But if anyone walks in the night he does stumble, because the light is not in him.” ¹⁸

^{§††} The Lord is still appealing to them to repent, to change direction. ^{§†} See John 8:59 and Luke 4:30, where Jesus used supernatural means to avoid a premature death. Presumably this is a third instance. ^{§††} We are back in Bithabara (see John 1:28). Although people came to John from all over, presumably the local residents, because of the convenience, would have made up a large percentage of the crowd. They heard John say, “Behold the Lamb of God!” This may be the first time that Jesus came back to this spot, and He may have stayed there for a bit. So they got their chance. ^{§†} I take it that the events recorded in Luke 14:25-18:17, or most of the ministry in Perea, occurred between 10:42 and 11:1, here. ^{§†} John is writing many years after the fact. Mary became identified by her famous deed, which actually took place several weeks after the raising of Lazarus, and is recorded in chapter 12. ^{§§†} Here the verb is *αγαπαω*; in verse 3 it is *φιλεω*. ^{§§†} And how long had it taken the messengers to find Him? Perhaps no more than a day; from Bethany to Jericho was all downhill. ^{§§§} They are in Perea, on the eastern side of the Jordan. ¹⁸ “The light is not IN him”—I take it that here in verse 10 Jesus refers to spiritual darkness and light, be-

¹¹ Having said these things He says to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going in order to awaken him." ¹² His disciples said to Him, "Lord, if he is sleeping he will get well." ¹³ But Jesus had spoken of his death, while they thought He was talking about natural sleep. ¹⁴ So then Jesus said to them plainly: "Lazarus died. ¹⁵ And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶ Then Thomas (called Twin) said to his fellow disciples, "Let's *us* go too, so that we may die with Him." ††

¹⁷ So when Jesus had come, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ (Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had joined the women around †† Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.) ²⁰ Then Martha, when she heard that Jesus was coming, †† went to meet Him; but Mary remained sitting at home. †††

Martha

²¹ Then Martha said to Jesus: "Lord, if You had been here my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." ²³ Jesus says to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha says to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her: "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes into me, though he may die, will live; ²⁶ and everyone who both lives and believes into me will never ever die. ††† Do you believe this?" ²⁷ She says to Him, "Yes,

cause no one has sunlight inside him. With God's light inside, Jesus was not going to stumble, regardless of the time of day. † "Let us go to HIM"—would you say that about a corpse? Jesus knows what He is going to do. †† Thomas has received negative 'press', off and on, but his heart was in the right place. ‡ Four days—that seems like quite a bit. In verses 11 and 14 Jesus makes clear that Lazarus had died before He left Perea. Someone in a hurry could make the distance in one day. I can't prove it, but I imagine that the events recorded in Luke 18:18-19:27 (and the parallel passages in Matthew and Mark) occurred between verses 16 & 17, here. Jesus probably spent a night at Zacchaeus' house (see Luke 19:5), doing the climb (of over 3,000 vertical feet) from Jericho to Jerusalem the next morning. The Lord deliberately took His time, delayed His arrival. †† Instead of "the women around Martha", perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read just "Martha" (as in NIV, NASB, TEV, LB, etc.). It seems obvious that the sisters would be surrounded by women. †† Since Jesus stopped outside the village (verse 30), I wonder how Martha got the word. Perhaps Jesus sent one of the disciples, but there may well have been a lookout watching the road. ††† Mary was quite possibly unhappy with Jesus. It was obvious that He had not come when called, or He would have arrived several days sooner. She would conclude that He just didn't care that much. Since Jesus acted deliberately, it is clear that the Plan involved making the sisters go through that emotional suffering. We need to fix firmly in our minds that belonging to Jesus does not mean a free ride—we too may suffer precisely because of the outworking of God's Plan. After all the discussion is over, we have two options: rebel or submit. ††† The verb 'die' in verse 25 refers to physical death, in verse 26 it refers to spiritual death, while the verb 'live' refers to spiritual life (although one might translate the Text as

Lord, I have come to believe that You are the Messiah, the Son of God, the One coming into the world." §

Mary

²⁸ Having said these things she went and called her sister Mary, saying privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling you!" ²⁹ Upon hearing it she gets up quickly and goes to Him. ³⁰ (Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was in the place where Martha met Him. ³¹ Then the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, when they saw Mary get up quickly and go out, they followed her saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there.") ³² Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, upon seeing Him she fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here my brother would not have died!" §†

Jesus is troubled

³³ So when Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with her crying, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. §†³⁴ And He said, "Where have you put him?" They say to Him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Jesus wept. §†³⁶ So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" ³⁷ But some of them said, "Couldn't this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, have also kept this one from dying?" ³⁸ Then, groaning within Himself again, Jesus arrived at the tomb.

Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead

It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹ Jesus says, "Remove the stone!" Martha, the sister of the deceased, says to Him, "Lord, he already stinks; it's been four days!" §†⁴⁰ Jesus says to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?" §†⁴¹ Then they took away the stone from where the de-

'will not die forever', rather than "will never ever die", indicating that physical death is temporary). Note that 'lives' and 'believes into' are in the present tense, and then note the word 'both'. Once you have life in Christ, you need to keep on believing. § Martha was not a theologian; she may not have understood it all, but she knew who Jesus was! Like Martha, we don't have to understand everything, but we do need to know who Jesus is. §† I see a significant contrast between the sisters. Both of them say the same thing, but in a different tone. Mary is given over to her grief, she has no hope. Martha goes on to declare her confidence in Jesus; she still has hope. §†† Why? What troubled Him? He would not be inconsistent with Himself and His commitment to the Father's will, the Plan. Seeing Mary's despair, perhaps He felt distress at the suffering the Plan was causing—He did not enjoy the fact that He was responsible for that suffering. §‡ The verb rendered 'wept' is really 'shed tears', different from the verb in verse 33, which is often associated with mourning. Jesus was not mourning, knowing what He was about to do. So why did He weep? Perhaps He was empathizing with their grief. But I imagine that their hopeless perspective also troubled Him—their view of death was inadequate. §†† That is just what she said. Hey, at that moment Martha was not thinking about how it would read 2,000 years later! She reacted instinctively and blurted it out. Being a practical person she wanted to avoid further distress. §† When had He said that? The Text does not say, but I imagine it was during their earlier conversation—to me it is obvious that they

ceased was lying. Jesus raised His eyes and said: "Father, I thank You that You heard me. ^{†42} I know that You always hear me, but I spoke for the sake of the crowd standing around, so that they may believe that You sent me." ^{††43} Upon saying these things He shouted with a loud voice, [‡] "Lazarus, come out!" ^{††44} And out the deceased came! Bound hand and foot with bandages, ^{‡‡} and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus says to them, "Loose him and let him go." ^{‡‡‡}

The reaction

⁴⁵ So many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed into Him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went off to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. ⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council ^{‡‡‡} and said: "What can we do? Because this man performs many miraculous signs; ⁴⁸ if we let him go on like this everybody will believe into him; and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation!" [§]

⁴⁹ But one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them: "You know nothing at all! ^{§†50} Nor do you consider that it is advantageous for us ^{§††} that one man should die on behalf of the people, rather than the whole nation perish!" ⁵¹ (Now he did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die on behalf of the nation; ^{§†52} and not only on behalf of the nation, but also to

said more than is recorded. In any event, we have here an important declaration. Have you seen the glory of God lately? † He is saying in so many words that He and the Father had already talked about the plan of action. †† He was talking out loud on purpose, so that the people around would hear what He said. ‡ That is what the Text says. Of course to shout is to use a loud voice, so the point seems to be that He really put His lungs into it—you could have heard Him a mile away! Well, Lazarus heard Him in Hades, which is in the middle of the earth somewhere (Matthew 12:40, Ephesians 4:9). Yes, but, could He not have done it with a whisper? I suppose so. So why did He yell? I do not know; I was not there. However, there may have been some symbolism involved—the longer one is dead the harder it is to bring him back. ‡† As someone has said, if the Lord hadn't specified 'Lazarus' He might have emptied the graveyard! ‡‡ He must have come jumping out like a kangaroo—with his feet tied he could not walk. It must have been an interesting sight. And with his eyes covered he could not see, so obviously he had supernatural help. ‡‡† Would you have wanted to be the first one to start untying? I bet it was Martha. Notice that Jesus did not do what they could do; removing the stone and unwrapping Lazarus was up to them. ‡‡‡ There is no definite article with 'council', so I doubt that it was the full Sanhedrin; they would not want Nicodemus, or any others who were sympathetic to Jesus, to be there. § This was their 'hidden agenda'. Jesus had more than substantiated His claim to be the Messiah, but they did not want the political consequences of installing Him. §† Dear me, he wasn't very nice! But John says he was prophesying, so it may have been God telling them what He thought of them. §†† For "us" perhaps 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, read "you" (as in NIV, NASB, TEV etc. [LB omits]). Since this is a prophecy, the difference is significant. §‡ The 'nation' in question would be the Jewish nation. I find it interesting that God would choose to speak through Caiaphas. He was not the real high priest (who was Annas) but reflected a Roman imposition whereby the Jews had to name a new one

gather into one all the scattered children of God.) ^{§††53} So from that day on they really plotted to kill Him. ^{§†}

A tactical withdrawal

⁵⁴ Therefore Jesus no longer moved about openly among the Jews, but went away from there into the country near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim; and He stayed there with His disciples. ^{§‡}

The Passover is near

⁵⁵ Now the Jewish Passover was near, and many from the country went up to Jerusalem before the Passover in order to purify themselves. ⁵⁶ So they were looking for Jesus, ^{§§†} and as they stood in the temple they were saying to each other, "What do you think—that he won't come to the feast at all?" ⁵⁷ Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had together issued an edict that if anyone knew where He was he should report it, so they could arrest Him.

The last week

Mary anoints Jesus' feet ^{§§‡}

12 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was (the deceased whom He raised from the dead). ² So they gave a dinner for Him there—Martha was serving, while Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him. ³ Then Mary, bringing a pound of pure oil of nard, very costly, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped His feet with her hair! ^{§§§} And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

Judas has a problem

⁴ Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son (who was about to betray Him), said, ⁵ "Why wasn't this oil sold for 300 denarii ¹⁸ and given to the poor?" ⁶ (Now he did not say this because the poor mattered

every year, and that year it was Caiaphas. Maybe from God's point of view Annas was worse. §†† The actual terms of the prophecy seem to be limited to the one nation, so I take it that verse 52 is an added application offered by John. §† They have been wanting to kill Him for some time, but at this point it becomes top §‡ The time available was probably not more than two weeks, if that. It was a last bit of rest before the final storm, but the Lord doubtless took advantage of the opportunity to teach the disciples, without the distraction of the crowds. §§† I think this refers back to verse 53—it is the leaders who are conversing among themselves. §§‡ This incident must not be confused with the one recorded in Matthew 26:6 and Mark 14:3. Here Mary anoints His FEET on Saturday (March 30, 30), while in Matthew and Mark an unidentified woman anoints His HEAD on Wednesday (April 3, 30). The houses are also different. §§§ She has obviously forgiven Him for letting her brother die, and might even have been making amends for having doubted Him. ¹⁸ 300 denarii represented one year's wages for a working man (manual labor); it was indeed an expensive offering.

to him, but because he was a thief and had the money box; and used to pilfer what was put in it.)¹⁷ So Jesus said: "Let her be; she has performed this with a view to my burial.⁸ For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

Lazarus *is* a problem

⁹ Then a large crowd of the Jews learned that He was there; and they came, not only because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.¹⁰ So the chief priests decided to kill Lazarus as well,^{††11} in that because of him many of the Jews were defecting and believing into Jesus.

The Triumphal Entry

¹² The next day a large crowd that had come to the feast,[‡] when they heard^{‡†} that Jesus was coming into Jerusalem,¹³ took branches from palm trees and went out to meet Him. And they started shouting:

"Hosanna!"

"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!"[‡]

"King of Israel!"^{‡†}

¹⁴ And finding a young donkey Jesus sat on it; just as it is written:

¹⁵ "Fear no more, daughter of Zion.

Look, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!"^{‡‡}

¹⁶ (Now His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him, and they had done them to Him.)[§]

¹⁷ So the crowd that had been with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify.¹⁸ That is also why the crowd met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign.¹⁹ So the Pharisees said among themselves: "You can see that you are not making any difference! Just look, the world has gone off after Him!"

† This is an editorial comment offered after the fact. Obviously they all trusted Judas at the time or they wouldn't have made him treasurer, and if he was caught the purse would go to someone else. In fact, John may have received this information by divine revelation. †† If they succeeded in killing Jesus first, then He would not be around to raise Lazarus a second time. ‡ If they had "come" to the feast, they were not local residents. As Matthew 21:10 makes clear, the locals did not know what was going on. ‡† I wonder how that happened. ‡‡ This is a quote from Psalm 118:26, where "the Lord" is Jehovah. ‡‡† Comparing the parallel accounts, we get a better idea of the variety of expression: "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Hosanna in the highest!" "Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" ‡‡‡ See Zechariah 9:9. § Presumably the Holy Spirit was involved in this—John 14:26, 1 Corinthians 2:13. The 'remembering' would not necessarily have been immediate or automatic.

Some Greeks

²⁰ Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the feast.^{§†21} So these men approached Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and requested of him saying, "Sir, we want to see Jesus."^{§††22} Philip goes and tells Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.²³ But Jesus answered them saying: "The hour has come for the Son of the Man to be glorified.^{§†24} Most assuredly I say to you, if a grain of wheat, having fallen into the ground, does not die, it remains alone; §†† but if it dies it bears a lot of fruit.^{§†25} The one 'loving' his life will waste it, and the one 'hating' his life, in this world, will preserve it into eternal life.^{§†26} If anyone would serve ME, let him follow ME;

§† It is difficult to know just when this episode occurred; as I compare all four accounts, I doubt that it happened as part of the triumphal entry. It seems more likely to me that it happened the next day, after the cleansing of the temple. The atmosphere would be tense, and as non-Jews (even though converts to Judaism) they were keeping a low profile; so they act indirectly. §†† They were not asking to look at Him from a distance; they could manage that without help. They wanted to talk with Him. §‡ The impression one gets is that Jesus did not address the Greeks directly, but I wonder if they didn't sort of tag along and thus were within earshot. We know that the Lord could read thoughts, and so He would know what they really wanted—I assume that what they wanted did not fit in the Plan at that point. However, if the Greeks were within range, verses 24-26 would be for them just as much as for anyone else. §‡† Once a seed is planted, if it doesn't germinate it rots, and is wasted, but the germinating process destroys the seed, it 'dies'. How this applies to us is developed in the next verse. §† Jehovah the Son had 'fallen to the ground' some 34 years before, but now He was going to die—the 'fruit' is still being produced! §‡ To understand what the Lord is saying here, let us go to the parallel passage in Luke 9:23-25. "If anyone desires to come after me let him deny himself, take up his cross each day and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it. For what will it profit a man to gain the whole world but waste or forfeit himself?" What does the Lord mean when He speaks of losing one's "life"? One does not lose one's soul for love of Christ. Nor is the reference to being killed. Rather, Jesus has in mind the life we live, the accumulated results of our living. All that I have done up to this moment plus all that I will yet do until overtaken by death or the rapture of the Church, whichever happens first—that is the "life" that is at risk (in my own case). Let us look at our Lord's words a little more closely. There seems to be a contradiction here—if you lose, you save; if you want to save, you lose. How can it work? The following context helps us out. In verse 26 Jesus explains verses 24-25 in terms of His second coming. The parallel passage, Matthew 16:27, is clearer. "For the Son of the Man is going to come in the glory of His Father, with His angels, and then He will repay each according to his deeds." Christ was thinking of the day of reckoning. In other words, "we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10) and "each of us will give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive his due according to what he has done while in the body, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). I understand that 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 is referring to the same occasion, the day of reckoning. After declaring that Jesus Christ is the only foundation, Paul speaks of different materials that one might use in building on it: "gold, silver, precious stones" or "wood, hay, straw". (Although the primary interpretation of this passage presumably has to do with the performance of teachers and leaders in the church, I believe it clearly applies to the daily life of each believer as well.) The point is,

and where I am, MY servant will be too. † Further, if anyone serves ME, the Father will honor him. ††

A Voice out of Heaven

²⁷ “Now my soul is distressed, and what should I say—‘Father, rescue me from this hour’? But this is why I came to this hour— ²⁸ ‘Father, glorify your name!’” Then a **Voice** came out of Heaven, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again!” ²⁹ So the crowd that was standing by and listening said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to Him.” ³⁰ Jesus answered and said: “It was not for my sake that this Voice came, but for your sakes. ³¹ NOW is the judgment of this world; NOW the ruler of this world will be thrown out. ³² While I, if I be lifted up from the

our deeds will be tested by fire. If fire has any effect upon gold or silver it is only to purify them, but its effect on hay and straw is devastating! Okay, so what? Let us go back to the beginning. God created the human being for His glory; to reflect it and contribute to it. I suppose we may understand Psalm 19:1 and Isaiah 43:7 in this way, at least by extension. But Adam lost this capacity when he rebelled against God. For this reason the sentence that weighs against our race is that we “fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). But the Son came into the world to restore our lost potential. Ephesians 1:12 and 14 tell us that the object of the plan of salvation is “the praise of His glory” (see also 2 Corinthians 1:20). And 1 Corinthians 10:31 puts it into a command

So there it is. To be a slave of Christ means to live with reference to the Kingdom; it means to do everything for the glory of God. In this way the slave “saves” his life because he will be building it with “gold and silver”, which will pass through the fire at the judgment seat of Christ without loss. In contrast, the believer who refuses to be a slave of Jesus builds his life with “hay and straw”, which will be consumed by the fire—and so he “loses” his life; he lived in vain; the potential that his life represented was wasted, thrown away. What a tragedy! † If we want to be where Jesus is, we need to stick close to Him. (Well, you know, that’s really kind of obvious, but how many of us do it?) †† Each underlined pronoun corresponds to an emphatic pronoun in the Original Text. What the Lord did here was quite unusual; in other places He emphasized one pronoun, but not five in a row, and especially with all five referring to Himself! So what was He trying to tell us? I take it that He is telling us to focus on HIM, his person and our relationship to Him. He needs to be number one

‡ It seems clear that the bystanders did not hear the words, at least not to distinguish them; they heard the Voice, which must have been impressive (they compared it to thunder). A similar thing happened on the road to Damascus; only Paul understood the words. ‡† “Thrown out” as ruler of this world; upon Christ’s victory through the cross and the resurrection Satan was deposed. Satan continues to carry on as if he were still the ruler, but he is acting on the basis of bluff and usurpation. If Christ is now the true and legitimate ruler of this world, why is Satan allowed to carry on? The Father is ‘seeking’ those who will worship Him in spirit and truth, not

earth, I will draw all *people* to myself.” ³³ (Now He said this to indicate by what kind of death He was about to die.) ³⁴ The people answered Him: “We have heard from the Law that the Messiah remains forever; and so how can you say, ‘The Son of the Man must be lifted up’? Who *is* this ‘the Son of the Man’?” ³⁵

Then Jesus said to them: “The Light will be with you just a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that darkness does not overtake you; ³⁶ the one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the Light, ³⁷ believe into the Light, so that you may become sons of light.” ³⁸ Jesus said these things, and going away He was hidden from them.

An editorial comment

³⁷ Although He had performed so many signs in their presence, they were not believing into Him; ³⁸ so that the word spoken by Isaiah the prophet should be fulfilled:

“Lord, who has believed what we heard?

And to whom has the arm of the **LORD** really been revealed?” ³⁹

Therefore they were unable to believe, in that Isaiah said again:

⁴⁰ “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, ⁴¹

lest they should see with their eyes

because it is easy or convenient. So there has to be testing, there has to be an adverse context; so no one can claim that God is ‘buying votes’ (which was Satan’s allegation about Job). ‡‡ Again, although our Lord was literally ‘lifted up’, His intended meaning would not be immediately obvious to His hearers. ‡‡‡ I find it interesting that the people were evidently equating ‘the Son of the Man’ with the Messiah, which was precisely correct; but what Jesus was saying did not match their expectations. ‡‡‡ Since most people did their traveling on foot, they would understand this principle very well—you need to make as much distance as you can while there is light. § Presumably He was referring to His physical presence among them. §† By believing into Jesus they would become ‘sons of light’—they would live according to the values of the Kingdom of Light, not those of the kingdom of darkness. §†† The reference is to Isaiah 53:1. Many years ago (over 50) I did an exegesis of this passage for my Hebrew professor at Dallas Seminary. The section really begins at 52:13—in verses 13-15 Jehovah describes the suffering of the Messiah. In verses 1-3 the people of Israel try to justify or explain why they rejected Him; you can almost hear them whine: “Who would have believed what was reported to us? And to whom has the arm of Jehovah really

§‡ Both Matthew (13:15) and Paul (Acts 28:27) also quote Isaiah 6:10 (as John is doing here), and they agree with the LXX; they give the impression that the people did it to themselves, rather than being a judicial act of God. What is involved is a different vowel pointing for the consonants of the main verbs. Since the original text had no vowel pointing, and both sets of pointings are possible and legitimate, we are looking at an option of the translator or interpreter. I imagine that both sides of the ambiguity are true, much as in the case of Pharaoh—during the first five plagues he hardened his own heart, after that God hardened his heart.

and understand with their hearts
and should turn around, and I would heal them.”
41 Isaiah said these things when † he saw His glory ††
and spoke concerning Him.

42 Nevertheless, even among the rulers many be-
lieved into Him, but because of the Pharisees they did
not confess Him, so they would not be expelled from
the synagogue; †43 for they loved the praise of men
more than the praise of God. ††

The last public word

44 Jesus called out and said: “The one believing into
me believes not into me but into Him who sent me.
45 And the one seeing me sees Him who sent me. 46 I,
Light, †† have come into the world so that everyone
who believes into me will not remain in the darkness.
††47 Also, if someone hears my words and does not be-
lieve, I do not judge him; because I did not come to
judge the world but to save the world. ††48 The one
who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has
that which judges him—the word that I have spoken,
that is what will judge him on the last day; †49 because I
have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent
me, HE gave me a command, what I should say and
what I should speak. 50 And I know that His command
is eternal life. So whatever I say, I say it just like the Fa-
ther told me.” ††

† Less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, read “because” instead of “when” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The difference in meaning is significant. †† Wait a minute! Whom did Isaiah see? John is talking about Jesus, so when did Isaiah see Jesus? The quote in verse 40 is from Isaiah 6:10. The quoted words were spoken by Jehovah, verse 8, the One who was sitting on the throne, verse 1. In verse 5 Isaiah says of Him, “my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts”. So John is affirming that the One on the throne was Jehovah the Son, Jesus. I love it! † To be barred from the synagogue was to be excommunicated, and in consequence to be socially ostracized. †† This is bothersome. In Matthew 10:32 the Lord Jesus said, “whoever confesses me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in the heavens”. So what happens if you don't confess? Like the rulers here who were ‘secret believers’. But in verse 33 the Lord goes on to say, “whoever denies me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in the heavens”. Is there a difference between denying and keeping quiet? Proverbs 29:25 says, “the fear of man brings a snare”. Writing to the Laodicean church the glorified Christ said, “because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will vomit you out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:16). If confessing is to be ‘hot’, and denying is to be ‘cold’, then keeping quiet is to be ‘lukewarm’. All in all it looks like the odds are in favor of confessing (see Luke 12:4-5). (See the note at John 5:44.) †† In verses 35 and 36 He has already referred to Himself as “the Light”—here there is no article, so I take it that He is emphasizing the quality inherent in the noun. ††† Again, ‘the darkness’ refers to Satan's kingdom. ††† This refers to His first advent. At His second advent He will indeed judge. † Ignorance of the law is no excuse. If the Bible exists in your language and you know how to read (or you know someone who can read), then you could have learned Jesus' sayings. Claiming that you did not know will not hack it. †† In John 5:19 Jesus affirms that he only did what He saw the Father do. Here He affirms that He only said what He heard the Father say. Although the Father and the Son are distinct persons, as Jesus repeatedly made clear, His identification with the Father was so complete

The last night

13 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus,
knowing that His hour had come that He should
depart from this world to the Father, having loved His
own who were in the world He loved them to the end.
†††

Jesus washes the disciples' feet

2 And after supper †† (the devil already having put it
into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray
Him), †††3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given
everything into His hands, †† and that He had come
from God and was going to God, 4 He gets up from the
meal and lays aside His garments, †† and taking a towel
He tied it around Himself. 5 Then He poured water
into the basin ††† and began to wash the disciples' feet
and to dry them with the towel with which He was
wrapped. †††

that to see Him was to see the Father, to believe into Him was to believe into the Father (verses 44-45, above). ††† This appears to be a cover statement, introducing the rest of the book. What Jesus would do in the upper room, in the garden, on the cross, after the resurrection, were expressions of His love for His own. His love took Him through to ‘the end’, the last consequence—nothing was left undone. How could He return to the Father if He didn't do all that had to be done? He had been sent to recover all that the first Adam had lost, and He did! †† Less than 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read ‘during’ supper (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.), which confuses the account. There was an ordinary meal, and then the Passover ritual itself. The meal was basically over, but they couldn't proceed with the ritual because they were ceremonially unclean—their feet hadn't been washed (they were dirty from the dust of the road). ††† This editorial aside seems to interrupt the flow of the narrative, but John does this sort of thing in other places as well. However, it furnishes important background information for verse 27 below. †† The Plan depended on Him, was “in His hands”. For Him to know that He was “going to God” (end of verse) meant that He knew He was going to win. †† The Text has ‘garments’, plural, so the rendering ‘robe’ doesn't seem to fit. I gather that Jesus stripped down to a loincloth, or basic underclothing, which is what a servant might wear. Since He was about to perform the duty of a servant (that should have been there, but wasn't), it was a graphic symbolism. ††† Yes, ‘the’ basin. When the Lord sent some disciples to prepare the room, they would not only have to be sure that there were thirteen couches, properly arranged [they did not sit on chairs, they reclined on couches, with their heads in toward the table, and so their feet would stick out—just right for washing], but also see to a basin, water and a towel, so that the necessary ceremonial washing could be performed. So this was ‘the’ basin that had been placed there on purpose. ††† Normally there would have been a servant there to perform the duty of washing feet, but I assume that the Lord had given instructions not to have one. There was an ongoing dispute among them as to who was the greatest (Luke 22:24), so naturally none of them was prepared to take the place of the servant. They could eat the meal with dirty feet, as they did, but not the Passover. I imagine that the situation began to get uncomfortable—it was time to proceed with the ritual, but first someone had to wash feet, and no one was offering. So finally Jesus Himself gets up.

Simon Peter

⁶ So He comes to Simon Peter, and *HE*[†] says to Him, "Lord, *YOU* wash *MY* feet?!" ⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know [by experience] after this." ^{††8} Peter says to Him, "You will never *EVER* wash my feet!" [‡] Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with me." ⁹ Simon Peter says to Him, "Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head!" ^{††10} Jesus says to him: "One who is bathed has no need except to wash his feet, but is clean all over. And you (pl) are clean, but not all of you." ¹¹ (He knew who was betraying Him; that is why He said, "Not all of you are clean.")

Jesus explains His action

¹² So when Jesus had washed their feet and put His garments back on, He reclined again and said to them: "Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³ You address me as 'Teacher' and 'Lord', and you speak correctly, because I am. ¹⁴ So then, if I, Lord and Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ Because I have given you an example, so that you also should do just as I did to you. ^{‡‡}

¹⁶ "Most assuredly I say to you, a slave is not greater than his owner, neither is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ If you understand these things, you are blessed if you do them. ^{‡‡‡}

¹⁸ "I do not speak concerning all of you—I know whom I chose. But let the Scripture be fulfilled: 'The one eating bread with me lifted up his heel against

[†] The pronoun is emphatic. The picture seems to be that Jesus had already done several pairs of feet, whose owners had submitted in silence. But now it is Peter's turn and he cannot take it (maybe he had a more tender conscience than the others). ^{††} The Lord makes an important distinction here—He advises Peter that he doesn't understand what is going on, as Peter proves the next time he opens his mouth, but in the future his knowledge on this subject will have been gained by experience. [‡] Peter loses it; his answer is totally without restraint. ^{††} Peter continues to demonstrate that he is not understanding, but his heart is in the right place. Faced with the possibility of being cut off from the Lord, he swings to the other extreme—now he wants a bath. ^{‡‡} First, we have the physical example of washing feet—those communities that practice foot washing have more basis for doing so than the rest of us have for not doing so (foot washing can be an important spiritual exercise). Second, we have the spiritual reality behind the example. The crucial point is in verse 10, "One who is bathed has no need except to wash his feet". Anyone who has been 'washed in the blood of the Lamb' has had his bath. But walking on the paths of life we get our feet dirty, we sin, and sin breaks our fellowship with God—you can't go into the living room with dirty feet. We need the blood of Christ for our daily cleansing, upon which depends our fellowship and communion with Him—as He said to Peter, "If I do not wash [not 'bathe'] you, you have no part with me". I regard Philippians 2:5-8 as a parallel passage: He took the form of a slave (verse 7), and His 'work' took Him to the cross, where He shed His blood, upon which both our salvation [bath] and daily walk [washing] depend. ^{‡‡†} We have here a condition of fact—the Lord is assuming that they understand; it follows that it is not enough to understand—we must do, in order to be blessed.

me.' ^{†††19} I am telling you *now* before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am.

²⁰ Most assuredly I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives me, [§] and he who receives me receives Him who sent me."

The traitor is identified ^{§†}

²¹ Having said these things, Jesus was distressed in His spirit and testified saying, "Most assuredly I say to you, one of you will betray me!" ²² So the disciples started looking at each other, at a loss as to whom He meant. ^{§††23} Now one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining beside Jesus' bosom. ^{§†24} So Simon Peter motions to him to inquire whom it might be that He was referring to. ²⁵ And leaning back against Jesus' breast he says to Him, "Lord, who is it?" ²⁶ Jesus answers, "It is the one to whom I will give the piece of dunked bread." And dunking the bread He gives it to Judas Iscariot, Simon's son. ²⁷ And after the sop, *THEN* Satan entered into him. ^{§††} Whereupon Jesus says to him, "What you are doing, do quickly!" ^{§†28} (Now none of those reclining at the table knew why He said this to him. ²⁹ Since Judas had the money box, some supposed that Jesus was telling him to buy what they needed for the feast, or to give something to the poor.) ^{§†30} So having received the sop, immediately he went out. And it was night. ^{§§†}

A new commandment

³¹ When he had gone out Jesus says: ^{§§†} "Now the Son of the Man has been glorified, and God has been glori-

^{‡‡‡} The reference is to Psalm 41:9. [§] To represent Christ on this earth is both a great privilege and a great responsibility. ^{§†} This is the second time; for the first see Matthew 26:21-25, Mark 14:18-21 and Luke 22:21-23. ^{§††} The way I used to think about Judas, I would have expected that the others would immediately suspect who it was, and start looking at him out of the corner of their eye. But no, they were clueless—no one thought of Judas! Which tells me that up to that moment he had conducted himself in an exemplary way; in fact, they trusted him so much that he was the treasurer. ^{§‡} They were reclining on their sides, propped up on their left elbows (unless someone was left handed). So John was next to Jesus, with his back to Jesus' bosom. In order to put his question, he leaned back until his shoulder touched Jesus' chest (he would have to rest his weight there), and in that way he was looking up at Jesus. ^{§‡†} As we know from verse two, Satan had already planted the idea in Judas' head/heart, but at this point he enters the man—Judas wasn't just demonized, he was satanized! Evidently Satan required permission to do this, and giving the sop was the signal; Jesus gave him the go-ahead. Obviously Satan had to be there, in that upper room! (If he was in that upper room, why can't he be in your church? Any Judases in your church?) I take it that Satan entered Judas to make sure that he would carry through with the plan. ^{§†} Although to the disciples it would appear that Jesus was addressing Judas, I rather suspect that He was actually addressing Satan, since it was Satan who would now control the man's thoughts. He orders him to get on with it; that is right, Jesus gave Satan an order, and Satan obeyed. ^{§‡} This is instructive—even though Jesus had just said that it was Judas, the others just could not believe it. ^{§§†} Commentators like to wax eloquent on this statement. It was literally night, perhaps about 9 p.m., but it was also spiritually 'night'—Satan's finest hour.

fied in Him. ³² Since God has been glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him with Himself, and He will do so presently. †

³³ “Little children, I am with you *just* a little longer. You will look for me, and as I said to the Jews, ‘Where I am going you cannot come,’ so now I say to you.

³⁴ “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you ††—that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” ‡

Jesus warns Peter ††

³⁶ Simon Peter says to Him, “Lord, where are you going?” †† Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but later you will follow me.”

††³⁷ Peter says to Him: “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for your sake!” ³⁸ Jesus answered him: “You will lay down your life for my sake? Most assuredly I say to you, no rooster can crow until you have denied me three times! †††

The Way, the Truth, the Life

14 “Do not let your (pl) heart be distressed; you believe into God and you believe into me. ⁵² In my

§§‡ The verb is in the present tense; I get the impression that as soon as the door clicked behind Judas the Lord started speaking. The events have been set in motion that will culminate in His being glorified. † Actually, ‘do so’ stands for ‘glorify Him’, that is repeated from the previous clause. †† The Law says to love your neighbor as yourself; Grace says to love as Christ loves—clearly a higher standard! ‡ Since agape

†† This is the first

warning. The second is recorded in Luke 22:31-34, which I would place after John 16:15, toward the end of the proceedings in the upper room. Both the context and the content of the warning differ from John. The third warning, in two parts, is recorded in Matthew 26:31-35 (1st part) and Mark 14:27-31 (2nd part). The first two warnings happened in the upper room, the third after they had left it.

†† Peter didn’t hear the ‘new commandment’; he was stuck on the prior statement. (This sort of thing happens during sermons all the time. So if the preacher says something unexpected, he had better stop and explain or he loses his audience.) ††† I imagine that the Lord is referring to Hades, in the first instance (referring to physical death), but then also to Heaven. It is not part of the Plan for Peter to die just yet (in fact, he was delivered from prison in a supernatural way to avoid a premature death—Acts 12:6-11), but of course he will die and go to Heaven later on. ††† The emphasis here is on the obligatory absence of any cockcrow until Peter has denied [at least] three times. There is no definite article with ‘rooster’, so it is “a rooster”; the negative is double, therefore emphatic, “absolutely not”. If you have lived where there were a number of roosters, you know that one or another can sound off at any time, and some one of them will crow almost on the hour throughout the night, while at dawn they put on a chorus. It was probably somewhere around 9 p.m. when Jesus issued this warning, and Peter’s first denial probably happened at least five hours later. For not a single rooster to crow anywhere within earshot during that time required supernatural intervention—which is why I render “no rooster can crow” (if an angel can close lions’ mouths [Daniel 6:22], closing roosters’ beaks would be a cake walk). § A Greek verb is ambiguous in the 2nd person plural between Indicative and Imperative, and since that form occurs in both clauses here, there are four possibilities—Ind. Ind., Ind. Imp., Imp. Ind., Imp. Imp. The choice is up to the translator,

Father’s house are many dwellings ^{5†} (otherwise I would have told you). ^{5††} I am going away to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also. ^{5†4} Now you know where I am going, and you know the way.”

Thomas’ question

⁵ Thomas says to Him, “Lord, we *DON’T* know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” ^{5††6} Jesus says to him: “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one goes to the Father except through me. ^{5†7} If you had known me, you would have known my Father as well; ^{5†} from now on you both know Him and have seen Him.”

Philip’s question

⁸ Philip says to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” ⁹ Jesus says to him: “Such a long time I have been with you, and you have not known me, Philip? ^{5††} He who has seen me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’ ¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own; rather it is the Father who dwells in me who does the works. ^{5††11} Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or else, believe me because of the works themselves. ^{5††}

which is why you will find differences among the versions at this point. We have already been told, in John 6:64, that Jesus knew who did not believe; it follows that He also knew who did. He knew that the eleven believed, so it seems more likely to me that He spoke in the Indicative. He is appealing to them to be consistent with their belief. ^{5†} ‘House’ and ‘dwelling’ translate different words. I suppose that “my Father’s house” is a synonym for Heaven. ^{5††} You can find quite a variety of interpretations and translations of this clause. I assume that the Lord had certainly given them teaching on the subject of Heaven; He here assures them that if their expectations were false He would have warned them. I take it that over 95% of the Greek manuscripts do not have “that” introducing the next clause. ^{5†} He wants us. We are important to Him. So much so that before He created our race He had determined to pay the price for our redemption—1 Peter 1:19-20. ^{5††} Peter wasn’t the only one who hadn’t figured it out. But we may thank Thomas for eliciting the tremendous statement that occupies verse 6! ^{5†} Jesus answers both questions: He is the way, and He is going to the Father. The only way that any human being, including Adam and Eve and all the Old Testament saints, can go to the Father is on the basis of the shed blood of the Lamb of God. ^{5†} The Lord is saying that up to that moment the disciples had not really gotten the point—they were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, all right, but did not understand the Messiah’s relationship to the Father. But as a result of the immediately coming events, culminating with the advent of the Holy Spirit, they will understand. ^{5†} It sounds like Jesus is a little disappointed. They are slow pupils. ^{5††} Notice again the close connection between saying and doing—“I speak... the Father does”. If, like Jesus (John 12:49-50), we only speak what the Father says, He will act on the basis of our word too. ^{5††} This is basically the same appeal He had already made to the Pharisees.

“Greater works than these”

¹² “Most assuredly I say to you, [†] the one believing in to me, he too will do the works that I do; ^{††} in fact he will do greater works than these, [‡] because I am going to my Father. ¹³ Further, whatever you (pl) may ask in my name, ^{‡‡} that I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in my name, I will do it! ¹⁵ If you love me, keep my commandments. ¹⁶ Also, ^{‡‡} I will ask the Father and He will give you another Enabler, ^{‡‡‡} so that He may stay with you throughout the age ^{‡‡‡17} —the Spirit of the Truth, [§]

[†] “Most assuredly” is actually “amen, amen”—rendered “verily, verily” in the AV. Only John registers the word as repeated, in the other Gospels it is just “amen”. In the contemporary literature we have no example of anyone else using the word in this way. It seems that Jesus coined His own use, and the point seems to be to call attention to an important pronouncement: “Stop and listen!” Often it precedes a formal statement of doctrine or policy, as here. ^{††} This is a tremendous statement, and not a little disconcerting. Notice that the Lord said, “will do”; not ‘maybe’, ‘perhaps’, ‘if you feel like it’; and certainly not ‘if the doctrine of your church permits it’! If you believe you **will do!** The verb ‘believe’ is in the present tense, 2nd person singular; if you (sg) are believing you will do; it follows that if you are not doing it is because you are not believing. 2 + 2 = 4. Doing what? “The works that I do.” Well, Jesus preached the Gospel, He taught, He cast out demons, He healed all sorts and sizes of sickness and disease, He raised an occasional dead person, and He performed a variety of miracles (water to wine, walk on water, stop a storm instantaneously, transport a boat several miles instantaneously, multiply food, shrivel a tree—and He implied that the disciples should have stopped the storm and multiplied the food, and He stated that they could shrivel a tree [Peter actually took a few steps on water]). So how about us? The preaching and teaching we can handle, but what about the rest? I once heard the president of a certain Christian college affirm that this verse obviously could not mean what it says because it is not happening! Well, in his own experience and in that of his associates I guess it is not. But many people today cast out demons and heal, and I personally know someone who has raised a dead person. Miracles are also happening. So how about me? And you? [‡] Well now, if we cast out demons, heal and perform miracles, isn’t that enough? Jesus wants more, He wants “greater things” than those just mentioned. Notice again that He said “will do”, not maybe, perhaps, or if your church permits. But what could be ‘greater’ than miracles? This cannot refer to modern technology because in that event such ‘greater things’ would not have been available to the believers during the first 1900 years. Note that the key is in the Lord’s final statement (in verse 12), “because I am going to my Father”. Only if He won could He return to the Father, so He is here declaring His victory before the fact. It is on the basis of that victory that the ‘greater things’ can be performed. Just what are those ‘greater’ things? For my answer, see my outline, “Biblical Spiritual Warfare”, available from my site: www.prunch.org. ^{‡‡} In verse 12 the verb ‘will do’ is singular, both times, so it has to do with the individual. Here, ‘you may ask’ is plural, reminiscent of Matthew 18:19-20. To ask “in Jesus’ name” is to ask something Jesus would ask, or is asking (remember John 12:49-50)—notice that the purpose is to glorify the Father (or more precisely, that the Father be glorified in/through the Son), not to satisfy any selfish wish we may have. ^{‡‡‡} I take it that verse 16 is parallel to verse 13, and both are tied to verse 12. ^{‡‡‡‡} Greek has two words for ‘another’, another of the same kind and another of a different kind. Here it is another of the same kind—being two members of the Trinity, the Son and the Holy Spirit are definitely of the ‘same’ kind! ^{‡‡‡‡} Strictly, ‘into the age’; ‘age’ is singular, and for the meaning ‘forever’ we would expect the plural, ‘into the ages’. I doubt that the Lord is promising that the

whom the world is unable to receive, ^{§†} because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you *DO* know Him, because He is staying with you and will be in you. ^{§††}

¹⁸ “I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you [shortly]. ^{§†19} In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Because I live you also will live. ^{§†20} In that day ^{§†} you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹ The one who has my commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves me. Now the one who loves me will be loved by my Father; and I will love him, and reveal myself to him.” ^{§†}

Judas' question

²² Judas (not the Iscariot) says to Him, “Lord, just how is it that You are going to reveal Yourself to us and *NOT* to the world?” ²³ Jesus answered and said to him: “If anyone loves me he will keep my word. So my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ^{§†24} The one who does not love me

Holy Spirit will remain in us (see next verse) throughout eternity, just during this age. During this age we need the Holy Spirit in us to counteract the ‘flesh’ or fallen nature; in Heaven we will be free of all contaminants. § That is what the Text says, ‘the’ Truth. The Holy Spirit represents the Truth, whereas Satan represents ‘the lie’ (John 8:44). §† 1 John 5:19 says that the whole world ‘lies in the wicked one’; Satan exercises control over it. The world is controlled by ‘the lie’ and thus is incapable of receiving the truth. Just try speaking out against relativism, humanism, abortion, homosexuality, materialism, permissiveness, etc. and see how the world reacts. §†† “Will be in you”, presumably a prophetic reference to Pentecost and after. During this age the Holy Spirit resides in the true believer. §‡ I assume that the reference is to His appearances during forty days (Acts 1:3) after His resurrection. They saw Him die on Friday and saw Him alive on Sunday, so they were not ‘without’ Him very long. Pentecost was fifty days after Passover; the Ascension was at least forty days after the Resurrection; so the interval between Ascension and Pentecost was only 7-8 days. Indeed, He did not leave them orphans. §‡† “I live”, present tense. As the I AM who is Life, at any moment throughout eternity (past or future) He can say, “I live”. As “the resurrection and the life” He can guarantee our future life. §† What ‘day’ is that? I assume that it refers back to verse 16, to the coming of the Enabler. With the indwelling Holy Spirit they will have a better understanding of the relationships. §‡ The Lord gives an important insight on spiritual growth, here: our love → our obedience → His love → His self revelation. Can you love someone you don’t know? Perhaps in theory, but not really. The more you know someone the more you love him/her (especially if they are nice). As we come to know the Lord we grow to love Him, which translates into obedience, which leads Him to reveal Himself to us, which increases our knowledge of Him, which increases our love for Him, which increases our obedience, which increases His self revelation, which increases our knowledge, love, obedience, and so on. It is an upward spiral which takes us ever closer to Him. §§† Like, wow—did you get that? We have always been taught (correctly) that the Holy Spirit indwells the true believer, but here the Lord says that the Father and the Son can be at home with us as well. That is all three persons of the Trinity! There is a condition, however—we must keep Jesus’ word, which is really the Father’s (next verse). The indispensable evidence that we love God is to obey His word; this stimulates His love in return. There is evidently some sense in which we influence the MANIFESTATION of His love, at least. The answer to Judas’ question is that the ‘revealing’ is one on one, and is triggered by one’s obedience. So the world is out.

does not keep my words; † further, the word which you hear is not *MINE* but the Father's who sent me.

The Teacher, the peace; the Father, the enemy

²⁵ "I have spoken these things to you while being with you. ²⁶ But the Enabler, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, *HE* will teach you all things and remind you of everything I said to you. ††

²⁷ "Peace I leave with you, *MY* peace I give to you; it is not like the world gives that I give to you. ‡ Do not let your heart be distressed or intimidated. ††

²⁸ "You heard me say to you, 'I am going away and I am coming *back* to you.' If you loved me you would have been glad that I said, 'I am going to the Father,' because my Father is greater than I. ††²⁹ I have told you *NOW*, before it happens, so that when it does happen you may believe.

³⁰ "I will no longer talk much with you, because the ruler of the world is approaching; ††† actually, he has *NOTHING* in me. †††³¹ Rather, I habitually do just as the Father commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. §

"Get up, let us leave here. §†

The true vine

15 "I am the vine, the true one, §†† and my Father is the vinedresser. ² Any branch in me which does

† In verse 23 "my word" is singular, here "my words" is plural; I take it that these phrases are being used interchangeably. †† We understand that this activity of the Holy Spirit would be especially prominent during the writing of the Gospels. They complement but do not contradict one another. ‡ The world can offer peace of a sort, for a time, with a price tag, but it's an illusion. †† Satan will certainly use the world to try to intimidate and distress us, but how we react is up to us. We can decide to "let the peace of God rule in our hearts" (Colossians 3:15). †† How does that work? Well, if you really love someone you are more concerned for their well-being than you are for your own. For Jesus to return to the Father would certainly be better for Him. (And because He sent the Holy Spirit it also became better for them, and for us.) ††† Like Jesus said a few hours later to the soldiers in the garden, "this is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke 22:53). Satan was 'approaching' to do his thing, to perform his part in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. ††† This is **important**

§ Jesus proved His love for the Father by obeying Him, giving us the example. §† Some have concluded that they left the upper room at this moment, but I take it that 18:1 states that it was only at that point that they actually left. We must not interpret the Text according to 'western' culture; in Brazil (for example) it is bad form for a visitor to leave before at least two false starts. You start making noises at least half an hour before you actually have to leave. The disciples may well have stood up at that point, but I take it that chapters 15-17 still took place in that room—once they were out walking it would be difficult for all of them to hear Him, and I assume that the Lord certainly wanted all of them to hear clearly. §†† There is emphasis on "true", which implies a contrast with the false one. I suppose that Jesus may have been referring to Jeremiah 2:21: "Yet I had

not produce fruit He lifts up, §† and every one producing fruit He prunes, so that it may produce more fruit. §††³ You are already clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. §†⁴ Abide in me and I in you. §† Just as a branch is incapable of producing fruit by itself, except it remains in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me.

⁵ "I am the vine, and you are the branches. The one who abides in me and I in him, he is the one who produces much fruit, because apart from me you are incapable of doing anything. §††⁶ If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown out, like a branch, and dries up; well they gather such and throw them into the fire, and he is burned up. §††⁷ If you abide in me and my

*planted you [Israel, see verse 4] a noble vine, a seed of highest quality. How then have you turned before Me into the degenerate plant of an alien vine?" For a similar idea see Isaiah 5:1-7. §† The Greek verb here covers a considerable semantic area. The familiar 'takes away' is one of its basic meanings, but 'lifts up' is another of its meanings and makes better sense here (the cutting off comes in verse 6). People plant (or buy) vineyards because they want grapes, and you can't have grapes without branches, so you don't destroy them without reason. When it's blossom time you go down the rows looking for any branches that the wind and rain have knocked down—a branch on the ground won't produce. You lift them up, shake off the dirt and fasten them up, to give them a chance. I take it that's the picture here—if we have fallen, the Father picks us up, brushes us off and gives us another go. Of course if we never produce, then we are suckers, and He goes 'snip' (verse 6). §†† I understand that a given stretch of vine or branch only produces grapes once, it is only the new growth that produces grapes, so if you want to increase production you must cut the vine back. §† Jesus had been 'pruning' those disciples for two years or more. §† From the way this is stated I conclude that although this 'abiding' is a two-way street, it actually depends on us. That is, as we abide in Him He will abide in us—He won't stop first; only if we stop abiding in Him will He stop abiding in us. §†† We seem to have a hard time getting this through our heads, but our Lord is very clear—all our activism is fruitless. If we wish to produce fruit for Christ's Kingdom we **MUST***

§†† That is what the Text says, 'he' is burned. The direct object of 'gather' and 'throw' is plural (referring to what normally happens to dead branches), but the subject of 'be burned' is singular. The 'he' must refer back to the beginning of the verse, to the one who does not abide in Christ. Few figures of speech fit in every detail. Of course an actual branch cannot just decide to jump out of its vine or tree; an outside force must cut or break it off. But we have volition—verbs like 'abide' or 'remain' clearly imply that the choice is up to us; we can indeed decide to leave our Vine, we can stop believing. Notice again the sequence of events, "if anyone does not abide in me he is thrown out"—a branch that is 'abiding' is not thrown; only if you choose to leave will you be thrown. I am a theologian (ThM) and am well aware that people tend to buy into a theological system, or doctrinal package, and they then impose that system on the Bible—if some passage does not fit, they do whatever damage may be necessary to that passage to MAKE it 'fit'. But I am also a linguist (PhD), and I know that human language is governed by rules—to disobey those rules is a form of lying, and God cannot lie (Titus 1:2), so if in interpreting the Bible you disobey those rules, you make a liar out of God, which is not very smart! In this passage the Lord Jesus Christ gives instruction that is perfectly plain. If the Word of Christ says one thing and your doctrinal package says another, then you had better stop and think. Which holds more authority for you, which are you going to follow, the Word of Christ or your doctrinal package? If you choose the latter, you are an idolater—to place your church's doctrine above the Word of God is a form of idolatry. Idolatry ALWAYS has negative consequences.

sayings † abide in you, you will ask whatever you desire and it will happen for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit; and you will become disciples *TO ME*. ††

We love

⁹ “Just as the Father has loved me, I also have loved you; ‡ abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, †† just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love. ¹¹ I have spoken these things to you so that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be made full. ††¹² This is my commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you. ††¹³ No one has greater love than this, that someone should lay down his life for his friends. ††¹⁴ You are my friends if you do whatever I command you.

¹⁵ “I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his owner is doing; rather I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I heard from my Father. ¹⁶ It was not you who chose me but I who chose you, and I appointed you so that you should go and produce fruit, and that your fruit should endure, so that whatever you may ask the Father in my name He may give you. ¹⁷ These things I command you so that you love one another. ††

† The Greek word is *ρημα* not *λογος*; if a distinction is intended I suppose the emphasis here would be on the content of what He taught. This is how we abide in Him, by obeying His Word. †† The pronoun is dative, not genitive, so to render ‘my’ disciples is not precise; since Jesus obviously could have used the genitive if that was what He wanted to say, then the choice of the dative is significant. In my own experience, not a few have said in my hearing that they were my disciples; I smiled and said ‘Thank you’, but seldom did I want to claim them (for varying reasons). I take it that here the Lord is saying that He will claim us as His DISCIPLES as we produce much fruit. ‡ Wow! †† “Abide in my love” is a command, not an option, and the way we do it is by obeying Him. I take it that ‘my love’ refers to His loving us, so again He is saying that our obedience triggers the manifestation (at least) of His love, in an ongoing relationship. We have probably all heard of ‘unconditional love’, but I wonder if they really know what they are talking about. It may be that God offers us His love without prior condition, but to enter into that love we have to believe into Jesus, which involves commitment on our part. Love that is not reciprocated becomes frustrated love. †† I take it that ‘my joy’ is not exactly the same as ‘your joy’. I can often tell when God is happy with me, and when He is not, and it is directly tied to the level of my obedience. I take it that His joy remaining in us refers to His being happy with us; of course the only way our joy can be full is if He is indeed happy with us (because of our obedience). ††† Comparing this command with verse 9 it appears that we are to love just like God loves! Help! How can we manage that? Well, maybe that is why we need the Enabler—only under the control of the Holy Spirit can I love as God does. ††† That is how Jesus proved His love for us. § We can be ‘horses’ (Psalm 32:9), slaves or friends. A ‘horse’ is a Christian who does his own thing, who does not listen to God—He has to use pain to get his attention. A slave listens, and obeys, but the owner does not necessarily explain the big picture, the dream, the plan. With a friend you share your dream, the big idea. Jesus offers us the privilege of being friends, but there is one little detail—you cannot be a friend without being a slave! I take that to be the point of verse 14. †† I understand the Text to be

The world hates

¹⁸ “When the world hates you, you can be sure that it has hated me first. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would be fond of its own. †† So because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, that is why the world hates you. ††²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his owner.’ †† If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. ²¹ Now they will do all of these things to you because of my name, in that they do not know the One who sent me. ²² If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be having sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ The one who hates *ME* hates my Father too. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the works that no one else has done, they would not be having sin; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father. ††²⁵ However, this was so that the statement written in their law might be fulfilled, ‘They hated me without cause.’ ††

²⁶ “Now when the Enabler comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of the Truth who proceeds from the Father, *HE* will testify concerning me. ²⁷ And you also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning. ††

16 “I have spoken these things to you to avoid your being caused to stumble ††—they will excommunicate you; indeed, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering God service! ††³ And they will do these things because they have not known either the Father or me. ⁴ Now I have told you these things so that when the time comes you may remember that I told you about them; I did not tell you these things from the beginning because I was with you. ¹⁸

saying that our loving one another is the intended result of the commands, not their content. ††† The Greek verb is *φιλεω*, not *αγαπω*. Actually, there is little, if any, *αγαπη* love in the world. †† If the world doesn't hate you, perhaps you should stop and take stock. Why not? Are you just like them? Nothing about you challenges their lifestyle? ††† See Matthew 10:24. †† Presumably the Lord is not saying that they were sinless; I take it He is referring to a particular sin—they rejected the full light that He brought, and are now overtly hating Him and the Father. Before Jesus ministered among them, they claimed that they loved God, and maybe actually thought that they did, but the Light exposed what they really were. †† This statement may be found in Psalm 35:19 and 69:4. Verses 9 and 21 of Psalm 69 are also applied to Christ in the NT. Notice that Jesus calls the book of Psalms their ‘law’. ††† It is after the coming of the Enabler that they will testify. In fact, they pretty much stayed in hiding until He came, but then they became bold as lions. ††† Suffering and persecution causes some Christians to doubt God, and even to rebel against Him, and Jesus does not want that to happen to them. ††† Like Saul of Tarsus—he thought he was serving God by persecuting the Christians (see Acts 23:1). ¹⁸ While Jesus was with them they enjoyed His protection.

What the Enabler will do

⁵ “Now then, I am going away to Him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷ Nevertheless I am telling you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, because if I do not go away the Enabler will not come to you, but if I do go I will send Him to you. †

⁸ “Now when He comes he will convict the world about sin and about righteousness and about judgment: ⁹ first about sin, because they do not believe in to me; ††¹⁰ then about righteousness, because I am going away to my Father and you will no longer see me; ††¹¹ then about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. ††

¹² “I still have many things to say to you but you cannot bear it now. ††¹³ However, when He, the Spirit of the Truth, has come, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own, but He will speak whatever He hears. †† He will also communicate to you the things that are coming. ¹⁴ He will glorify me because He will take of what is mine and communicate it to you. ¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine; †† that is why I said that He takes from what is mine and will communicate it to you.

Sorrow to joy

¹⁶ “In just a little you will not see me, and in another little you will see me, because I am going to the Father.” ¹⁷ Then some of His disciples said among themselves: “What is this that He is telling us, ‘In just a little you will not see me, and in another little you will see me,’ and because ‘I am going to the Father?’” ¹⁸ So they said: “What is this ‘little’ that He mentions? We do not know what He is talking about.” ††

† Jesus could only be physically present in one place at a time. The Holy Spirit can be in all believers all around the world all the time—clearly to our advantage. †† Since to believe into Jesus is the only cure for sin, to reject Him is the ultimate sin—you lock yourself into the consequences = spiritual death. † The resurrection was the proof that the Father accepted the sacrifice of the Lamb (Romans 4:25, he “was raised because

†† If the big boss has been judged, then no one under him will escape. †† We have no record that He told them those things during the 40 days before His Ascension, so it may have been left for the Spirit to do (verse 13)—although probably a lot happened during those days that is not recorded. ††† Whenever the Son spoke, it was really the Father speaking (John 12:50); the same is true of the Holy Spirit. The Trinity works together. ††† Wow! † Perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “because I am going to the Father” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). †† With hindsight it appears that the first ‘little’ referred to the less than 24 hours before His burial, when He would be hidden from view. The second ‘little’ would refer to the forty days between resurrection and ascension, during which they did indeed see Him.

¹⁹ Well Jesus knew that they were wanting to question Him and said to them: “Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, ‘In just a little you will not see me, and in another little you will see me?’”

²⁰ Most assuredly I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will become grieved, †† but your grief will be turned into joy.

††²¹ When a woman gives birth she has pain, because her time has come; but when the child is born she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. ²² So in your turn you are now experiencing grief, but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. ²³ In that day †† you will not question me about anything.

“Most assuredly I say to you that whatever you ask the Father in my name He will give you. ²⁴ Until now you have not asked anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.

Figures of speech

²⁵ “I have told you these things using figures of speech, but a time is coming when I will no longer talk to you with figures of speech; rather I will tell you plainly about the Father. ²⁶ In that day you will ask in my name; I do not say to you that I will request the Father on your behalf, ²⁷ because the Father Himself is fond of you, † in that you have become fond of me and have believed that I came forth from God. ²⁸ I did come forth from the Father and have come into the world. I am leaving the world again † and am going to the Father.”

²⁹ His disciples say to Him: “Hey, now you are speaking plainly and using no figure of speech! ³⁰ Now we know that you know everything and don’t need anyone to question you. †† By this we believe that you came forth from God.” ††

“Take heart!”

³¹ Jesus answered them: “Do you believe now, really?” ³² Listen, an hour is coming, actually it has already arrived, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and you will leave ME alone. †† Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. ³³ I have spoken these things to

†† This refers to the first ‘little’—upon His death they will really †† This refers to the second ‘little’—upon His resurrection there will be joy. ††† Perhaps the ‘day’ here is different from the one in 14:20; and yet, even after seeing the risen Lord, they still got discouraged. By the sea shore Peter still asked Him a question, so maybe the ‘day’ is the same as in 14:20. It was the coming of the Holy Spirit that gave them joy that could not be stolen. †† The verb is φιλῶ, not αγαπῶ. †† Jehovah the Son had visited this world many times during the OT period. During the 33+ years of incarnation He changed His abode (John 1:14). ††† They seem to be implying that before He was confused and needed help; their questions made Him think things through, or some such thing. But now He finally got it sorted out! (If it were not so pitiful it would be humorous.) ††† I frankly don’t understand the disciples’ reasoning here.

you so that in me you may have peace. In the world you have oppression; † but take heart, I have conquered the world!" ††

Jesus prays

17 Jesus spoke these things, † raising His eyes to Heaven and saying:

For Himself

"Father, the hour has come! Glorify Your Son, so that Your Son also may glorify You, † just as You gave Him authority over all humanity, so that He will give eternal life to all those whom You have given Him. †† Now eternal life is this: that they may know You, †† the only true God, and the One whom You sent—Jesus Christ. ††† I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work that You have given me to do. ††† So now, Father, You glorify me by Your side with the glory that I had along with You before the world existed! †

For the Apostles

6 "I have revealed Your name †† to the men whom You have given me out of the world. They were *YOURS* and

How about all His miracles, etc. etc.? ††† It happened that very night. † Just so. Any system dominated by Satan will be oppressive, for everybody, but his special malice will be directed at those who serve Christ. †† Yes, amen! I take it that the 'world' here refers to the world system controlled by Satan. Jesus did indeed conquer it. He lived within that system for 33 years without ever succumbing to it, without ever being tainted by it. Since He conquered the world, we can too! So let's take heart! † I take it that 'these things' is cataphoric, referring forward to the content of the prayer. †† Here is a clear statement of divine participation in our salvation. The whole process is under the authority of the Father. †† I take it that the reference here is to experiential knowledge. 'Eternal life' refers mainly to a quality of life (more than longevity), and that quality is defined by relationship with the Father. The person who conceives of God as a distant, detached authority figure doesn't really know Him. ††† This is the first recorded time that the Lord used this title, 'Jesus Christ' (in Matthew 16:20 there is 'Jesus, the Christ'—as in over 95% of the Greek manuscripts). He did so when He could also say, "I have finished the work that You have given me to do" (next verse) (He still had a few hours to go, but is declaring His victory). In Acts and the epistles the title is very frequent—it affirms that Jesus is the Messiah. Also, what happens to those who only 'know' the Father, but not the Son? ††† The older I get, finishing 'the work You have given me to do' looms larger and larger in my mind. † As it says in 1 Peter 1:19-20, the Lamb, with His blood shed, was foreknown before the foundation of the world. Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:10 and John 1:3,10 make clear that the Son was the primary agent in the creation of this planet. So Jehovah the Son is both Creator and Lamb—before He created He knew that man would rebel and He Himself would have to pay the terrible ransom. From our Lord's statement here I get the impression that as soon as the Son started dealing with this planet He gave up some of His glory. So now He is asking to have it back. Ephesians 1:20-21 makes clear that the Father granted His request, the Son is back where He was before. And He took us with Him (Ephesians 2:6)! Thank You, Lord!! Also, our Lord's statement here goes against any 'Gnostic' type view that has Jesus beginning as an inferior being and working up through successive levels of perfection, or what have you. †† "Your name" = "You"; a person's name represents that person. This is very clear in John 3:18. Jesus revealed the Father to the world.

You gave them to me, and they have kept Your word. † They now know that everything You have given to me is from You; † because I have given them the sayings which You have given to me; and they have received and known for sure that I came forth from You, †† and they have believed that You sent me. † I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom You have given me, because they are yours. † Actually, all my things are Yours and Yours are mine, and I have been glorified in them. † Now I am no longer in the world, † yet these are in the world, and I am coming to You.

"Holy Father, keep them in Your name which You have given to me, so that they may be one just as we are. †† While I was with them in the world I kept them in Your name. I protected those whom You gave me, and not one of them was lost except the son of perdition, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled. †† But now I am coming to You, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have *MY* joy made full in them. †

14 "I have given them Your word; †† and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. † I am not asking that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the malignant one. †† They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. †† Sanctify them by Your Truth; *YOUR* Word is Truth. †† Just as You sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

†† Over and over again the Lord returns to the theme of their knowing and believing where He came from, His divine origin. So this must be important! Someone who does not believe that Jesus is God cannot be a true Christian. † He would still be around for another forty days, or so, but the countdown has begun. †† I imagine that this will only be fully realized after we are glorified. † This is perhaps the clearest of a very few passages in the Bible that might be said to indicate what has been called 'double predestination' or 'preterition', that is, that someone is predestined to be lost. In Hebrew usage (Jesus, a Jew among Jews, was presumably speaking Hebrew here) a 'son' of something is characterized by that something; so a 'son of perdition' is characterized by lostness; the Scripture in question would be part of the Old Testament and hence written long before the person was born. (I have not been able to locate a clear text to that effect, but there are indirect ones.) † Although He was addressing the Father, Jesus evidently did so out loud—precisely so that the disciples would hear, with a view to joy. †† Yes! Oh praise God! That Word delivers us from Satan's kingdom in every way, including worldview. So it is only natural that Satan's 'world' will hate us. †† "The malignant one" is Satan. Satan got one of the twelve, but must not get any more of them. † He repeats what He just said in verse 14, so it must be important. Jesus was not of this world because He literally came from Heaven, which could not be said of those disciples. But in the context of verse 15 the reference is probably to the 'world' dominated by Satan, the system. Their allegiance is no longer to Satan's system. † The Word is what the Holy Spirit uses to sanctify us; it is His 'sword' (Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:12).

¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify myself, ^{††} so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

For all believers

²⁰ "I pray not only for these, but also for those who believe into me through their word; ²¹ that they all may be one, just as You, Father, are in me and I in You; that in Us they also may be one, so that the world may believe that You sent me. ²² In fact, the glory that You gave to me I have given to them, [‡] so that they may be one just as We are one: ²³ I in them and You in me, so that they may be perfected into one; also so that the world may know that You sent me, and have loved them just as You have loved me. ^{‡‡}

²⁴ "Father, those whom You have given to me, I desire that they also may be with me where I am, ^{‡‡} so that they may observe *MY* glory, which You have given me, because You loved me before the founding of the world. ²⁵ Righteous Father! Indeed the world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent me. ²⁶ Yes, I have made Your name known to them and will make it known, so that the love with which You have loved me may be in them, and I in them." ^{‡‡‡}

Betrayal and arrest

18 Having said these things Jesus went out with His disciples across the Kidron ravine, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. ² Now Judas, the one betraying Him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with His disciples. ³ So Judas, having received the detachment of *soldiers* and operatives from the chief priests and Pharisees, he arrives there with lanterns, torches and weapons.

Jesus knocks the soldiers down with His word

⁴ Then Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to Him, went forward and said to them, "Who are you looking for?" ⁵ They answered Him, "Jesus the Natsorean." Jesus says to them, "I am he." (Now Judas, His betrayer, was also standing with them.) ⁶ So when He said to them, "I am he," they went backward and fell to the ground! ^{‡‡‡7} Then He asked them again,

[†] See John 20:21. ^{††} To 'sanctify' something to God means to separate/dedicate/consecrate it for His exclusive use. While on earth Jesus concentrated His attention and energies on a single goal, to execute the Plan, the Father's will. To the extent that we pay attention to the Truth, we will do the same. [‡] What 'glory' was that? In Romans 3:23 I imagine that the 'glory' of God has to do with His essence, His character. The new 'man' or nature that a regenerated person receives is related to that essence/character. It is that nature in common that makes us 'one'. However, since most Christians seldom allow the new nature to control them, in practice we don't see all that much unity. But in Heaven it will come to fruition. ^{‡‡} Tremendous! ^{‡‡‡} He wants His bride. ^{‡‡‡} Here is the 'spiral' again; the more we know, the more we love, the more we obey...

"Who are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus the Natsorean." ⁸ Jesus answered: "I told you that I am he. So if it is *ME* you are looking for, allow these men to go" ⁹ (so that the word that He spoke might be fulfilled, "Of those you have given me I did not lose even one"). [§]

¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) ^{§†11} So Jesus said to Peter: "Sheathe the sword! ^{§††} The cup that the Father has given me, must I not drink it?"

To Annas first

¹² Then the detachment, the commander ^{§‡} and the operatives of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. ¹³ They took Him to Annas first, because he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, ^{§††} who was high priest that year. ^{§†14} (Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.)

Peter denies Jesus

¹⁵ Now Simon Peter kept following Jesus, as also the other disciple. Well that disciple was known to the high priest, ^{§‡} so he went into the high priest's courtyard with Jesus. ¹⁶ But Peter was *left* standing outside by the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper (f), and brought Peter in. ¹⁷ So the servant girl, the doorkeeper, says to Peter, "You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?" ^{§§†} He says, "I am not!"

^{‡‡‡} *Have you ever tried to imagine this scene? Try imagining that you are one those soldiers, and the person you have been sent to arrest knocks you down, just with his word! So are you going to want to try anything against him, really? Hey, I think I would get up and run away as fast and as far as I could! I see two miracles here: 1) He knocked them down with His word; 2) He obliged them to stay there and get on with their job, because it was the appointed time for Him to be taken, tried and crucified. But He made it perfectly clear that He was in control of the situation. § I take it that the Iscariot had not been given to Him by the Father, at least in the sense of 17:6—"They were Yours and You gave them to me". Presumably the Iscariot never belonged to the Father. §† John probably knew him personally; see verse 15 below. §†† We know from Luke 22:51 that Jesus healed the ear, or Peter could have been in trouble. The parallel accounts give more detail. §‡ The word here (chiliarch*

^{§††} *The bigger reason was that Annas was the real high priest, according to the Law (the office of high priest was for life). He was the power behind the throne, so to say. Caiaphas was the political high priest (that year), for purposes of dealing with Rome. §† A careful look at the parallel accounts makes clear that all of Peter's denials took place at Caiaphas' palace, as also all the recorded questionings, etc. So between verses 13 and 15 Jesus is taken to Caiaphas (see verse 24 below). §‡ Annas is never referred to as the high priest by John, so this is Caiaphas. §§† Everyone there, including the girl, knows that John belongs to Jesus, so her question is perfectly natural, without malice—she assumes that Peter must also. Notice that Peter denies*

¹⁸ Now the servants and operatives had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, [†] and they were standing there warming themselves. So Peter stood with them and warmed himself. ^{††}

Caiaphas interrogates Jesus

¹⁹ Then the high priest questioned Jesus about His disciples and about His teaching. ²⁰ Jesus answered him: "I have spoken openly to the world. I always taught in synagogue and temple, where the Jews always congregate, and I have spoken nothing in secret. ²¹ Why do you question me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them. Sure, they know what I said." ²² But upon His saying these things one of the operatives standing by slapped Jesus saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" ²³ Jesus answered him, "If I spoke wrongly, identify the wrong; but if rightly, why do you hit me?" ²⁴ (Annas had sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.) [‡]

Peter again

²⁵ Well Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You aren't one of His disciples too, are you?" ^{‡‡} So he denied it and said, "I am not!" ²⁶ One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the one whose ear Peter had sliced, says, "Didn't I see you with Him in the garden?" ^{‡‡‡} So Peter denied again, and immediately a rooster crowed. [§]

right in front of John! Don't you know that John kept his eye on Peter from that moment on! [†] It was after midnight in early April.

^{††} For a detailed discussion of Peter's denials, please see the Appendix: "How many times did Jesus say Peter would deny Him?"

[‡] The Lord's observation here was perfectly reasonable and in accord with the law. The priest should have produced witnesses, rather than asking Jesus to testify against Himself. ^{‡†} Since everything that was going on was unjust and illegal, I find it to be curious that Jesus reprimanded the man. ^{‡‡} The eclectic text, following about 9% of the Greek manuscripts, reads "THEN Annas sent...", creating a conflict with the parallel passages (perhaps 1% read "but Annas sent/had sent..."). The use of parenthetical comments, or historical/cultural asides, is standard procedure for John; for a partial list see: 1:44, 2:6, 4:2,9,44, 6:4,64, 7:50, 9:14, 11:2,18-19,30-31, 12:1,6,16, 13:2,11,28-29 (there are at least a dozen more). I take it that verse 24 here is just one more instance; it is as if at this point John realizes that the reader could think that the proceedings were still going on at Annas' house. ^{‡‡†} We don't know what John was doing all this time, except that he was right there in that compound; I think it perfectly likely that he would talk to Peter from time to time. They knew that John was a disciple, but did not know Peter. Also, the windows of the house were doubtless open (no air conditioning), so they probably heard Caiaphas ask about His disciples. Actually, Luke 22:61 says Jesus TURNED and looked at Peter, so the window had to be open, and Jesus was near the window but with His back to it. Since Caiaphas was presumably facing Jesus he was also facing the open window and his voice would certainly carry out to the patio. Their question was not unreasonable. ^{‡‡‡} Now here we have a little malice; you can imagine the intonation in the man's voice! Peter goes into a cold sweat. I bet he was wishing he was someplace else. (I wonder if he was still wearing his sword.) [§] In keeping with his usual procedure, John records three denials by Peter that are not mentioned by the other Evangelists, and I would say that the rooster crow here is the first of the two (Mark 14:68, 72). A close compari-

Crucifixion day

Jesus taken to Pilate

²⁸ Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. They themselves did not enter the Praetorium, so that they would not be defiled but could eat the Passover. ^{§†29} So Pilate went out to them ^{§††} and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" ³⁰ In reply they said to him, "If he were not an evil-doer we would not have handed him over to you." ^{§†31} So Pilate said to them, "YOU take him and judge him according to your law." So the Jews said to him, "We are not permitted to execute anyone." ^{§†32} (This was to fulfill the statement that Jesus made, indicating what sort of death He was about to die.) ^{§†}

Pilate and Jesus

³³ Then Pilate went back into the Praetorium, called Jesus and said to Him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" ³⁴ Jesus answered him, "Are you saying this on your own, or did others inform you about me?" ³⁵ Pilate answered Him: "I'm not a Jew, am I? Your own nation, that is, the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?" ³⁶ Jesus answered: "MY kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my subjects would fight so that I not be delivered to the Jews; but NOW my kingdom is not from here." ^{§†37} So Pilate said to Him, "You ARE a king then?" Jesus answered: "As you say, I am a king; for this I was born. And for this I came into the world, to testify to the Truth. Everyone who is of the Truth hears my voice." ³⁸ Pilate says to Him, "What is truth?" ^{§§†}

son of all the details surrounding the denials (who provoked it, in what terms, when, where, Peter's response) shows that there had to be a minimum of six, more likely eight, denials—3/4 before the first rooster crow, 3/4 before the second. Peter was being satanized (Luke 22:31), and it took a look from the Lord to break the spell (Luke 22:61). ^{§†} Aren't these guys cute? They are perpetrating a totally illegal and immoral plot, but they think they are squeaky clean, no problem—but to set foot in the Praetorium, now that would be dirty! If your values are twisted, you are twisted. ^{§††} It seems to me obvious that the hierarchy had made a deal with Pilate; he was waiting. Hey, you do not go marching up to the Governor's headquarters at 5:30 a.m. and demand a hearing; and there is no indication that Pilate came out in his pajamas. He was up, dressed and waiting. ^{§‡} Their answer seems a bit petulant. I gather that the deal they thought they had with Pilate included that he would just take Jesus and condemn Him. Pilate's attitude takes them by surprise. ^{§††} Pilate was rubbing salt in their wound, reminding them that they were a subjugated people—he knew they wanted to kill Jesus, so when he tells them to judge Him he forces them to acknowledge their subjugation. (Roman governors were probably not appointed on the basis of being nice.) ^{§†} Jesus had to die on a cross, but crucifixion was a Roman procedure, not Jewish—they would probably have stoned Him. ^{§‡} But one day, probably quite soon now, it will be. ^{§§†} Apparently the question was rhetorical; he didn't wait for an answer.

Barabbas

Upon saying this he went out to the Jews again and says to them: "I find no crime in him at all. ^{†39} Now we ^{††} have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover; so do you want me to release the King of the Jews to you?" ⁴⁰ Then they all cried out saying, "Not this fellow, but Barabbas!" Well, Barabbas was a bandit!

Soldiers mock Jesus

19 So then Pilate took Jesus and had Him flogged. ² And the soldiers twisted a crown out of [poisonous] thorns and put it on His head; they also threw a purple robe around Him ³ and started saying, "Hail, O King of the Jews!" And they slapped Him repeatedly.

"Behold the Man!"

⁴ Pilate then went out again and says to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you so that you may know that I find no crime in him at all." ⁵ Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe; and Pilate says to them, "Look at the man!" ⁶ Well when the chief priests and the operatives saw Him they shouted, saying, "Crucify! Crucify him!" Pilate says to them, "You take and crucify him, because I find no crime in him." ^{†7} The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law he ought to die, because he made himself 'Son of God!'"

Pilate and Jesus, again

⁸ Hey, when Pilate heard this statement he was more afraid than ever! ^{†9} So back into the Praetorium he went and says to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus did not answer him. ¹⁰ So Pilate says to Him: "Are you not speaking to ME? Don't you know that I have authority to crucify you and authority to release you?" ¹¹ Jesus answered: "You would have no authority over me at all if it had not been given to you from Above. ^{‡‡}

† Comparing John with Luke 23:4-12 it appears that between verses 38 and 39 here Jesus was sent to Herod. Notice that Pilate declares Jesus to be innocent. †† I here follow the best line of transmission, although representing only some 20% of the manuscripts. Upon reflection this reading looks correct—how could the Jews have a custom that placed an obligation on their conquerors? ‡ Pilate's reasoning is not obvious to me, unless the normal procedure would be to get on with the execution. But Pilate is not happy and is looking for a way out; he had received a message from his wife in the meantime (Matthew 27:19). Perhaps he hoped they would be satisfied when they saw how much He had already suffered. †† This is the second time that Pilate declares that he finds no crime in Jesus. He is declaring His innocence, so he will knowingly condemn an innocent man. ‡‡ And not without reason. The conversation recorded in 18:33-37 would certainly have impressed Pilate and left him troubled. Then his wife added fuel to the fire. And now this. Pilate was not a religious type, presumably, but Jesus was impressive! Pilate was in over his head, and knew it. ‡‡† Pilate represented the Roman empire, the greatest temporal power at that time (whose

Therefore the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin."

The Jews best Pilate

¹² From that moment Pilate really tried to release Him; but the Jews kept shouting, saying: "If you release this fellow you are no friend of Caesar's! Whoever makes himself a king is opposing Caesar!" ^{‡‡‡13} Well, upon hearing this statement Pilate led Jesus outside and sat down on the judgment seat, in a place called 'Stone Pavement', while in Hebrew 'Gabatha' ^{§14} (now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; ^{§†} the hour was about six a.m.), ^{§††} and he says to the Jews, "Look at your king!" ¹⁵ But they shouted, "Out! Out! Crucify him!" Pilate says to them, "Shall I crucify your KING?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!" ^{§†16} So then he handed Him over to them to be crucified.

Jesus is crucified

So they took Jesus and lead Him away. ¹⁷ And carrying His cross He went out to the place called 'Skull', which in Hebrew is called 'Golgotha'; ¹⁸ there they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle. ¹⁹ Now Pilate had also written a notice, and put it on the cross; and the inscription was:

JESUS THE NATSOREAN ^{§††}
THE KING OF THE JEWS.

²⁰ So many of the Jews read this notice, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; further, it was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin! ^{§†21} So

ruler was supposedly divine), but Jesus calmly affirms that there is a higher power and that He represents that higher power—and Pilate believed Him! Pilate wanted no part of killing Jesus, and really tried to avoid it, but the Jews did an end run. ^{‡‡‡} Oops! Pilate owed his position to Caesar's good graces, and simply could not afford to do something that could be construed (even with a little twisting) as treason. He is beaten and knows it. [§] This action signaled that he had reached a decision and was about to give the verdict. ^{§†} If the Jews were still preparing for the Passover, then Jesus and His disciples observed it a day early—which must have seemed strange to the disciples. But as the ultimate Passover Lamb, Jesus had to die on that preparation day. ^{§††} The Text says "the sixth hour", which in Roman time is six a.m. If it were Jewish time it would be noon, which will not work here. Actually it says 'around' or 'about' six—I assume that it was a little after the hour. ^{§‡} Ah, Pilate gets his 'pound of flesh'. He doubtless knew a bit about Jewish culture and religion, including their messianic hopes. In effect the Jews here deny the Messiah—Caesar is their only king! Pilate rescued this bit of satisfaction out of a bad deal. ^{§††} That Pilate put "THE Natsorean" (NOT Natsarene [Nazarene]) indicates that he had researched Jesus. The reference is to Isaiah 11:1; Jesus was David's Branch, the Messiah. Pilate was making a statement. ^{§†} Comparing the other Gospels, the full inscription was, 'This is Jesus the Natsorean, the King of the Jews'. To put all of that in three languages would require a board of fair size. But why did Pilate use THREE languages? One would have been enough (it was customary to put the crime over the victim's head). I take it that Pilate was not

the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Don't write, 'The king of the Jews', but that the fellow said, 'I am the king of the Jews.'" ²² Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written!" [†]

Psalm 22:18 is fulfilled

²³ Now when the soldiers had crucified Jesus they took His clothes and made four parts, a part for each soldier. ^{††} They also took His tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. ²⁴ So they said among themselves, "Let's not rip it, but toss for it, to see whose it will be," so that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says:

"They divided my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast a lot."
That is why the soldiers did these things. [‡]

Jesus provides for His mother

²⁵ Now Jesus' mother and her sister, Mary of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene were standing by His cross. ²⁶ So Jesus, seeing His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He says to His mother, "Woman, there is your son!" ²⁷ Then He says to the disciple, "There is your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. ^{†††}

The shout of victory

²⁸ After this, knowing that everything was now accomplished so that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus says, "I'm thirsty!" ²⁹ Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; so they filled a sponge with sour wine, placed it on a hyssop, and put it to His mouth. ³⁰ Then, when He had received ^{‡‡} the sour wine, Jesus

[†] *The chief priests have gotten all they are going to get out of Pilate; he was making a statement, but he was also getting back at them a little bit. †† This probably means that Jesus was left without any; one final bit of humiliation. ‡ See Psalm 22:18. John seems to be affirming a cause/effect relationship. The centurion could have claimed the tunic, or whatever, but casting a lot had been prophesied. ‡† Notice that Jesus is still perfectly lucid. As Mary's oldest son, He was responsible for her well-being (we understand that Joseph was gone by now), so He passes that responsibility over to the Apostle John (the author of this Gospel); and John accepts it. ‡‡ From the word 'received' it appears that He did swallow some. Since sour wine was not used at the Passover, this does not conflict with the Lord's statement in the upper room (Matthew 26:29) that He would not drink of "this product of the vine". All four Evangelists mention the sour wine. There was evidently a pot/vessel full of it (the soldiers were in for many hours of vigil and that was what they drank). The mocking offer mentioned in Luke 23:36 happened before the darkness; the other three accounts after. The offer recorded in Matthew 27:48 and Mark 15:36 was triggered by Jesus' cry, "My God, my God..." The one in John 19:29-30 by His saying, "I am thirsty". I venture to suggest that there was an interval between His despairing cry and His statement—after the cry He may have lapsed back into silence for a bit; He was trying to make contact with the Father. It may be that the sour wine sort of 'wet His whistle' so He could let out His shout of victory.*

said, "Paid in full!!" ^{‡‡†} And bowing His head He dismissed His spirit. ^{‡‡}

A soldier spears His side

³¹ Now then, because it was Preparation Day, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews requested Pilate that their legs might be broken and they be removed. ³² Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and of the other one who had been crucified with Him. ³³ But upon coming to Jesus, they did not break His legs, since they saw that He had already died. ³⁴ But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. ³⁵ And the one who saw has testified, [§] and his testimony is true (yes, he knows he is telling the truth), so that you may believe. ³⁶ Because these things happened so that the Scripture should be fulfilled: "Not a bone of His will be broken." ^{§†37} And again another Scripture says: "They will look on Him whom they pierced." ^{§††}

Jesus is buried

³⁸ After these things Joseph, the one from Arimathea (being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews), requested Pilate that he might remove the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave permission. So he came and removed Jesus' body. ³⁹ Now Nicodemus also came ^{§†} (the one who at first came to Jesus by night), bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. ^{§††40} Then they took Jesus' body and wrapped it in linen strips, with the aromatic spices, according to the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹ Now at the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been buried. ^{§†42} So that is where they put Jesus, because of

^{‡‡†} *Matthew, Mark and Luke all affirm that Jesus gave a great shout, but without giving the content. I take it that John supplies that information, although he does not mention that it was a shout. "Τετέλεσται"—that was what they wrote on bills and promissory notes when they were paid off = 'paid in full'. When something is shouted the individual sounds can be distorted, but John was right there and could read His lips, if necessary. It was a shout of victory: "We did it!" "Finished!" "Paid in full!" ‡‡‡ That is right—the cross did not kill Jesus, He just told His spirit to leave. In John 10:17-18 he was very clear: no one could take His life from Him, but He could lay it down (please see the note at John 10:18). § John, the author of this Gospel, was right there (verses 25-26 above), so he could see very clearly what came out of Jesus' side—that the blood had separated was a clear sign of physical death. (I guess we don't need to know, really, just how the separation came about, whether by purely natural processes or with supernatural intervention; in any case, John is emphatic about what he saw.) §† See Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:12 and Psalm 34:20. §†† See Zechariah 12:10. §‡ He helped Joseph take down the body, and they transported it to the tomb in a linen sheet (Matthew 27:59). §†† Do you suppose they just 'happened' to have a hundred pounds of expensive spices lying around? Almost certainly everything had been prepared before hand, including the tomb, on purpose. These men had doubtless received specific instructions and were waiting in the wings to perform their part.*

the Jews' Preparation Day, since the tomb was nearby.

Resurrection Day †

The empty tomb

20 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb early, while it is still dark, and sees that the stone has been removed from the tomb. ² So she runs and comes to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and says to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we ^{††} don't know where they put Him!" ^{‡‡} So Peter and the other disciple took off, heading for the tomb. ⁴ Well the two started running together, and the other disciple outran Peter and got to the tomb first. ⁵ And stooping to look he sees the linen strips lying there; however he did not go in. ⁶ Then following him comes Simon Peter and went into the tomb; and he sees the linen strips lying there, ⁷ and the facecloth ^{‡‡} that had been on His head not lying with the linen strips, but folded up in a separate place.

John sees and believes

⁸ So then the other disciple went in too, the one who got to the tomb first; and he saw and believed. ^{‡‡‡} (For they did not yet know the Scripture, that He had to rise

[†] Isaiah 53:9 affirms that the Messiah would have a rich man's burial, and He did—a brand new tomb (rather large), and a hundred pounds of expensive spices. The body of an executed criminal would normally be treated ignominiously, and I imagine that was what the high priests intended, but the Father made sure that the Son received an honorable burial. Matthew 27:60 informs us that Joseph had himself prepared that tomb, and he did so at a spot near Golgotha. The next verse (here in John) indicates that this was done on purpose, for the reason mentioned. Joseph and Nicodemus clearly did what they did under divine guidance, and of course God knew that the tomb would need to be near Golgotha, etc. † For a harmonization of all the details furnished by the four Gospel accounts, please see the Appendix: "Harmonizing the accounts of the Resurrection". †† "We"—presumably Magdalene is referring to the other women who were with her, as in the parallel accounts. ‡ Pure supposition—she had not looked in the tomb; she jumped to a false conclusion. It is clear that there was no longer a shining angel sitting on the stone outside (Matthew 28:2). ‡† That there was a facecloth indicates that there was not a sheet that covered the body from head to toe (as in the 'shroud of Turin'). This was also true of Lazarus (John 11:44). ‡‡ What did John 'see' that made him 'believe'? He saw the linen strips 'lying', that is, in the form of the body, only there was no body inside them! If someone had stolen the body, as Magdalene supposed, they would have taken the wrapped package (much easier to carry, not to mention 100 pounds of expensive spices) and there would have been no linen strips. If someone had unwrapped the body there would have been a mound of linen strips and spices piled up (how much cloth would it take to wrap up a hundred pounds of spices?). No, Jesus simply passed through the cloth, as He would later pass through the wall, leaving the package like a mummy or empty cocoon. When John saw that he understood that the only possible explanation was resurrection.

from among the dead.) ^{‡‡‡‡} Then the disciples went back home.

Jesus appears first to Magdalene

¹¹ Well Mary stood outside at the tomb, crying. ^{‡‡‡} Then, while she was crying, she stooped to look into the tomb. ¹² And she sees two angels [§] in white, sitting one at the head and one at the feet of where the body of Jesus had lain. ¹³ And they say to her, "Woman, why are you crying?" She says to them, "Because they removed my Lord, and I don't know where they put Him." ¹⁴ And upon saying this she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, yet did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus says to her: "Woman, why are you crying? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing that He was the gardener, says to Him, "Sir, if you carried Him away, tell me where you put Him, and I will remove Him." ¹⁶ Jesus says to her, "Mary!" Turning she says to Him, "Raboni!" (which means 'Teacher'). ¹⁷ Jesus says to her: "Stop clinging to me, ^{§†} for I have not yet ascended to my Father; ^{§††} but go to my brothers ^{§‡} and say to

^{‡‡‡} But they should have; Jesus had told them repeatedly. But wait just a minute! Where in the OT is there such a Scripture? John wrote this Gospel over fifteen years after the other three had been 'published' and were in circulation, so his term 'Scripture' may be referring to them. ^{‡‡‡} When the disciples took off running, of course Magdalene followed them back to the tomb. But she was winded, and could not keep up with them (actually, in that culture women probably seldom ran, so she would really be out of breath, but she was not about to be left out of the action, either). The Jerusalem at that time probably covered a relatively small area; it was probably no more than half a mile from the house to the tomb, if that, so she may have arrived as they were leaving; if not, they would pass her on the road. § How did John know they were angels? He had just been there and knew there were no human beings around (the guards were presumably gone before the two got there). The angels were in white, but probably not shining, or Magdalene would have been shaken out of her despair. She was so locked in to her sorrow that not even seeing the wrappings collapsed without the body sank in. §† That is what the Text says. I take it that Magdalene was an emotive person, capable of sudden 'ups' and 'downs'. From the way the Lord pronounced her name she knew who it was; from deep sorrow she swings to a transport of joy and impulsively throws her arms around Him. Hey, she is not

§†† The causal connection here seems difficult to us—what did His not having ascended have to do with it? Various suggestions have been offered. My guess is as follows: Magdalene had not heard the teaching in the Upper Room, more precisely, John 16:7. "I am telling you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, because if I do not go away the Enabler will not come to you, but if I go I will send Him to you." She had just gotten her Master back and was not about to turn Him loose—she was feeling, not thinking. But Jesus had to ascend so He could send the Enabler, which would be better for everybody. She wants to hang on to Him, but He tells her to stop; the old relationships are gone, everything is now new. (Within a very few minutes He will allow the other women to hold His feet, so mere physical contact is not the problem; in fact, He will later invite the disciples to touch Him.) §‡ He does not just reprimand her, He gives her something to do. But just who are the "brothers"? Since the angel had told the other women to tell the disciples, I am inclined to imagine that the Lord sends her to His half brothers, although she started out with the disciples (next verse).

them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father—my God and your God.'" ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene goes to the disciples, reporting that she had seen the Lord and He had said these things to her.

Disciples commissioned

¹⁹ Then at evening on that first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the middle, and He says to them, "Peace to you!" ²⁰ And upon saying this He showed them His hands and His side. Well, the disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord! ²¹ So Jesus said to them again: "Peace to you! † Just as the Father sent me, I also send you." ††²² Upon saying this He breathed on them and said: "Receive Holy Spirit! †‡²³ To whomever you forgive the sins, †† they are forgiven to them; to whomever you retain, they have been retained." ††

Thomas

²⁴ Now one of the twelve, Thomas (called Twin), was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "If I do not see the nail prints in His hands and put my finger into the nail prints, and put my hand into His side, I will **NOT** believe!" ††

²⁶ Well after eight days ††† His disciples were inside again, and Thomas with them. The doors were locked

† This is what He said "again", having already said it (verse 19).
 †† This is tremendous! In my own experience (as a missionary, son of missionaries), I have seldom heard a missionary challenge based on John 20:21. The champion is Matthew 28:19-20, 'the great commission', followed by Mark 16:15 and perhaps Acts 1:8; but John 20:21? "Just as... so also"—Jesus is sending us just like the Father sent Him. So how did They do it? The Father determined and the Son obeyed: "Behold, I have come to do your will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7). And what was that will? To destroy Satan (Hebrews 2:14) and undo his works (1 John 3:8). Since Jesus did indeed defeat Satan (Colossians 2:15, Ephesians 1:20-21, etc.) what is left for us is the undoing of his works. For more on this subject see my article, "Biblical Spiritual Warfare", available from my site, www.prunch.org. † There is no definite article with "Holy Spirit" and I hesitate to add it. Perhaps we should try thinking of 'Holy Spirit' as a proper name.
 †† This is a literal rendering, but I hesitate to change it. The primary reference is presumably to the sins of that person, but it is sometimes necessary to pronounce forgiveness for sins of past generations (see 2 Samuel 21:1-14). †† That is what the Text says, "have been". The idea seems to be that sins are already retained (as soon as a sin is committed it is on the account); Jesus gives them the prerogative to change that situation, undoing the retaining, as it were. Presumably the forgiving and retaining have to do with the consequences of the sin in this life (not for salvation). I take it that the undoing of Satan's works (1 John 3:8) must reverse consequences (to the extent that this may be possible). Since Satan is involved in all sin, indirectly at least (or so I imagine), I conclude that verse 23 here falls within the competence of anyone who has the Holy Spirit.
 ††† Thomas is very emphatic. Jesus is dead and his hopes are too! (Presumably he had watched the crucifixion from a distance.)
 †††† Their method of calculation included the day from which the count was made (as they do in Brazil as well), so this is the next Sunday.

[again]; Jesus came and stood in the middle, and said, "Peace to you!" ²⁷ Then He says to Thomas: "Bring your finger here and perceive my hands; bring your hand and put it into my side; [§] do not be unbelieving but believing!" ²⁸ Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus says to him: "Because you have observed me, you have believed. Blessed are those who believe without seeing!" ^{§†}

Why this book

³⁰ Now then, Jesus actually performed many other miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples, that are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have Life through His Name.

Epilogue

Breakfast on the beach

21 After these things Jesus, risen from the dead, ^{§††} revealed Himself to His disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He did it like this: ² Simon Peter, Thomas (called Twin), Nathanael (from Cana of Galilee), Zebedee's sons ^{§†} and two others of His disciples were together. ³ Simon Peter says to them, "I'm going fishing." They say to him, "We're coming with you." Off they went and got right into the boat, and that whole night they caught nothing.

⁴ Well when daybreak had now come Jesus stood on the beach; however the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵ Then Jesus says to them, "Boys, you don't have any food, do you?" They answered Him, "No." ^{§††6} So He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find." So they did, ^{§†} and now they were unable to haul it in because of the multitude of fish! ⁷ Then that disciple whom Jesus loved says to Peter, "It's the Lord!" Upon hearing that it was the Lord, Simon Peter tied on his outer garment (for he was stripped) and plunged into the sea. ⁸ But the other disciples came in the little boat dragging the net with the fish (for they were not far from the land, but about 100 yards).

⁹ Then, as they stepped onto the land they saw a charcoal fire in place with fish lying on it, and bread. ¹⁰ Jesus says to them, "Bring some of the fish that you

§ Since Jesus had not been there to hear Thomas, how did He know what he had said? We know the answer, but it delivered a knockout punch to Thomas. Evidently he did not try to touch Jesus, but without further ado said, "My Lord and my God!" ^{§†} This blessing includes us. ^{§††} I follow the best line of transmission in reading "risen from the dead", albeit representing only 25% of the Greek manuscripts, at this point. ^{§‡} Recall that they were James and John (the author of this Gospel). ^{§††} You can bet they are not feeling like making small talk. ^{§†} I find it interesting that they apparently obeyed without question—there was something about that voice.

have just caught.”¹¹ Simon Peter got up † and dragged the net onto the land, full of one hundred and fifty-three large fish [!]; and *although* being so many, the net was not torn.^{††}

¹² Jesus says to them, “Come have breakfast!” Well not one of the disciples dared to ask Him, “Who are you?”—knowing that it was the Lord.¹³ Then Jesus comes and takes the bread and gives it to them, as also the fish.[‡]

¹⁴ This was already a third time †† that Jesus appeared to His disciples after He was raised from among the dead.

Jesus reinstates Peter

¹⁵ So, when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus says to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these?” † He says to Him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I’m fond of you.” †† He says to him, “Feed my lambs.”¹⁶ He says to him again, a second time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me?” ††† He says to Him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I’m fond of you.” He says to him, “Shepherd my sheep.”¹⁷ The third time He says to him, “Simon, son of Jonah, are you *fond* of me?” Peter

† *That is what the Text says. Well, what do you suppose he did when he got to land, since he obviously got there well before the others. From verse 12 I gather that Peter had not ventured to speak. He is wet and therefore cold, and there is a fire. I bet he went straight to the fire and squatted down to warm himself, but he was too embarrassed to attempt a conversation. So he welcomes a chance to do something and jumps up when Jesus asks for fish.*

†† *Like, wow! They were evidently special fish, all large. But why 153? I do not know. The whole thing is supernatural, including the net not tearing. ‡ Notice that Jesus serves them. Well, the situation was a bit strange, and the men probably felt awkward; so He helps them out. †† This would presumably be the first appearance in Galilee, following the two in the upper room. †† My first impression was that Jesus asked if Peter loved Him more than the others did, but Peter’s answer does not seem to fit with that idea. My next impression would be that Jesus asked if Peter loved Him more than he loved the fish (and therefore, fishing), but His use of αγαπαω does not seem to fit. The only other option that I see would be that Jesus asked if Peter loved Him more than he loved his colleagues. ††† Jesus uses αγαπαω; Peter uses φιλεω. ††† Notice that He omits ‘more than these’, so the question has been weakened.*

was grieved in that the third time He said to him, “Are you fond of me?”[§] and said to Him: “Lord, you know all things. You *know* that I’m fond of you!” Jesus says to him: “Feed my sheep.”¹⁸ Most assuredly I say to you, when you were younger you used to get dressed and walk where you wished; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands and another will dress you and carry you where you do not wish.”¹⁹ (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) And upon saying that He says to him, “Follow me!”^{§†}

About the author

²⁰ But turning around Peter sees the disciple whom Jesus loved following (that is the one who reclined on His chest at the supper and said, “Lord, who is the one who is betraying you?”).²¹ Seeing him, Peter says to Jesus, “Lord, what about *him*?”²² Jesus says to him: “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me.”²³ So this saying spread among the brothers,^{§††} that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him [Peter] that he [John] would not die,^{§‡} but, “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?”

²⁴ This is the disciple who is testifying to these things, and who wrote them; and we know that his testimony is true.²⁵ Indeed, there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that not even the whole world^{§††} could contain the books that would be written! Amen.

§ *Now Jesus weakens His question still further, using Peter’s verb—He is probing Peter. But the repeated command to feed His sheep indicates that Peter is being reinstated. §† The first time He said this to Peter had been 3½ years before, also on the shore of that lake [could it have been the same spot?]. Jesus renews His call. But Jesus actually starts walking away, and Peter follows Him (to be followed by John). §†† “The brothers”—this became a common way to refer to the Christian community. §‡ But John was the last of the Apostles to die, close to AD 100. §†† The world that he knew would not include the Americas, nor all of Africa or Asia, and perhaps not even all of northern Europe (presumably). However, his use of ‘suppose’ indicates that he is not making a scientific statement.*

Acts

Opening considerations

A link to Luke

1 The first account I prepared, Theophilus [God-lover], † concerned all that Jesus began to do and to teach †2 until the day in which He was taken back, ‡ after He had given commandment, by Holy Spirit, †† to the apostles whom He had chosen; † to whom He also showed Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing evidences, appearing to them during forty days and speaking of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. ††† And being together He directed them not to go away from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, †††† “which you heard from me; ††††† John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with Holy Spirit not many days from now.” ††††††

Jesus returns to Heaven

6 Well then, being together † they asked Him saying, “Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel at this time?” ††7 So He said to them: “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has placed

† Since in addressing Luke to Theophilus the author added the honorific ‘honorable’ or ‘excellent’, this was presumably a specific man, but I would like to think that the two books are also addressed to all lovers of God. Actually, Luke 1:4 makes clear that he was a specific man. †† Why “began”? Presumably because this book will relate what He continued to do and teach, through the Apostles. He is still at work in our world, through us. ††† Jehovah the Son was given (John 3:16, Isaiah 9:6) to this earth for thirty some years, then He was taken back. †††† There is no definite article with “Holy Spirit”, and I hesitate to add it. Perhaps we should try thinking of ‘Holy Spirit’ as a proper name. To carry out the commands in Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-18, Luke 24:46-48 and John 20:21 would require the Holy Spirit’s enabling. †††† I get the impression that the Lord did a lot more appearing and teaching during those 40 days than has been recorded. ††††† Luke is repeating what he wrote in Luke 24:49, which in turn refers to John 14:16 and 26 (from John 14:31 it appears that what Jesus did started with the Father). †††††† The grammar requires that the material within quotation marks be handled as a direct quote, even though it is a bit awkward, in English. ††††††† The reference is to verse 4, which refers to Luke 24:49-50, which informs us that Jesus led them out to Bethany; so they had assembled in the city. A certain Greek particle is used in both verse 1 and verse 6, making them grammatically parallel; verses 1-5 refer to the former account, verse 6 begins the present account. †††††††† Messiah and kingdom are closely linked in their minds. Jesus is the Messiah, now victorious over death, so where is the Kingdom? Jesus does not question the fact implicit in their question, but tells them that the time

within His own authority. †† But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be witnesses to me †††—both in Jerusalem, and all Judea and Samaria, and even to the last part of the earth.” ††††

9 Upon saying these things, as they watched, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight.

10 And as they were staring into the sky, while He was going, suddenly two men in white clothing ††† stood beside them; †††† and they said: “Men of Galilee, ††† why do you stand gazing up into the sky? This very Jesus who is being taken up from you into the sky, He will come again in the precise manner that you observed Him going into the sky.” †††††

12 They then returned to Jerusalem from the mount called ‘of Olives’, which is near Jerusalem (a Sabbath day’s journey). †††††

A replacement for Judas Iscariot

13 When they had entered [the city] they went up into the upper room †††† where they were staying: namely

†††† A very small minority of Greek manuscripts (perhaps 2%), of inferior quality, read ‘my witnesses’ instead of ‘witnesses to me’. To my mind, at least, there is a significant difference in meaning—to be a witness to Jesus involves BEING like Him (Matthew 10:25) and DOING like Him (John 14:12). ††† There is a strategy here: ‘both...and...and’ = simultaneously. If you stay in your ‘Jerusalem’ until you win everyone, you will never get to the world (there are many people who do not want God, period, so they will never be won). ‘Judea’ and ‘Samaria’ are treated as a unit, grammatically, so we have our town, our country and the world. “Last” is an adjective used as a noun, so we must supply ‘part’ or ‘place’, or else render ‘end’; note that the word is singular. I take it that no part of the world is to be left unreached. ††††† I wonder if these were the same two angels who officiated at the empty tomb. ††††† Why do the angels emphasize that the men are from Galilee? The ‘men’ refers only to males, so presumably they were the Eleven. It does appear that none of the first apostles were from Judea, which I find to be curious. On the other hand, the Pharisee types had such a stranglehold on Jerusalem society that the Text refers to secret believers, ‘for fear of the Jews’. That stranglehold was a factor throughout Judea, but much less in Galilee. So much so that the Judeans tended to look down their spiritual noses at Galileans. ††††† The angels are emphatic; the return is going to be just like the departure. I take it that the Lord will return with the same glorified human body, visibly, come out of a cloud, and His feet will touch down at the same spot where they left (see Matthew 24:30, “coming on the clouds”, and Zechariah 14:4, “His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives”). ††††† Generally understood to be about 1,000 yards or ⅔ of a mile; just under a kilometer. †††††† Probably the same one that was used for the last Passover, since the Text has ‘THE upper room’. Both Mark 14:15 and Luke 22:12 inform us that the room was ‘large’, as it would have to be to hold 120 people (see verse 15 below).

Peter and James, John and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas of James.¹⁴ All these were continuing with one purpose in prayer and petition, along with the women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.^{††}

¹⁵ Well in those days Peter stood up in the middle of the disciples[‡] (the number of people assembled there was about 120) and said:¹⁶ “Men,^{††} brothers: It was necessary that this Scripture be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by David’s mouth^{‡‡} concerning Judas, who was guide to those who arrested Jesus;¹⁷ in that he was numbered with us and obtained his share in this ministry.”¹⁸ (In fact this man acquired a field with the wages of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle, and all his innards were spilled out.^{†††19} And it became known to all who lived in Jerusalem, so that in their own language that field came to be called ‘Akeldama’, that is, ‘Field of Blood’.)²⁰ “Because it stands written in Book of Psalms:

‘Let his residence become desolate,
and may no one live in it’
and,

‘Let another take his office.’^{†††}

²¹ So then, of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,²² beginning from the baptism of John until the day when He was taken up from us, of these one must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”[§]

²³ So they nominated two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.²⁴ And praying they said: “You, Lord, Knower of all hearts, show which one of these two You have chosen^{§†25} to receive

† Since there was more than one James, Simon and Judas, the last three require an added description. The Text presents the names in pairs, and so have I. †† The reference is to His half brothers, presumably including at least James and Jude. ‡ A very small minority of the Greek manuscripts [3%], of inferior quality, read ‘brothers’ for ‘disciples’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The original Eleven are now called ‘apostles’ (verse 2), and the 120 who were there are called ‘disciples’. ‡† The term used here refers exclusively to males—so also in 1:21, 2:5, 2:14, 2:22, 2:29, 2:37 and 3:12. ‡‡ Notice that Peter evidently held to a ‘dictation’ view of Inspiration, the Holy Spirit used David’s mouth. ††† Matthew 27:5 says that Judas hanged himself, and here it says he fell headlong—well, to fall headlong there has to be a cliff, and you would have to dive off. Putting the two accounts together we understand that there must have been a tree near the edge of the cliff, with a branch reaching out beyond the edge; Judas tied a cord around that branch and his neck and jumped—either the cord or the branch broke, and the impact was sufficient to split him open. Matthew also states that it was actually the chief priests who bought the field, using the money that Judas had thrown on the temple floor; so Judas made the purchase posthumously. ††† See Psalms 69:25 and 109:8. § Notice that the crucial thing is the resurrection. ‘Let another take his office’ would appear to be the basis for Peter’s assertion. §† Wait a minute! How do we, or Peter, know that holding that election was God’s idea? If it was not God’s idea then Matthias was not really God’s choice. (Perhaps Peter did like we so often do, bring our ideas to God and ask Him to bless them, although Peter’s idea was evidently based on Psalm 109:8.) In any case, this is the first and last time Matthias is

the portion of this ministry and apostleship, out of which Judas turned aside to go into his own place.”^{§††26} And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles.

Pentecost

2 When the day of Pentecost had come,^{§†} they were all together with one purpose.^{§††2} And suddenly a roar came out of the sky, like the rushing of a violent wind,^{§†} and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.^{§†‡3} Fiery tongues appeared and were distributed to them, and it [a tongue] landed^{§§†} on each one of them.⁴ And they were ALL filled with Holy Spirit and began to speak different languages,^{§§‡} as the Spirit was granting to them to speak out.^{§§§}

People from all over

⁵ Now there were devout men, Jews, from every nation under heaven, dwelling in Jerusalem.¹⁸⁶ So when that roar occurred, the crowd came together, and was bewildered, because each one was hearing them speaking to him in his own dialect.¹⁹⁷ So they were

mentioned in the New Testament. The original twelve were personally chosen by Jesus; the only other one so chosen was Saul/Paul. §†† Judas turned aside “out of” Jesus’ group, to go “into” his own place. Peter does not name the place, but the Lord Jesus had declared in their hearing that Judas was lost (John 17:12; see also Matthew 26:24). §‡ This was no more than eight days after the Ascension. In John 14:18 the Lord had said, “I will not leave you orphans”—they only had to wait one week for the Holy Spirit; albeit on resurrection night Jesus had breathed on them at least a portion of the Holy Spirit (John 20:22). §†† See 1:14 above. What was that ‘purpose’? I assume that they were obeying the Lord’s command, they were waiting for ‘the promise of the Father’, the baptism with Holy Spirit. §† Why the noise? Presumably to attract attention—God wanted to impact the whole city. Since everyone moved on foot, people would be arriving for a number of minutes, depending on where they started (the city was small in those days). §‡ They were sitting, so presumably the ‘house’ wasn’t the temple; I imagine it was the ‘upper room’. §§† I understand from the grammar that the tongue actually touched down on the person, there was contact. §§‡ These are human languages, spoken somewhere on earth, as the following context makes clear. §§§ “Speak out” translates a different word than the “speak” in the middle of the verse; the idea is to proclaim or project the voice. Notice that the speaking was controlled by the Spirit. The Text is emphatic that they were all filled, but they did not all start spouting languages; the languages were directed to specific hearers, as the following context makes clear. As the crowd began to gather the Spirit presumably sent the disciples (probably the same 120, at least) out to mingle with the people, and the Spirit proclaimed ‘the great works of God’ to each one in his mother tongue, using the mouths of the disciples. But there would also need to be a miracle in the ear of each hearer, to filter his own language out from the welter of sound (many languages being proclaimed at the same time). I would imagine that this activity lasted at least 10 or 15 minutes. 18 If these were people who had come for a short time, they would not be tied to business activities, and might even be bored, so any promise of something different would be welcome. So the ‘foreigners’ probably outnumbered the local citizens in that crowd. 19 The word rendered ‘dialect’ is different from the word rendered ‘language’. What each

amazed and marveled, saying to one another: † “Hey, aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 So how can each of us be hearing our own dialect in which we were born? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites; those dwelling in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, 10 in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene; and visitors from Rome—both Jews and proselytes— 11 Cretans and Arabians; we hear them declaring the great works of God in our own languages.” 12 Yes they were all amazed and perplexed, saying one to another, “Whatever is going on?” 13 But different ones were jeering, saying, “They are full of sweet wine!” ††

Peter's proclamation

14 So Peter, standing with the eleven, ‡ raised his voice and proclaimed to them: “Men—Jews and all who are dwelling in Jerusalem—let this be known to you; indeed, listen to my speech! 15 Because these are not drunk, as you suppose (since it is only the third hour of the day), 16 but this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

17 ‘It will be in the last days, says God:

I will pour out from my Spirit upon all flesh;
your sons and your daughters will prophesy;
your young men will see visions;
your old men will dream a dream. ††

18 In those days I will indeed pour out from my Spirit upon my male slaves and upon my female slaves, and they will prophesy. ††

one heard was what was spoken in his home town, complete with peculiarities—the only explanation for what was happening was supernatural activity. † I gather that the material within quotes represents a sampling from a variety of speakers. †† In ‘sweet’ wine the fermentation process was just beginning, so the alcohol content was still low; but if you drank enough of it you got ‘happy’. So the mockers are saying that the disciples had tanked up and were feeling the effects. (On the other hand, 120 bellyfuls would represent a respectable quantity of liquid, much more than would normally be available, so the mockers’ hypothesis is not very plausible—and being drunk does not give you the ability to speak a different language [in fact, you don't even speak your own correctly].) But as Peter points out in verse 15, it was 9:00 a.m., too early for anyone to be drunk. ‡ Many versions render ‘standing up’, as if Peter and the others had been sitting in the house all this time (did the crowd invade the house?). The basic meaning of the verb here is more like ‘standing still’ (stopping)—I take it that the Eleven had been mingling with the crowd too, but Peter now gathers them to form a nucleus upon which the crowd can focus its attention. †† “Visions” is plural, but “dream” is singular, in the Text (albeit 15% of the Greek manuscripts do have ‘dreams’). When I was young I had all sorts of ‘visions’ of what I thought I was going to achieve in my lifetime. Now that I am old I am pretty well reduced to one ‘dream’. One’s focus must accompany his energy level. (My personal experience is probably not the intended meaning of the Text, but I am not sure what it might be—do all old men have the same dream?) †† As is typical in Hebrew, verse 18 repeats part of verse 17. Similarly, verse 20 complements verse 19. I take it that verses 19 and 20 will be fulfilled during the Great Tribulation, literally, so it was verses 17 and 18 that were immediately applicable to what was happening there. So why did Peter quote the material in 19 and 20? Perhaps he (and the oth-

19 I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below: blood and fire and smoke vapor.

20 The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into ‘blood’ before the great and glorious day of the LORD will come.

21 And it will be: whoever calls on the name of the LORD^{‡‡‡} will be saved!

22 “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Natsorean, ^{‡‡‡} a man from God attested to you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in your midst, as you yourselves well know, ^{§23} HIM—being delivered up by the established purpose and foreknowledge of God—you murdered, having taken Him with lawless hands and crucified Him; ^{§†24} whom God raised up, ending the labor pains of death, ^{§††} because it was not possible that He should be held by it. 25 For David says concerning Him:

‘I always saw the LORD before my face, because He is at my right side so that I not be shaken. ^{§†}

26 Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced.

Furthermore, even my flesh will repose upon hope, ^{§††}

ers) thought that ‘the day of the Lord’ had already started—so much so that no one went home; the believers stayed on in Jerusalem until the persecution sent them running (Acts 8:1). ^{‡‡†} To call on the ‘name’ of the Lord is to call on Him. To ‘call’ on Him is to place yourself under His protection, which involves a recognition of His rulership. ^{‡‡‡} ‘Natsorean’, not ‘Nazarene’. The Text has ‘the’ Natsorean, the Branch-man (see Matthew 2:23 and Isaiah 11:1). In Acts 22:8 the glorified Jesus identifies Himself to Saul as THE Natsorean, which Saul would understand as being the Messiah. [§] Peter here addresses specifically the Israelites, presumably residents of Jerusalem and Judea, since they had been eyewitnesses of what Jesus did. ^{§†} “You took with lawless hands”—‘take’ and ‘lawless’ clearly give the idea that they were responsible for their actions. “Being delivered up by the established purpose and foreknowledge of God” is a clear statement of God’s sovereignty in action. So here we have divine sovereignty and human responsibility side by side; they are both true, whether we understand it or not. (Less than 3% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit ‘having taken’.) ^{§††} In Revelation 1:5 Jesus is called “the firstborn from among the dead”. Death is pictured as a huge womb, pregnant with all the dead, and Jesus Christ was the first one out, literally the ‘firstborn’. Resurrection is the process by which one is ‘born’ out of physical death. The figure of death as a womb is strong, but effective. That ‘womb’ had been holding people for thousands of years, but now finally ‘gives birth’. (People like Lazarus who were returned to this life for a while had to die all over again; they have to wait for the resurrection like the rest of us.) ^{§‡} Nothing like having God at your side, literally, to give you confidence, but nothing like the awareness that He is looking at you to keep you in line! The quote is from Psalm 16:8-11. ^{§††} I take it that the emphasis here is upon the physical body; Jesus’ body was preserved from decay by divine intervention—there was no bad smell in the empty tomb. The resurrection accounts refer to the wrappings, but not to the 100 pounds of spices—I wonder what happened to them (you know, that much spice would be hard to ignore).

²⁷ because You will not abandon my soul in Hades, † nor will You allow Your Holy One to see decay.
²⁸ You have made known to me roads of life; †† with Your presence You make me full of gladness.’ ‡
²⁹ “Men, brothers, be it permitted to speak to you plainly about the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ††³⁰ So then, he being a prophet and knowing that God had sworn to him with an oath that of the fruit, according to flesh, †† of his loins ††† He would raise up the Messiah ††† to sit on his throne, ††† he foreseeing this ††† spoke about the resurrection of the Messiah, that His soul ††† was not abandoned in Hades, nor did His flesh see decay. ††††
³² “This Jesus God raised, to which we all are witnesses. ††††
³³ Therefore, having been exalted to God’s right hand, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this that you now see and hear. ††††
³⁴ Further, David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says:
 ‘The LORD said to my Lord: ††††
 Sit at my right hand
³⁵ until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’
³⁶ Therefore, let all the house of Israel know ASSUREDLY that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom *you* crucified!” ††††

† This is the other side of the coin: for the body not to see decay, it would have to be resurrected; but for resurrection to happen the soul must be reunited with the body, and therefore could not remain in Hades. David had no way of knowing that, so evidently wrote under divine inspiration. †† Life, not death. ‡ If you are a God-lover there is nothing like His presence to make you glad (on the other hand, for a God-hater that Presence is the worst thing in the universe [which is why a God-hater would rather be in hell than in heaven]). ††† David was buried in Jerusalem, and evidently his tomb could still be identified at that time. ††† Peter is being theologically precise here; David’s genes contributed only to the Messiah’s body, not to His soul and spirit. †††† The term rendered ‘loins’ when singular refers to the waist, where a belt is worn. When plural it was used to refer to the place of the reproductive organs—actually, the prostate gland is not all that far below the waist. †††† The Text, being Greek, has ‘Christ’, but king David spoke Hebrew and to him it was ‘Messiah’ (and Peter was presumably speaking in Hebrew). Peter makes the overt connection to Jesus in verse 32. Two percent of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “according to flesh, He would raise up the Messiah” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). § “He foreseeing this” is parallel to “he being a prophet” in verse 30. †† Two percent of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “His soul” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The omission weakens the point of the argument. ††† Peter’s reasoning is impressive, a prime instance of illumination. (By ‘illumination’ we mean divine assistance in interpreting divinely inspired writing. ‘Inspiration’ attaches to the writing, ‘illumination’ attaches to the interpretation of inspired writing.) ††† Peter was there when Jesus used this text to silence the Pharisees (Matthew 22:41-46). †††† Nothing like making sure your audience gets the point! But why “BOTH Lord and Christ”? Perhaps there were a variety of ideas about the ‘Messiah’ out there and Peter nails down His identity as the LORD.

The reaction

³⁷ Now upon hearing this they were cut to the heart and said to Peter, and the rest of the Apostles, “Men, brothers, what shall we do?!” †††
³⁸ So Peter said to them: “Repent and be baptized, each one of you, upon the name of Jesus Christ, ††† for forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. †††
³⁹ For the promise is *TO YOU*, and to your children, and to all who are far away †††—as many, *that is*, as the Lord our God may call.” †††
⁴⁰ With many different words he both testified and kept exhorting, saying, “Escape from this perverse generation!” ††††

The beginning of the Church

⁴¹ Then those who gladly †††† received his word were baptized, and that day about three thousand souls were added. ††††
⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ teaching and in the fellowship, both in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers. ††††
⁴³ Fear came upon every soul—many wonders and signs were taking place through the Apostles. †††

All things in common

⁴⁴ Now all who believed were together and had all things in common; †††† they started selling both possessions and goods and were distributing to all according as anyone had need. ††††
⁴⁵ So day by day they continued steadfastly with one purpose in the temple †††† and

†† This is the first use of the title, Jesus Christ, after the Gospels; the Lord had Himself inaugurated the title fifty days before (John 17:3)—it affirms that Jesus is the Messiah. Anyone being baptized upon that name would be publicly declaring allegiance to Jesus as the Messiah. Notice that Peter promises forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Holy Spirit to any who enter into that COMMITMENT. †† I assume that “all who are far away” is a reference to Gentiles, and the promise applies only to the ‘called’. ††† The ‘generation’ in question was the one that had crucified the Messiah. By being baptized upon the name of Jesus Christ

††† Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit “gladly” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The word is significant and should not be omitted on such flimsy evidence. It emphasizes sincerity and commitment. ††† I take “the breaking of THE bread” to refer to the Lord’s Supper, which with the “prayers” gives the content of the “fellowship”, but that fellowship cannot be disassociated from the Apostles’ teaching. †† Evidently it was not just Peter; the others were also producing. †† No one wanted to go home to his own area; they did not want to miss anything (it appears that they were expecting the Lord’s return at any moment). But what happens after all the goods and possessions have been sold? God sends persecution, and if there is nothing to leave behind it is easier to go somewhere else and start over. †† Since Jesus had formally abandoned the temple, Matthew 23:38-24:1, why were they still using it? It was probably the largest structure in town, and the only one that could hold their in-

broke bread from house to house; † they received their share of food with gladness and singleness of heart, ††47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And day by day the Lord added ‡ to the Church †† those who were being saved.

A man lame from birth

3 Now Peter and John were going up together into the temple at the hour (the ninth) † of prayer. ††2 And a certain man, who had actually been lame from his mother's womb, was being carried (they would lay him daily at the temple gate, the one called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple), † who, upon seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, began asking for alms.

Peter heals him

4 So Peter, with John, fastening his gaze on him said, "Look at us." 5 So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said: "I do not have silver and gold, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ the Natsorean, get up and walk!" ††7 And grasping him by his right hand he lifted him up; † immediately his feet and ankles were strengthened. 8 So jumping up he stood, and began to walk! †† And he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping ††† and praising God. 9 Well all the people saw him walking and praising God; 10 and they recognized him—that he was the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, with a view to alms—and they were filled with wonder and amazement because of what had happened to him.

Peter preaches

11 Now as the lame man who had been healed held on †† to Peter and John, all the people ran together to

creasing number. It would also be strategic for evangelizing unconverted Jews. But it later became a snare, as illustrated by the episode that resulted in Paul's imprisonment. † Here we have the regular meals. †† This sort of thing can work for a while, but tends to go sour; see 6:1 below. [Many years ago I observed a community in Ann Arbor, Michigan try this, but they had trouble with free loaders and moochers.] † Notice who does the adding, and He cannot be deceived. †† Three percent of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit "to the Church" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). †† If Luke is using Hebrew time, it was 3 p.m., if Roman, it was 9 a.m., both being Jewish times for prayer. But from 4:3 below, that says it was already evening, it appears that Luke uses Hebrew time here. ††† But why did they go to the temple to pray? Since God had abandoned that temple, they might just as well have prayed at home. ††† Alack! Many churches now have silver and gold, but can no longer say, "Get up and walk!" † This was an act of faith on Peter's part; if nothing happened the man would fall back down. †† He had never learned to walk (lame from birth), so how could he just start walking, not to mention leaping? The miracle included his head, not just his limbs. ††† Don't you know he had a bouncing good time! †† I assume that he was literally hanging on to them, perhaps their clothes—for whatever reason he did not want to be separated from them. Some 11% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'the

them in the portico, the one called 'Solomon's', really wondering. 12 So upon observing this Peter responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why are you marveling at this, or why are you staring at us as if we have made him walk by our own power or godliness? †††13 The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom YOU delivered up; and you repudiated Him to Pilate's face, when he was intending to release Him. ††14 Yes YOU repudiated the holy and righteous One, and you asked that a *murderer* be granted to you, ††15 while you killed the Originator of the Life, ††† whom God raised from among the dead, to which we are witnesses. 16 Well His name, based on faith in His name, ††† made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith that is through Him ††† has given him this wholeness in the presence of you all.

17 "So now, brothers, I know that you did it in ignorance, as also your rulers. 18 But the things that God foretold through the mouth of all His prophets, that the Messiah would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 19 Repent therefore, and turn around, so that your sins may be erased, in order that times of refreshing may come from the Lord's face 1820 and that He may send Jesus, who had been ordained to be your Messiah, 1921 whom Heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, 20 of which *times*21 God spoke long ago by the mouth of all His holy prophets.

22 "For example, Moses said to the fathers: 22 'The Lord our 23 God will raise up for you a Prophet, like me, from among your brothers. You must listen to *Him*, in

lame man who had been healed' (as in NIV [the beggar], NASB, LB, TEV [the man], etc.). ††† Well, what had happened was extraordinary, to say the least, and probably deserved a little staring. †† Comparing Matthew 27:11-26, Mark 15:2-19, Luke 23:3-25 and John 18:33-19:15 it becomes clear that Pilate wanted no part of killing Jesus and tried hard to release Him. But they not only repudiated Jesus, they repudiated their claim to the Messiah, saying, "We have no king but Caesar". †† Peter does not mince words; he is emphatic about their guilt. ††† A curious expression! How could anyone kill the Originator of the Life? Well, it was certainly their intention to kill Jesus, and Peter declares their guilt, but Jesus gave up His own life, as John 10:17-18 makes clear. ††† A name represents the person, so it was faith in Jesus that produced the healing; but Peter put his faith into action. ††† If the Lord Jesus is not the actual source of the faith, it is mediated through Him. 18 Although the Lord's return is still future, by His grace, and by walking in the Spirit, we have the privilege of experiencing our own little 'times of refreshing'. 19 That is what the Text says. There was God's side, ordaining, and there was their side, recognizing and receiving. If Jesus had been received as Messiah while He lived among them, presumably history would have been different. But now Jesus will only return when it is time to 'restore all things'. But comparing the first clause of verse 19 with that of verse 20 it almost seems that Peter is saying that they could bring Jesus back right away. 20 I take this to be a reference to the Messianic Kingdom, the Millennium. 21 The relative pronoun here is ambiguous as to the antecedent, it could refer to 'things' or 'times', but verse 24 below makes clear that it is 'times'. 22 Some 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit "to the fathers" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). 23 Instead of 'our', perhaps 40% of the Greek manuscripts read 'your'.

all that He may say to you. ²³ It will be that every person who will not listen to that Prophet will be extirpated from among the people.' [†]

²⁴ "Yes and all the prophets, from Samuel on down, ^{††} as many as have spoken, have also foretold [‡] these days. ²⁵ You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'Yes, in your seed ^{‡†} all the families ^{‡†} of the earth will be blessed.' ²⁶ God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, ^{‡‡†} sent Him to *you* first, ^{‡‡†} to bless you by turning each of you away from your iniquities.'" [§]

Peter and John arrested

4 Now as they were speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came at them, ² being upset because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ^{§†3} And they laid hands on them and put them in custody until the next day, because it was already evening. ⁴ (However, many of those who heard the message believed; the number of the men ^{§††} came to be about five thousand.) ⁵ So the next day an assembly of their rulers, both elders and scribes, occurred in Jerusalem, ^{§†6} along with Annas the high priest, ^{§††} and Caiaphas, John and Alexander, and as many as were of high-priestly descent. ⁷ And having placed them in the middle [of the assembly] they started questioning: "By what power, or by what name did you do this?" ^{§†}

[†] See Deuteronomy 18:15-19. Peter is saying that those who did not listen to Jesus are under the sentence of an early death, and quite possibly with spiritual implications. ^{††} Samuel was a prophet. [‡] I follow the best line of transmission in reading "foretold", rather than 'proclaimed', albeit representing only 25% of the Greek manuscripts, at this point. ^{‡†} "Seed" is singular. Paul runs with this in Galatians 3:16. ^{‡‡} The reference is to patriarchal families, units much smaller than whole tribes or ethnic nations; God emphasizes the importance of the family, while Satan works to destroy it. ^{‡‡†} Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit "Jesus" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). As is often the case, the eclectic text weakens the statement. ^{‡‡‡} Wait a minute! When did this 'sending' take place? It was after the resurrection, but Jesus never showed Himself to the people at large during the forty days. I take it that God is doing the 'sending' through the Apostles, who started their ministry in Jerusalem ('to you first'). [§] To be turned away from one's iniquities is a major blessing, because of the consequences of those iniquities, both now and later. ^{§†} The high priest and family were Sadducees; they did not believe in resurrection (for anybody). So they were doubly disturbed, because the Apostles were affirming that Jesus had already done it, and in consequence others would too. ^{§††} The word used refers exclusively to males, so with women and children the total number of believers would have been several times larger. In 2:41 above it was 3,000 'souls', which presumably included everybody. The total number has probably grown 4-5 times since Pentecost. ^{§‡} The impression one gets is that they were called in from surrounding areas. ^{§††} Annas was the real high priest—once installed, the office was for life. ^{§†} "This" suggests that the healed man was present, as verse 10 confirms.

Peter's defense

⁸ Then Peter, full of Holy Spirit, ^{§†} said to them: "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: ^{§§†9} If we are being examined today about a good deed *done* to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, ¹⁰ be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Natsorean, whom *you* crucified, whom God raised from the dead, ^{§§†} by *Him* this man stands here before you whole. ¹¹ This is 'the stone which was despised by you, the builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' ¹² Also, the salvation ^{§§§} does not exist in anyone else, because there is no other name under heaven, given among men, by which we must be saved."

Rulers impressed

¹³ Now upon observing the boldness of Peter and John and perceiving that they were uneducated and unskilled men, ¹⁸ they marveled; and they recognized that they had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ Further, seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. ¹⁵ So ordering them to go out from the council they began to confer among themselves, ¹⁶ saying: "What can we do to these men? Because, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. ^{19†7} But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them to no longer speak to anyone in this name."

They are forbidden to use the name 'Jesus'

¹⁸ So summoning them they commanded them absolutely not to speak or teach in the name of 'Jesus'. ¹⁹ But in answer Peter and John said to them: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, judge for yourselves; ²⁰ because we cannot help but speak the things we have seen and heard." ²⁰²¹ So threatening them some more they released them, not finding any way to punish them, because of the people, since they were all glorifying God over what had happened; ²² because the man on

^{§‡} Again, no definite article. ^{§§†} Perhaps 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "of Israel" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{§§‡} Peter is being neither cautious nor conciliatory! In affirming the resurrection he goes right to the sore point. ^{§§§} The Text has the definite article; there may be many 'salvations' in life, but this is a very specific one. Notice that Peter makes an absolute statement: Jesus is the *ONLY* way. ¹⁸ The disciples had not received a theological education nor been trained in verbal skills (of course Peter was a skilled fisherman, but that is not the point here). ¹⁹ They knew that Jesus was the Messiah but had repudiated Him anyway. Here again the facts are clear, but they are determined to maintain their repudiation of Jesus, and to impose their view on the people. Having committed the unpardonable sin, they were under satanic control. ²⁰ There are times when we must *NOT* obey those in authority; mainly when they demand that we deny God's truth and His values.

whom this miracle of healing had been performed was over forty years old. †

The reaction of the believers

²³ So upon being released they went to their own *group* and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. ²⁴ Well upon hearing it, with one mind they called out †† to God and said: “O Sovereign! ‡ You are God, †† the Maker of sky and earth and ocean, and all that is in them; ²⁵ You who said through the mouth of Your servant David: ††

‘Why did nations snort ††† and peoples plot vain things?

²⁶ The kings of the earth took a stand, and the rulers were gathered together, against the *LORD* and against His Messiah.’ †††

²⁷ Well, in fact, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with Gentiles and peoples of Israel, were gathered together § against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, ²⁸ to do whatever *YOUR* hand and *YOUR* counsel foreordained to happen. §†²⁹ As for the present, Lord, consider their threats, and grant to Your slaves to speak Your word with all boldness, ³⁰ while You stretch out Your hand to heal and that signs and wonders may occur through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” ³¹ Well when they had prayed, the place where they were gathered was shaken, and they were all filled with Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God with boldness. §††

The young Church consolidates

³² Now the multitude of those who believed was of one heart and soul; indeed not one was saying that any of his belongings was his own, but they had all things in common. ³³ (Also the Apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power. §†) Yes, great grace was on them all, ³⁴ be-

† He had been lame for over forty years. †† The Text actually says ‘they lifted voice to God’ (since God is not deaf, there is no need to shout). ‡ Our ‘despot’ is a transliteration of the Greek word here. The term is stronger than ‘master’ or ‘lord’. But ‘despot’ by itself has a negative connotation to us, so we sometimes say ‘benevolent despot’, but not as a form of direct address! Hence, ‘sovereign’. †† Perhaps 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “God” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). †† Some 8% of the Greek manuscripts replace the opening clause with, “You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ††† One can ‘snort’ in anger or in disdain, or perhaps both. There is no definite article with either ‘nations’ or ‘peoples’ (and so in verse 27). ††† See Psalm 2:1-2. § Perhaps 10% of the Greek manuscripts add ‘in this city’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §† They have a clear understanding that God’s Plan prevailed, while not denying human responsibility. §†† Their request was granted. Notice that the Holy Spirit’s filling is not once for all, and is not automatic. Notice further that they did not ask for a free ride. (Again, there is no definite article with Holy Spirit.) But where did they do the speaking? Presumably out among the people. §† So how did that work? It was power in action, presumably signs

cause there were not any needy among them—as many as were owners of lands or houses were selling them and bringing the proceeds of the sold items ³⁵ and placing them at the Apostles’ feet, and they were distributed to each according as anyone had need.

³⁶ So Joses, who was named Barnabas by the Apostles (which is, being translated, ‘Son of encouragement’), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, ³⁷ having a field, sold it, brought the money and placed it at the Apostles’ feet. §††

Ananias and Sapphira

5 Now a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession ² and kept back part of the price for himself, his wife also being party to it; bringing a certain part he placed it at the Apostles’ feet. ³ So Peter said: “Ananias, on what basis §† has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the price of the land? ⁴ While it remained *unsold* was it not yours, and once sold was it not in your power? How is it that you have conceived this thing in your heart? You did not lie to men but to God.” §†⁵ Well upon hearing these words Ananias fell down and expired! (Great fear came on all who heard these things.) ⁶ So the young men got up and wrapped him, and carrying him out they buried him. §††

⁷ Now after an interval of some three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. §†† So Peter addressed her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for so much.” So she said, “Yes, for so much.” ⁹ Peter said to her: “How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry *YOU* out!” ¹⁰ So she immediately fell down at his feet and expired! So upon entering the young men found her dead, and carrying her out they buried her beside

and wonders (see 5:12 below), performed in the name of the resurrected Jesus—if He were rotting in a grave, what could He do? §†† Since many were doing it, one wonders why Luke singled out Barnabas; perhaps because he would be an important player later on. §† The familiar ‘why’ is not adequate here; Satan needs no reason for attacking us. But by asking ‘because of what’ Peter is saying that Ananias gave Satan an entrance into his life (which evidently is not a very good idea). So what sort of thing gives Satan an entrance? One way is to harbor an attitude contrary to God’s will and character. §† As the context makes clear, the problem was that Ananias lied. He wanted the credit for doing like the others, but he was hedging his bet. If he had honestly stated that it was only a part, he would have lived on. He evidently figured it was only a little ‘white’ lie that would not do anybody any harm (no victim)—it did not occur to him that he was really challenging God. §†† Apparently they did not have a coroner. The two were buried without ceremony and without mourning. Was there no family? §†† She was probably looking for him, wondering why he had not come home.

her husband. ^{††} So great fear came on the whole assembly and on all who heard these things. ^{††}

The Apostles distinguish themselves

¹² Now many signs and wonders were being performed among the people by the hands of the Apostles; and they were all in Solomon's Porch with one purpose. ^{†††} None of the rest dared to join them, ^{††} but the people were magnifying them. ¹⁴ Believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, ^{†††} to the point that they kept carrying the sick into the streets, placing them on cots and pallets, so that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. ^{††††} Further, the multitude from the surrounding cities also kept coming into Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed. ^{†††}

Sadducees X Apostles

¹⁷ Then the high priest rose up, and all those with him (being the sect of the Sadducees); they were filled with jealousy ^{§†} and laid their hands on the Apostles and put them in the common prison. ¹⁹ But, during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the prison, and leading them out he said, ²⁰ "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life." ^{§††} So upon hearing it they entered the temple about daybreak ^{§††} and started to teach.

Then the high priest and those with him arrived and convened the Sanhedrin, even all the council of elders of the sons of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. ²² Well, upon arriving the operatives did NOT find them in the jail, so they returned and report-

† There are times when 'togetherness' is not all that good an idea. †† Really. Can you imagine if this sort of thing started happening in our churches today? † I take it that the primary reference is to the Apostles; they were holding court, as it were, in Solomon's Porch where there was plenty of room. †† The Eleven had a stature that set them apart; no one else was pretending to be an Apostle. †† After Pentecost we find the expression 'both men and women'—the participation of women in the Church is overtly stated. ††† Well now, the Lord Jesus recuperated Peter with a vengeance. This would appear to be one of the "greater things" of John 14:12, since we have no record of Jesus using His shadow. Evidently people kept getting healed in this way, and once healed their places would be taken by new arrivals. The local residents had the first chance, and if they were all healed it would be the ones from outlying areas that maintained the flow. ††† This is reminiscent of the Lord's ministry, when all who came were healed. Should we be able to do this today, or is this a 'special occasion' sort of thing? How about when we introduce the Gospel to a new area or culture? Would not overt demonstrations of God's power speed up the process? § They were being upstaged, and how, and did not like it—the true merits of the case were beside the point. §† That is what the Text says, "this Life". To belong to Jesus not only means spiritual life in the place of spiritual death, but it means a way of life—a system of values, a set of presuppositions, a worldview. §†† From the prison they went 'home', for a little refreshment. During the night there would be no one to teach.

ed, ²³ saying: "We certainly found the prison securely locked, and the guards standing in front of the doors, but upon opening them we found no one inside!"

²⁴ Now when the high priest, ^{§†} the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these words, they were really perplexed as to what the implications might be. ^{§††}

²⁵ But someone came and told them, "Hey, the men whom you put in the jail are standing in the temple and teaching the people!" ²⁶ Then the captain went with the operatives and brought them without violence, because they were afraid that the people might stone them. ²⁷ So bringing them they set them before the Sanhedrin; and the high priest addressed them ²⁸ saying: "Did we not emphatically command you not to teach in this name? Just look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood on us!" ^{§†}

Apostles infuriate Sadducees

²⁹ So in answer Peter and the Apostles said: "One must obey God rather than men. ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. ³¹ *Him* God has exalted to His right hand as Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. ^{§††} And we are witnesses to these statements about Him, as also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those obeying Him." ^{§§†}

Gamaliel counsels Sadducees

³³ Well upon hearing it they became infuriated and started plotting to kill them. ³⁴ But someone in the council stood up ^{§§†} (a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law respected by all the people) and commanded to put the Apostles out for a bit. ³⁵ He then said to them: "Men, Israelites, take heed to yourselves concerning these men, as to what you are about to do. ³⁶ For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody; with whom about four hundred men joined up; who was killed, and all who

§† Some 9% of the Greek manuscripts omit "the high priest" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §†† Come now, the only possible explanation was supernatural intervention. There is no one more blind than he who refuses to see. §† Those very men had said, "His blood be upon us, and upon our children!" But of course, a good memory is not always convenient. However, in this case the priest was just being perverse. Well, actually, having committed the unpardonable sin he was under satanic control. §† I was tempted to render, "to give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel", but the Text does not have that order (though it could have), perhaps so as not to limit the forgiveness of sins to Israel. §§† The Apostles are impressive—no fear, no apology, no toning down. "You murdered Him!" "God raised Him!" "He is Prince and Savior!" "The Holy Spirit exists!" All these affirmations were things they absolutely did not want to hear, as their reaction attests. Many in our day do not want to hear that the Holy Spirit is given to those who OBEY God. §§† I gather that Gamaliel just took over, and something about his demeanor made the high priest let him do it.

obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing.

³⁷ Later Judas the Galilean rose up, in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. ³⁸ So now I say to you, keep away from these men and leave them alone; because if this counsel or this work should be of men, it will be abolished; ³⁹ but if it is of God, † you will not be able to overthrow it—lest you even be found to be fighting against God!" ††

Sadducees beat and threaten Apostles

⁴⁰ Well they were persuaded by him, ‡ and summoned the Apostles; after beating them they commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹ So they went out rejoicing †† from the presence of the council, in that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name of the Christ. ††† And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not stop teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. †††

Enter deacons

6 Now in those days, as the disciples were multiplying, a complaint arose from the Hellenists against the Hebrews, because their widows †† were being overlooked in the daily distribution. ² So summoning the multitude of the disciples the twelve said: "It is not advantageous that we should forsake the Word of God to serve at tables. ³ Therefore, brothers, select from among you seven men § of good reputation, full of Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we will appoint over this need. ⁴ But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word." ††

⁵ The statement pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and Holy ††† Spirit, and Philip and Prochorus and Nicanor and Tim-

† The conditional clauses are not the same—the first is a condition of doubt, the second is a condition of fact. Gamaliel makes clear that he personally thinks it is of God. †† Of course they were fighting against God, and presumably knew it, but Gamaliel gives them the benefit of the doubt. ‡ Up to a point—they did not kill them, but still beat and threatened them. They had known all along that they were in fact fighting against God, but for some reason they decided to humor Gamaliel. †† The impression I get is that they started rejoicing right there in the council. What do you suppose the effect was upon the members? †† I here follow what I consider to be the best line of transmission, albeit making up only some 35% of the manuscripts, at this point. But the evidence is badly split: 35% have 'of the Christ', 14% have 'of Jesus', 10% have 'of the Lord Jesus', 20% have 'his', and 21% omit. ††† It bears repeating: the Apostles are impressive. ††† Wait a minute! Where did all those foreign widows come from? (There must have been a fair number, to have caused the problem.) Would a widow have traveled alone from Asia to Jerusalem to attend the Passover? Had their husbands died in Jerusalem? I would imagine more probably the latter, since time was passing and there were many thousands of believers; people would be dying, getting married, etc. as usual. § The term here refers only to males. †† Prayer and the ministry of the Word—how many pastors, missionaries, 'apostles' and such today would fit that description? Don't you suppose we ought to start moving back in that

on and Parmenas and Nicholas, a proselyte from Antioch, ††† whom they set before the Apostles; and after praying they laid hands on them.

⁷ Well the Word of God kept spreading, and the number of disciples in Jerusalem kept multiplying at a great rate, and a large company of the priests were obeying the faith. ⁸ While Stephen, full of faith ††† and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. ††

Stephen in a kangaroo court

⁹ Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. ¹⁰ And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke.

¹¹ Then they instigated men to say, "We have heard him speaking blasphemous words against Moses and God." ¹² And they stirred up the people, and the elders and the scribes; †† and coming upon him they seized him, and brought him in to the Sanhedrin; ¹³ and they put forward false witnesses who said: "This man never stops speaking blasphemous words against the holy place and the law; ¹⁴ for we have heard him saying that this Jesus the Natsorean will destroy this place and change the customs that Moses delivered to us."

†††¹⁵ All who sat in the council, looking intently at him, saw his face like the face of an angel. †††

Stephen's discourse

7 Then the high priest said, "Can these things be so?" †††² So he said: "Men, brothers and fathers, listen: ¹⁸ The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he resided in Haran, ³ and said to him, 'Leave your country and your relatives, and come into a land that I will show you.' ⁴ Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and resided in Haran. ¹⁹ From there, after his father died, ²⁰ God

direction? ††† Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit "Holy" (as in NIV and NASB.). ††† Nicholas is declared to be a foreigner, but some of the other names also sound foreign, so the plaintiffs were well represented. Here we see love and grace in action. ††† For 'faith' some 20% of the Greek manuscripts have 'grace' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). †† Would not signs and wonders already be miraculous, without being "great"? Stephen was something else! Please notice that Stephen was not an Apostle, so the doing of miracles was not limited to them. Stephen and Philip (chapter 8 below) were deacons. †† What follows is obviously a put up job; the Sanhedrin is waiting for him. ††† Big deal! Those guys were really hard up. ††† I wonder how many of them had ever seen an angel, to know what one looked like. Perhaps his face had a supernatural shine. Something like that should have given them pause, but they were too far gone. ††† The man knows it is all a farce, but he pretends astonishment. ¹⁸ Stephen knows he is in a kangaroo court, so he wastes no time with the ridiculous charge; he delivers a prophetic, and condemnatory, sermon. ¹⁹ But he took his father and a nephew along, and Haran was not that land. 'Our father Abraham'—the Jews began their history with Abraham, who started out with incomplete obedience. ²⁰ There went fifteen

moved him to this land in which you now live; ^{†5} yet He did not give him an inheritance in it, not even a foot-step. He promised to give it to him for a possession, that is, to his seed after him, though he had no child. ^{††6} Further, God spoke like this: that his offspring would be aliens in a foreign land—and that they would be enslaved and oppressed—four hundred years. ^{†7} ‘I will judge the nation to which they will be in bondage,’ said God, ^{††} ‘and after that they will come out and serve Me in this place.’ ⁸ And He gave him a covenant of circumcision; ^{††} and so he begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; ^{†††} and Isaac did the same to Jacob, and Jacob to the twelve patriarchs.

Down to Egypt

⁹ ‘The patriarchs, being envious, sold Joseph into Egypt; yet God was with him ¹⁰ and delivered him out of all his adversities, and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. ¹¹ And a famine came upon all the land of Egypt and Canaan, even a great affliction, and our fathers could not find food. ¹² But upon hearing that there was wheat in Egypt, Jacob first sent our fathers. ¹³ On the second *trip* Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph’s family was presented to Pharaoh. ¹⁴ Joseph sent and summoned his father Jacob and all his relatives, seventy-five souls. ^{†††15} So Jacob went down to Egypt; and he died, he and our fathers; ¹⁶ and they were transferred

years of his life. And he took his nephew Lot along, who would be a big

† Stephen ties his hearers into the story. †† Abraham was 100 when he begot Isaac, who was 60 when he begot Jacob and Esau. Abraham died at 175, so lived to see his two grandsons. But before Isaac there was Ishmael... † Stephen cites Genesis 15:13, which should be understood as a chiasmus, a frequent structure in the Bible: A. his offspring would be aliens in a foreign land B. and they would be enslaved B. and oppressed A. four hundred years. A careful comparison of the relevant texts shows that the 400 years includes from the weaning of Isaac to the Exodus (1891 to 1491 BC

†† And He did, with a vengeance. By wiping out the Egyptian army God guaranteed that Egypt would not be a threat to the developing nation of Israel for hundreds of years. †† Women whose husbands are circumcised do not get cervical cancer—the procedure is not a sadistic bit of gore; there is a medical reason for it. ††† Modern medicine has verified that on the eighth day of a male’s life his defenses against infection are at their peak—it is the best day in his whole life for minor surgery. Now then, 3900 years ago who but the Creator could know that? ††† Comparing this verse with Genesis 46:26-27 we get three numbers: 66, 70 and 75. The 66, being ‘out of his loins’, of course excludes Jacob himself and the wives (Joseph is already there). The 70 includes Jacob, Joseph and his two sons. The 75 excludes Jacob and Joseph, but includes nine wives; some had evidently already died in Canaan. For further discussion, please see the Appendix: “How many?”

to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor of Shechem. ⁵

Enter Moses

¹⁷ ‘Now as the time of the promise was approaching which God had sworn to Abraham, the people increased and were multiplied in Egypt, ¹⁸ until a different ^{5†} king arose who had not known Joseph. ¹⁹ This man took advantage of our race and oppressed our fathers, making them expose their babies so that they would not stay alive. ^{5††20} At that time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; he was nurtured in his father’s house for three months. ²¹ When he was exposed, Pharaoh’s daughter took him to herself and brought him up as her own son. ²² So Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; he was mighty in words and deeds. ²³ Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the sons of Israel. ^{5††24} Well seeing one of them being wronged, he defended and avenged the one being oppressed, striking down the Egyptian. ²⁵ Now he supposed that his brothers understood that God was giving them deliverance by his hand, ^{5††} but they did not understand. ²⁶ The next day he appeared to them as they were fighting and tried to reconcile them, saying, ‘Men, you are brothers; why do you wrong one another?’ ²⁷ But the one who was wronging his neighbor pushed Moses away, saying: ‘Who made you a ruler

§ The only record we have of someone buying from Hamor is Jacob (Genesis 33:19); Abraham bought from Ephron (Genesis 23:17)—Shechem and Hebron are presumably different places. Assuming that Stephen’s statement is correct (if he was full of the Spirit as he spoke, verse 55), then presumably Abraham actually bought both places, though Moses only records one, and Jacob was obliged to rebuy one or bought a larger area around it. A variety of historical records existed, made during OT times, that were not included in the Canon and of which we have no copies—but they were still available in Stephen’s day. (For instance, Jude [verse 14] cites Enoch—we have no Hebrew copy of Enoch’s prophecy today, but Jude must have had access to one.) In any case, notice that the Text says ‘they’ were taken to Shechem—this would refer to Jacob’s sons, since he himself was buried at Hebron. Going back to Genesis 34:29, after killing all the men of Shechem, Jacob’s sons kept the women, which is presumably where they got wives for so many men. They also got rich on the spoils of the town. So why not be buried there? For further discussion, please see the Appendix: “Who bought what from whom?” §† The word here suggests a different kind; either a different dynasty or a different race. §†† My rendering here is round about because the Text is round about. §† Comparing Hebrews 11:24-26, it appears that Moses had formally refused the status of being the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, with the political and other advantages pertaining to that status. This attitude probably did not sit well with Pharaoh, which is why he was prepared to kill Moses, when the opportunity presented itself. §†† This evaluation of Moses’ thinking is not in the OT, at least not at this juncture. Did Moses really suppose that killing an Egyptian would make a difference, or that God would give deliverance in that way? When we see him in heaven we can ask him. But comparing this with verse 23 above we may conclude that it was God who put the idea of visiting his people in his heart.

and a judge over us? ²⁸ Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?' ²⁹ Well Moses fled at that word, and became a stranger in the land of Midian, where he begot two sons. [†]

Moses commissioned

³⁰ "And when *another* forty years had passed, Angel of the *LORD*^{††} appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, [‡] in a flame of fire in a bush. ³¹ Well upon seeing it Moses was amazed at the sight, but as he approached for a closer look the voice of the *LORD* came to him: ³² 'I am the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' ^{‡‡} Moses started trembling and did not dare to look. ³³ So the *LORD* said to him: 'Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. ³⁴ I have definitely seen the mistreatment of my people in Egypt, and have heard their groaning; and I have come down ^{‡‡} to deliver them. So now come, I will send you to Egypt.'

³⁵ "This Moses whom they refused, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?'—God sent *HIM* as leader and deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush. ³⁶ This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea, and for forty years in the wilderness.

Israel's rebellion

³⁷ "This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, 'The *LORD* our ^{‡‡‡} God will raise up to you a Prophet from among your brothers, like me.' ^{‡‡‡‡38} This is he who

[†] I find Stephen's selection of details to be curious. Moses' two sons were not prominent in the history of Israel, so why mention them? Well, Moses' failure to circumcise them almost cost him his life! See Exodus 4:24-26. Although Moses himself was certainly circumcised as a baby, he was brought up as an Egyptian, and the importance of the procedure had not been ingrained in him; his wife was not an Israelite and was against it. But how could Moses lead the covenant people while ignoring the sign of the covenant?

^{††} There is no definite article with "angel". Comparing Exodus 3:2 and 4 it is clear that "the Angel of the *LORD*

[‡] Moses was in Midian, so the real Mount Sinai is in Midian, which is part of Arabia, not the peninsula between the 'rabbit ears' of the Red Sea. For a discussion of this, please see the Appendix: "Where is Mt. Sinai?" ^{‡‡} See Exodus 3:6. The Lord Jesus made use of this passage to demonstrate the fact of resurrection (Matthew 22:32). Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "the God" before Isaac and Jacob (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{‡‡} 'Come down' from where? From Heaven, presumably—I imagine that whenever God 'comes down' it is to intervene in human affairs. ^{‡‡‡} Perhaps 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "the Lord", and they are joined by another 3% in omitting 'our' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{‡‡‡} I take it that here Stephen sets up the main thrust of his speech: God sent Moses, but his contemporaries rejected him; God sent the Prophet, but those present rejected Him. Both rejections resulted in judgment. Some 15% of the Greek manuscripts add 'Him you shall hear' (as in AV and NKJV).

was in the assembly in the wilderness, who was with the Angel who spoke with him on Mount Sinai and was with our fathers, [§] who received living oracles ^{§†} to give to us; ³⁹ to whom our fathers did not want to be obedient; rather they rejected him and turned back in their heart to Egypt, ⁴⁰ saying to Aaron, 'Make us gods that will go before us; because this Moses, who led us out of the land of Egypt—we do not know what has become of him.' ^{§††41} Well they made a calf in those days and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and started rejoicing in the works of their hands. ⁴² But God turned away and gave them over to serve the army of the heaven, ^{§†} just as it is written in Book of the Prophets: 'House of Israel, did you offer me slaughtered animals

and sacrifices during forty years in the wilderness? ⁴³ Actually you took along the tent of Moloch, and the star of your god, Rephan, the images that you made to worship; so I will relocate you beyond Babylon.' ^{§††}

A dwelling for God

⁴⁴ "The tent of the testimony, according to the pattern that Moses had seen, just as the One speaking to him had commanded to make it, was with our fathers in the wilderness; ⁴⁵ which, having received it in turn, our fathers with Joshua brought into the possession of the nations, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, until the days of David; ⁴⁶ who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God ^{§†} of Jacob, ⁴⁷ but Solomon built Him a house. ⁴⁸ However, the Most High does not dwell in handmade sanctuaries, just as the prophet says:

⁴⁹ 'Heaven is my throne, while the earth is a footstool for my feet. What kind of house will you build me,' says the *LORD*, 'or what place for my rest?

⁵⁰ Did not my hand make all these things?' ^{§†}

[§] I take it that Stephen is emphasizing that Moses was with *BOTH* the Angel and the people; he was a mediator, as would be 'the Prophet'—"like me" (verse 37). ^{§†} What makes an oracle 'living'? It continues to function, to be applicable. ^{§††} See Exodus 32:1. ^{§‡} Presumably the reference is to Satan's army of fallen angels, see Ephesians 2:2. Those who choose idolatry are really turning themselves over to Satan [even if they don't believe in him]. If God gives you over, what are your chances? ^{§††} See Amos 5:25-27. Amos appears to be saying that the Israelites took these gods with them out of Egypt, kept them all the time in the wilderness, and even took them into the Promised Land! ^{§†} The same handful of early manuscripts of inferior quality that NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. usually follow have 'house' instead of 'God', but are abandoned by their usually faithful followers. ^{§‡} See Isaiah 66:1-2. This could be an oblique defense against their allegation that he had blasphemed the temple—if God does not dwell there (and in fact Jesus had formally abandoned it) [and Josephus says that the Ark was no longer there] it has lost its importance.

Stephen attacks

⁵¹ “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always oppose the Holy Spirit; [†] as your fathers did, so you do. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, of whom you have now become betrayers and murderers; ^{††53} you who received the Law as ‘ordinances of angels’ and have not kept it!”

Stephen is martyred

⁵⁴ Well as they heard these things their hearts were being sawed in half, [‡] and they started gnashing their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ But he, being full of Holy Spirit and looking intently into the heaven, he saw the glory of God and Jesus standing ^{††} on God's right, ⁵⁶ and said, “Wow! I see the heavens opened and the Son of the Man standing at God's right!” ⁵⁷ Yelling at the top of their voice ^{‡‡} they covered their ears and rushed at him all at once, ⁵⁸ and throwing him out of the city they stoned him! ^{‡‡‡} (The witnesses placed their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.) ⁵⁹ Yes, they stoned Stephen as he called out and said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰ Then kneeling down he called out at the top of his voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them!” And upon saying this he fell asleep. ^{‡‡‡} (Saul was in full agreement with his murder.)

Under persecution the Church moves out

8 At that time a major persecution arose against the church that was in Jerusalem, so all, except the Apostles, were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. ² (Devout men had buried Stephen and made a great lamentation over him.) ³ As for Saul, he was trying to destroy the Church; invading house after house and dragging away both men and women,

[†] *In fact, the Sadducees even refused to acknowledge His existence!* ^{††} *Stephen states plainly that they murdered the Messiah.*
[‡] *That is what the Text says. It is a graphic figure of speech. If you are sliced with a sharp object you may scarcely feel it at the moment, but if someone starts sawing on you... No wonder they were mad! (They had long since figured out that Stephen was not being conciliatory.)* ^{††} *There are several texts that have Jesus seated at the Father's right, not standing. Apparently the Lord stood up to receive Stephen—he got a hero's welcome.* ^{‡‡} *They tried to drown out his voice, as well as covering their ears—they really did not want to hear any more! Not a few today do not want to hear the truth either.* ^{‡‡†} *They were beside themselves with rage, and forgot all about getting permission from the Roman authorities—typical mob action, but doubtless demonically inspired.* ^{‡‡‡} *Sleep is frequently used as a figure for death in the Bible, especially with reference to believers. Stephen's death reminds me of the Lord's—both let out a shout, and then died. In the Lord's case we are explicitly told that He dismissed His spirit. I wonder if Stephen was somehow able to dismiss his (if he was able to shout he still had strength, and death by stoning took a while). Both also asked forgiveness for their murderers.*

he was putting them in prison. ⁴ So on their part those who were scattered abroad went about preaching the Word.

Philip's ministry

⁵ Now Philip, having gone down to a city of Samaria, [§] was proclaiming the Christ to them; ⁶ and the crowds gave heed with one accord to what Philip was saying, as they heard the words and saw the signs that he kept performing. ^{§†7} Because unclean spirits came out screaming from many who had them, and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. ⁸ Yes, there was great joy in that city! ^{§††}

Simon, the sorcerer

⁹ Now a certain man named Simon was in the city first, practicing sorcery and astounding the people of Samaria, affirming himself to be someone great, ¹⁰ to whom they used to pay attention, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the great power of God.” ^{§†11} They listened to him because he had amazed them with his sorceries for a long time. ¹² But, when they believed Philip, as he proclaimed the good news concerning the Kingdom of God and the name, Jesus Christ, ^{§††} they were baptized, both men and women. ¹³ Even Simon himself believed, and having been baptized he stayed right with Philip; observing miracles and signs occurring, he was amazed. ^{§†}

¹⁴ Now when the Apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, ¹⁵ who upon coming down prayed about them, so that they might receive Holy Spirit, ¹⁶ because He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had only been baptized into the name of Jesus, the Christ. ^{§†17} Then they laid their hands upon them and they received Holy Spirit.

¹⁸ Well, upon observing that the Holy ^{§§†} Spirit was given through the laying on of the Apostles' hands, Simon offered them money ¹⁹ saying, “Give this power to me also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive Holy Spirit.” ²⁰ But Peter said to him: “May your silver go with you into perdition, ^{§§†} for thinking that

[§] *Perhaps 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have ‘the city’, instead of “a city”, to be followed by most versions, including AV and NKJV.* ^{§†} *He did not just talk, he demonstrated God's power. So how about us—do we just talk?* ^{§††} *Not bad, for a deacon.* ^{§‡} *That is what the Text says. I would expect ‘has’ the power or ‘shows’ it, or whatever, but the Text has ‘is’.* *Perhaps the Samaritans thought he was the Messiah. Around 9% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘is called’.* ^{§††} *He was proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah.* ^{§†} *Why? If he himself had really been producing miracles and signs, he could have said, “business as usual”. Presumably he had been faking it (or else doing it by demonic power), so when he saw the real thing, by God's power, he was genuinely impressed.* ^{§‡} *Some 30% of the Greek manuscripts read ‘Lord’ instead of ‘Christ’, as in most versions.* ^{§§†} *‘Holy’ is omitted by two (2) manuscripts (against over 600), to be followed by NIV, NASB, TEV, etc. Those two are ancient, but of objectively inferior quality.* ^{§§‡} *Peter*

the gift of God could be acquired with money! ²¹ You have neither part nor portion in this matter, because your heart is not right before God. ²² Turn away therefore from this your wickedness and make petition to God, [†] in case the intent of your heart may be forgiven you; ²³ for I see you being into a gall of bitterness and a fetter of unrighteousness.” ^{††24} So in answer Simon said, “*You[‡] make petition to the Lord on my behalf, so that nothing of what you have spoken may come upon me!*”

²⁵ So when they had both ^{‡†} thoroughly testified and spoken the Word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem; they also evangelized many Samaritan villages.

The Ethiopian treasurer

²⁶ Then an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, “Get up and go south on the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza; ^{‡†} it is desolate.” ²⁷ So he got up and went; and there, a man, an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court-official of Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasury, who had come worshiping to Jerusalem ^{‡††28} —he was returning, sitting in his chariot and reading aloud the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go forward and join this chariot.” ³⁰ So running up Philip heard him reading the prophet Isaiah and said, “Do you really understand what you are reading?” ³¹ So he said, “Well

is really upset and does not mince words; he evidently felt that the sin was so serious as to place Simon's eternal destiny in doubt (see verse 22, “in case”). Well, the Lord Jesus Himself had taught them that to blaspheme the Holy Spirit was unpardonable, and Peter evidently figured that Simon had come close. † Some 5% of the Greek manuscripts read ‘Lord’ instead of ‘God’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). †† The Text has ‘into’ not ‘in’, thereby emphasizing (I suppose) that this was a long-standing condition. Since gall is bitter, very, I take it that Peter is saying that Simon was controlled by a terrible bitterness. Isaiah 58:6 speaks of “fettlers of wickedness”, where the fettlers have been placed on the victim(s) by wicked men (or angels), presumably [the LXX uses the word that Peter uses here, ‘unrighteousness’]. We don't know if Peter was thinking of this text, and since Simon was into sorcery/spiritism, the fetter could have been of his own forging. The inspired author says that Simon believed, so I take it that he really did. But the consequences to his soul of years spent in sorcery/spiritism were not immediately, miraculously obliterated. Those in our day who have disciples people converted out of Satanism/spiritism (especially mediums—witches, warlocks) know that those consequences can hang around for quite a while, and be difficult to eliminate. ‡ The Text is emphatic. Simon is not being disrespectful; he doubts that his own pleading will do much good, so he begs them to do it for him (God is much more likely to listen to them). ‡† This word goes with the verbs ‘testify’ and ‘speak’, not Peter and John. I suppose the ‘thorough testifying’ would be with reference to the Lord's ministry, teaching, death and resurrection (they were eye witnesses). ‡‡ From Samaria to the Gaza road would be a walk of at least 60 miles, over accidented terrain. Notice that God removes Philip from a very successful ministry to reach one man (albeit a very strategic one). ‡‡† So how did this man know about Jehovah, and why had he learned to read Hebrew (unless he was reading a Greek translation)? Although nearly a millennium had intervened, this could be a result of the Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon.

how can I, unless someone guides me?” And he urged Philip to come up and sit with him. ^{‡‡†}

³² Now the portion of the Scripture that he was reading was this:

“He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so He does not open His mouth.

³³ In His humiliation His justice was removed,
and who will recount His generation?

Because His life is removed from the earth.” [§]

³⁴ So continuing the eunuch said to Philip, “I ask you, about whom does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” ³⁵ So opening his mouth and beginning from this Scripture, Philip preached Jesus to him.

³⁶ Now as they were going down the road they came upon some water, and the eunuch said: “Look, water! What is keeping me from being baptized?” ^{§†38} So he ordered the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. ³⁹ Now when they came up out of the water, Spirit of the Lord ^{§††} snatched Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him any more, because he went on his way rejoicing. ^{§†}

⁴⁰ Philip was found at Azotus, ^{§††} and as he passed through he evangelized all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Saul of Tarsus

9 Meanwhile Saul, still exhaling murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked for letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he should find any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

^{‡‡‡} *The Holy Spirit was obviously in charge of this whole operation and moved upon the man to trust Philip. § See Isaiah 53:7-8. §† The AV and NKJV have verse 37: Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” It is the sort of thing that makes us think, “If Philip did not say that, he should have”. And maybe he really did, but the question immediately before us is whether Luke wrote it. 88% of the Greek manuscripts, including the best line of transmission, do not have the verse—I imagine that the verse originated in the Latin tradition, during the second century. Philip doubtless recounted the event many times (his house in Caesarea received MANY visitors), and if the exchange recorded in verse 37 actually took place it would be part of the story that he told, and could easily have been added to the Text of Acts. (The addition appears in eighteen slightly different forms, which does not inspire confidence.) §†† Again there is no definite article with ‘Spirit’, nor with ‘Lord’—I would like to translate ‘Spirit of Jehovah’, but God's personal name never occurs in the New Testament. §‡ He did not stop to look for Philip or attempt any further contact with him; Ethiopia was a long way away and he just kept on going. He doubtless understood that Philip's ‘visit’ was a supernatural present, and let it go at that. §†† The verb is in the passive voice, but I am tempted to translate, ‘found himself’. The Spirit put Philip down in a nearby town, perhaps 10-15 miles away. Caesarea was some 50 miles on up the coast; speaking of which, Philip evidently decided to settle there.*

Jesus chooses Saul

³ So it happened, as he was going, that he got close to Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him; ⁴ and falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" ⁵ So he said, "Who are you, Lord?" So the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting; ¹⁶ but get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." ⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the sound but seeing no one. ⁸ Then Saul got up from the ground, and upon opening his eyes he saw no one; so leading him by the hand they brought him into Damascus. ⁹ He was without sight for three days, and neither ate nor drank. ^{††}

Ananias sent to Saul

¹⁰ Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias, and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias!" So he said, "Here I am, Lord." ¹¹ So the Lord said to him: "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas inquire by name for Saul of Tarsus; because, you see, he is praying, ¹² and in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and placing a hand on him, so that he might recover *his* sight." ¹³ But Ananias answered: "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how many evil things he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ Moreover *HERE* he has authority from the chief priests † to bind all who are calling on Your name." ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him: "Get moving, because this man is a chosen vessel to me, to carry my name before nations and kings, also the children of Israel; ¹⁶ for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake." ¹⁷ So Ananias went and entered the house, and placing his hands on him he said, "Brother †† Saul, the Lord, †† who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me so that you may recover your sight and be filled by Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ Immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he recovered his sight forthwith; ††† and getting up he was baptized, †††19 and upon receiving food he was

† At this point AV and NKJV, following the TR, add: "It is hard for you to kick against the goads." So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "...". The addition comes from the Latin tradition; the Greek manuscripts do not have it. Some of the information may be found in the parallel accounts in Acts 22 and 26. †† Saul was in total shock; his world was being turned upside down. † I find it to be curious that the authority of the chief priests extended all the way to Damascus, but how did Ananias know about that? I suppose that Saul's companions gave out that information. †† That was a nice touch. At that moment it no doubt meant a lot to Saul to be called 'brother'. †† Some 10% of the Greek manuscripts add 'Jesus'; to be followed by most versions. ††† Perhaps 70% of the Greek manuscripts do not have 'forthwith'; and they are followed by printed editions of the Majority Text. However, the best line of transmission does have the word, as in AV and NKJV. ††† Any water in the house had to be car-

strengthened. So Saul was with the disciples in Damascus for a number of days.

Saul starts preaching

²⁰ Immediately he started proclaiming Jesus [§] in the synagogues, that He is the Son of the God. ²¹ Well, all who heard him were astounded and started saying: "Isn't this the one who tried to destroy, in Jerusalem, those who called on this name? Even here he had come with that purpose, that he might take them bound to the high priests." ²² But Saul kept growing stronger and kept on confounding the Jews who lived in Damascus, proving that 'This One is the Christ.'

Saul escapes death

²³ Now when a good many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him; ²⁴ but their plot became known to Saul. They started watching the gates day and night, so that they might kill him; ²⁵ so the disciples ^{§†} took him by night and passed him through the wall, lowering him in a hamper. ^{§††}

Barnabas vouches for Saul

²⁶ Now upon arriving in Jerusalem Saul kept trying to join himself to the disciples; ^{§†} but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took him in tow and brought him to the apostles, and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken fearlessly in the name of the Lord Jesus. ^{§†28} So he was with them in Jerusalem, going in and out, and speaking fearlessly in the name of Jesus. ^{§†29} He kept on speaking and debating with the Hellenists, so they started trying to kill

ried there, so it is improbable that there could have been enough to immerse Saul. § 'Jesus' is read by Family 35 and the earliest MSS, albeit representing only some 20% of the Greek MSS here; the rest have 'the Christ'. To teach that the Messiah was the Son of God would be 'old hat', no problem—but Saul was showing that Jesus was God's Son. Notice the end of verse 22, "THIS One is the Christ"—what is the antecedent of "this"? To say that the Christ is the Christ would be stupid, which neither of the authors is. §† Evidently Ananias was not the only disciple of Jesus in Damascus, but we are not told how many there may have been. Of course, Saul's preaching may have added to the number. In fact some 3% of the Greek manuscripts add 'his' [i.e. Saul's] (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §†† From Paul's mention of this in 2 Corinthians 11:32-3, I gather that he felt this to be humiliating. §‡ I get the impression that he made repeated efforts; after all, he probably had a very good idea of where different groups could be found. Either he didn't know where the apostles were, or lacked the courage to approach them. It was probably after several efforts that Barnabas got wind of what was happening; however, the news doubtless spread through the community quite quickly. §‡† How did Barnabas know all that? Perhaps he grilled Saul, before deciding he was on the up and up. I follow some 45% of the Greek manuscripts, including the best line of transmission, in reading 'Lord Jesus'. §† Some 67% of the Greek manuscripts have 'Lord Jesus'; I follow the best line of transmission (just 24% of the manuscripts here) in reading 'Jesus'; (another 8% have only 'Lord').

him. ^{†30} Upon finding it out, the brothers brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

A brief respite

³¹ So then the congregations ^{††} throughout all Judea and Galilee, and Samaria, had peace and were built up; and proceeding in the fear of the Lord and in the enabling of the Holy Spirit [‡] they were being multiplied.

Peter's ministry

³² Now it happened, as Peter went through all *those parts*, that he also went down to the saints who were living in Lydda.

Peter heals Aeneas

³³ And there he found a certain man named Aeneas who was paralyzed—he had been lying on a pallet for eight years. ³⁴ Peter said to him: “Aeneas, Jesus the Messiah ^{††} is healing you. Get up and make your bed!” ^{‡‡} And immediately he stood up! ³⁵ All who were living in Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned ^{‡‡†} to the Lord.

Peter raises Dorcas

³⁶ Now there was a certain disciple in Joppa named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds that she kept doing. ³⁷ But it happened in those days that she took sick and died; so when they had washed her they placed her in the upper room. ^{‡‡‡38} Now Lydda was near Joppa; the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent to him imploring him not to delay in coming to them. ³⁹ So Peter got up and went with them; upon arriving they took him up to the upper room; all the widows stood around him weeping and showing the coats and garments that Dorcas was making [§] while she was with them. ⁴⁰ So Peter put them all out, ^{§†} knelt down and prayed. Turning to the body he said, “Tabitha, get up!” So she opened her eyes, and upon seeing Peter she sat up. ^{§††41} Then he gave her a

† I imagine that it was at this juncture that Saul received the vision mentioned in Acts 22:17-21. †† 8% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘church’, singular (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The true Text emphasizes that there were groups of believers scattered throughout that whole area. ‡ Does the Holy Spirit enable those who do not fear the Lord? Probably not very often. ‡† The Text being in Greek has “the Christ”, but Peter was probably speaking Hebrew, and he was declaring Jesus to be the Messiah. Perhaps 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit the definite article (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡‡ It had been eight years since the last time he could make a bed! You can believe that it gave him great pleasure. ‡‡† The idea is of a change of direction in belief or course of conduct. ‡‡‡ The upper room of her house; she was presumably reasonably well off. § That is what the Text says; I get the impression that Dorcas used a production line method, and left a variety of unfinished garments. §† You could not hear yourself think in there;

hand and lifted her up, and calling the saints and widows he presented her alive. ⁴² And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. ⁴³ So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with a certain Simon, a tanner.

The case of Cornelius

10 Now there was a certain man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, ² devout and fearing God with all his household, both giving alms generously to the people and praying to God about everything. ^{§†3} About the ninth hour of the day, ^{§††} in a vision, he saw clearly an angel of God entering his presence and saying to him, “Cornelius!” ⁴ Well, staring at him and being frightened he said, “What is it, Lord?” So he said to him: “Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. ⁵ Now send men to Joppa and summon Simon, who is surnamed Peter; ⁶ he is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea.” ^{§†7} So when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who were faithful to him, ⁸ and explaining everything to them he sent them to Joppa.

God prepares Peter

⁹ Now on the next day, as they were traveling and drawing near to the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray at about noon. ^{§†10} Well he became hungry and wanted to eat; but while they were preparing, a trance fell on him, ¹¹ and he saw the heaven opened and a container like a great sheet descending to him—it was tied at the four corners and was being let down to the earth— ¹² in which were all *kinds* of four-footed *animals* of the earth (both wild animals and reptiles) and birds of the sky. ^{§§†13} Then a voice came to him, “Get up, Peter, slaughter and eat!” ¹⁴ But Peter said: “No way, Lord! Never have I eaten anything ‘common’ ^{§§†} or unclean!” ¹⁵ So the voice came to him a second time, “What (pl) God has made clean you must not

he had to do that so he could hear the Holy Spirit. §†† She had been dead for a number of hours. §‡ How about us; do we pray to God about everything? §‡† That would be 3 p.m. in Hebrew time, one of the Jewish hours of prayer. §† The familiar “He will tell you what you must do” (as in AV and NKJV) comes from the TR, which is here based on a very few late Greek manuscripts plus part of the Latin tradition. §‡ The Text has “the sixth hour”. §§† What the Text actually says, literally, is: “all the four-footed of the earth, and the wild animals, and the reptiles, and the birds of the sky”—a rerun of Noah’s ark! Well, if the sheet were large enough... However, from Peter’s response it appears that no ‘clean’ animals or birds were included. I am tempted to translate: “all the four-footed of the earth—that is, the wild animals and the reptiles—and the birds of the sky” wherein the ‘birds of the sky’ are carrion fowl (songbirds and game birds generally stay close to the ground). §§‡ That is, something ritually or ceremonially impure (and therefore not to be eaten).

call 'common!' 16 Well this happened three times, and then the object was taken back up into the sky.

The messengers arrive

17 Now as Peter was really perplexed within himself as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, well the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having inquired and found Simon's house, stood before the gate, 18 and calling out they inquired whether Simon, who was surnamed Peter, was staying there as a guest. 19 So as Peter was pondering the vision the Spirit said to him: "Listen, some men are looking for you; 20 so get up and go downstairs; and go with them, doubting nothing, for I have sent them." 21 So going down to the men † Peter said: "Yes, I am the one you are looking for. For what reason have you come?" 22 So they said: "Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man, well spoken of by all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by an angel †† to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you." 23 So he invited them in and put them up.

On to Caesarea

The next day Peter set out with them, also some of the brothers from Joppa went with him; 24 and the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, ‡ having called together his relatives and close friends. 25 So when Peter actually arrived, Cornelius met him, fell at his feet and worshiped. 26 But Peter lifted him up, saying: "Stand up! I myself am also a man." 27 And conversing with him he went in and found many gathered *there*. 28 Then he said to

† Some 35% of the Greek manuscripts add "who had been sent to him from Cornelius", as in AV and NKJV. †† I follow the best line of transmission in not adding 'holy', although here representing only 20% of the manuscripts. To be giving divine instruction the angel was evidently from God. ‡ Let us try to get the 'feel' of this watershed event. Cornelius is a Gentile, but he REALLY wants to know God; yet he 'knows' that Jehovah has a thing with the Jews and is not too big on Gentiles. But he is convinced that Jehovah is the true God and is doing his very best to please Him. So one day God gives him a special dispensation of grace; He sends an angel! Was Cornelius excited, or was he excited!! Like, wow. So he sends his messengers hotfooting it to Joppa (some 60 km), and they do it in less than 24 hours. So what does Cornelius do while he waits? He prays and FASTS. Surely, he was already a man of prayer (verse 2) so how is he going to show his appreciation to God for the special favor? He fasts—now that he has God's attention, marvel of marvels, he wants to stay tuned in so as not to miss anything. And after allowing for the minimum time necessary for the round trip, he is at the door looking down the road—well, being a military commander he doubtless had lookouts and probably had someone on duty to tell him when the group came into view. Enter Peter. He lays on the bit about Jews not contaminating themselves with Gentiles, but God told him to come, and so what does Cornelius want. Now it is his turn—he is looking at a Jew who is not exactly oozing enthusiasm at being there, but he is Jehovah's messenger and the centurion understands about rank and authority; so he plays the only cards he has: his own sincerity and seriousness and God's revealed will. (See the second note down.)

them: "You know how it is unlawful for a Jewish man to associate with or to approach a different race; but God has shown ME that I should not call any man 'common' or unclean. 29 Therefore also I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. So I ask, for what reason did you send for me?"

30 So Cornelius said: "I have been fasting † during four days until this very hour; yes, *it was* the ninth hour, †† I was praying in my house when *wow*, a man stood before me in shining clothing 31 and said: 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms are remembered before God. 32 Send therefore to Joppa and summon Simon, who is surnamed Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea; upon arriving he will speak to you.' †††33 So I sent to you at once, and you did well to come. Now then, we are all present before God to hear all the things commanded you by God." †††

Peter preaches

34 So opening his mouth Peter said: "Really, I comprehend that God is not One to show partiality, 35 but in every ethnic nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him. 36 The word that He sent to the sons † of Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all— 37 that spoken word you know, that was proclaimed throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism that John preached: †††38 Jesus of Natsareth,

†† Some 3.5% of the Greek manuscripts omit the 'fasting' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ††† "I have been fasting during four days until this very hour" (the first card) and "the ninth hour..." (the second card). About the sequence, we observe the following: verse 3—1st day: Cornelius sees angel, about 3 p.m., and sends messengers forthwith; verse 9—2nd day: Peter has vision, after 12 noon, and messengers arrive (& are lodged for the night); verse 23—3rd day: Peter and company leave Joppa; verse 24—4th day: they enter Caesarea (probably before noon). So, by western reckoning we have not quite three full days, but by Hebrew and Brazilian reckoning we have a situation that involves four days. The messengers, under urgent orders, did the 60 km in under 24 hours (whether they went all night, we do not know, but they were probably obviously tired when they showed up at Peter's gate). Peter was not about to be stam-peded into action; he had to eat, sort things out in his mind, talk it over with the others—since they decided to send a committee, preparations had to be made. So they set out the next day, but they are dignified Jews and are not going to run—they set a steady pace and probably make some 45 km before stopping for the night. The remaining 15 km they knock off before noon the next day. So, the "this very hour" refers to the time of Peter's arrival. †††† Less than 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "upon arriving he will speak to you" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). †††† Cornelius does not beat around the bush, he wants to hear from God

§ This statement of Peter's does not fit in very well with the doctrine of salvation (soteriology) as taught in many schools and churches. God deals with people where they are, within the context that they are. Surely, because He cannot deal with people where they are not. †† 'Sons' is often translated 'children' when referring to the descendants of Jacob—Peter is referring to the current generation, the one that received the revelation of 'Jesus Christ'. ††† As soon as John was put in prison, which was the end of his preaching

how God anointed Him with Holy Spirit and power, who went about doing good and healing all those being oppressed by the devil, † because God was with Him ³⁹—yes, *WE* are witnesses of all that He did, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem—whom they also killed, hanging Him on a tree. ⁴⁰ *Him* God raised on the third day, and gave Him to become visible, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to witnesses who had been chosen beforehand by God, to *us*, who ate and drank with Him after He arose out from the dead. ^{††42} And He ordered us to proclaim to the people, that is, to testify that *HE* is the One who has been ordained by God as Judge of living and dead. ⁴³ To *Him* all the prophets bear witness ‡ that through His name †† everyone who believes into Him will receive forgiveness of sins.” ‡

The Holy Spirit falls

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all who were hearing the message. ^{‡‡45} Well the believers of the circumcision [Jews] who had come with Peter were astonished, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had also been poured out on the Gentiles, ⁴⁶ in that they heard them speaking lan-

and baptizing, Jesus moved out of Judea into Galilee—He spent over a year there before returning to Judea. Peter is assuming that Cornelius would have followed the career of Jesus with interest. He gives a very brief, almost disjointed, review of some salient points.
 † *THE devil is Satan. Did Peter mean that every time Jesus saw an oppressed person He healed them, or did he mean that everyone whom Jesus healed was oppressed, or both? The episode at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:2-13) would appear to eliminate the first option, that every time He saw an oppressed person He healed them, because there was a “great multitude” of oppressed people there, and Jesus obviously saw them, but He did nothing to help them. This leaves us with the clear conclusion that it is the second meaning that is correct, everyone whom Jesus healed was oppressed, which means that Satan is involved in all maladies. [With reference to John 5:2-13, less than 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit the last clause of verse 3 and all of verse 4 (as in NIV, NASB, LB, [TEV], etc.). But obviously all those people would not stay there (in discomfort) day in and day out, year in and year out, if nothing was happening. Obviously people got healed, and verse 7 makes clear that it had to do with the stirring of the water—so why did not those manuscripts omit verse 7 as well? The UBS editions do us a considerable disservice by following a very small minority of manuscripts and making the angel “of the Lord”. Since angels can be good or fallen, it seems most likely to me that the angel involved was fallen. A capricious, occasional healing condemned all those people to added suffering (being at the pool instead of the comfort of home), including the frustration and despair of those who never made it (like the man Jesus healed). A sadistic procedure is just like Satan.] †† Here we have an interesting bit of information not recorded elsewhere. Jesus ate AND DRANK with some of them after His resurrection. ‡ Presumably the prophets all bear witness to the Messiah in some way. †† I take “through His name” to mean something like ‘because of His identity’ as Messiah and Jehovah the Son. ‡ This was the crucial bit of information they were waiting for, what they had to do to be saved. The minute Peter said, “believe into Jesus”, they did! And the Holy Spirit came upon them! Believe “into” not “in”—a change of location is involved, from being outside to being inside, which requires commitment. ‡‡ If anyone present was not ‘hearing’ they would neither believe nor receive.*

guages ‡‡ and magnifying God. Then Peter responded: ⁴⁷ “Surely no one can forbid the water, can he, that these should not be baptized [§] who received the Holy Spirit just like we did?” ⁴⁸ So he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ^{§†} Then they asked him to stay a few days.

Peter has to explain

11 Now the Apostles and the brothers throughout Judea ^{§††} heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. ² When Peter went up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision *party* started contending with him, ³ saying, “You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!” ^{§‡}

⁴ So Peter began by explaining it to them in order, saying: ⁵ “I was in the town of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision: a certain object like a great sheet coming down out of the sky, being lowered by its four corners; and it came to me. ⁶ Upon peering into it I observed and distinguished the quadrupeds of the earth—both the wild animals and the reptiles—and the birds of the sky. ⁷ Then I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter, slaughter and eat!’ ⁸ So I said: ‘No way, Lord! Never has anything ‘common’ or unclean entered my mouth!’ ⁹ But the voice answered me, a second time, from heaven, ‘Things that God has made clean you must not call ‘common.’’ ¹⁰ Well this was done three times, and it was all pulled back up into the sky. ¹¹ At that very moment three men stopped in front of the house where I was, having been sent from Caesarea to me. ¹² The Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. These six brothers also went with me, ^{§††} and we entered the man’s house. ¹³ He then related to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying to him, ‘Send to Joppa and summon Simon, who is called Peter, ¹⁴ who will speak words to you by which you and all your household will be saved.’ ¹⁵ Well as I began to speak, ^{§†} the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as on us at the beginning. ¹⁶ I remem-

‡‡‡ The term often rendered ‘tongue’ is the ordinary word for ‘language’—these were presumably real languages, though unknown to the hearers (and speakers). What happened here went against the Jews’ worldview. § Baptism followed immediately upon conversion (not after weeks of instruction and observation). I believe they were formally severing any and all connection with Satan and the world controlled by him, and placing themselves under the protection of the Lord Jesus. The sooner a new convert does that the better. Did the centurion have a swimming pool in his house? Would there have been enough water there to immerse all those people? §† The Greek manuscripts are divided among three main variants here (‘the Lord Jesus’ [35%], ‘the Lord’ [57%], ‘Jesus Christ’ [8%]); I have followed what I understand to be the best line of transmission. §†† Talk about news spreading like wildfire; well this news was really ‘hot!’ §‡ In Matthew 28 the resurrected Jesus had commanded that disciples be made among all ethnic nations—so how can you disciple someone without talking to him or associating with him? In fact, the ‘Great Commission’ imposed a significant shift in worldview upon Jesus’ Jewish followers. The transition was not easy, and many never made it. §†† Peter presumably knew he would be called on

bered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you will be baptized with Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷ So if God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed upon the Lord Jesus, ^{††} who was I to be able to withstand God?" ¹⁸ Upon hearing these things they acquiesced and started glorifying God, saying, "So then, God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance into life!" [‡]

Enter Barnabas

¹⁹ Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that came about in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews only. ^{‡20} But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who upon entering Antioch started speaking to the Greek-speakers, ^{‡‡} preaching the good news of the Lord Jesus. ²¹ And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. ²² Well the report concerning them reached the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. ²³ Upon arriving and seeing the grace of God, he was glad, and he kept encouraging them all to remain true to the Lord with purpose of heart ^{‡‡24} (for he was a good man, full of Holy Spirit and of faith). And a considerable crowd was added to the Lord.

²⁵ Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶ and upon finding him he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they met with the congregation and taught a great many people. The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

Enter Agabus

²⁷ Now in these days, prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸ One of them, named Agabus, stood up and indicated by the Spirit that a great famine was about to come upon the whole world (this indeed happened while Claudius was Caesar). ²⁹ Then the disciples, to the extent that any had plenty, each of them determined to send relief to the brothers who lived in

the carpet, so he took his witnesses along. §† Peter was set to give a proper discourse, but the Spirit intervened. † See Acts 1:5. This was spoken by the Lord Jesus just before His ascension. †† Notice that there is no mention of keeping the Law, being circumcised, or following Jewish customs. Peter is saying that what God did indicates that the key to salvation is believing upon the Lord Jesus, whether Jew or Gentile. I follow the best line of transmission that reads 'the Lord Jesus'; some 75% of the Greek manuscripts add 'Christ'. ‡ Their religious culture had twisted the OT Scriptures so as to exclude Gentiles. So now they are surprised. †† This was before the Cornelius episode. ‡‡ In verse 19, those who spoke to Jews only, presumably used Hebrew, which would not be understood by outsiders. In verse 20, by preaching in Greek, the whole populace could understand, even if Greek-speaking Jews were the main target. Verse 21 implies that the number of believers exceeded the number of Jews, so Gentiles also were believing. ‡‡† Barnabas gives us a good example to follow.

Judea; ³⁰ which they also did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

Enter Herod

12 Now about that time, Herod the king laid hands on some from the church to mistreat them. ² James, the brother of John, he put to death by sword. ^{‡‡‡3} When he saw that it was pleasing to the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter as well (it was during the days of the unleavened loaves) ⁴ —upon seizing him he put him in prison, turning him over to sixteen soldiers ⁵ to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover.

Enter angel

⁵ Well Peter was being held in the prison all right, but the congregation was making earnest prayer to God on his behalf. ⁶ So when Herod was about to bring him out, ^{§†} that night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, with guards protecting the prison in front of the doors. ⁷ Suddenly, an angel of the Lord was there, and a light shone in the cell; striking Peter on the side he roused him saying, "Quick, get up!" and the chains fell away from his wrists. ⁸ Then the angel said to him, "Fasten your belt and put on your sandals." So he did. Then he said to him, "Put on your cloak and follow me." ⁹ So he went out and started following him, not realizing that what the angel was doing was real; he supposed he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰ Passing through the first and second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads into the city, that opened for them by itself; ^{§††} upon exiting they advanced one block, and suddenly the angel left him.

Enter Rhoda

¹¹ When Peter had come to himself he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord sent His angel and delivered me out of Herod's hand and from all the expectation of the Jewish people." ¹² Upon reflection he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John (the one called Mark), where a considerable number had gathered and were praying. ¹³ When Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. ¹⁴ Upon recognizing Peter's voice, she was so glad she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter was standing before the gate! ¹⁵ But they said to her, "You're crazy!" but she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, "It is his angel." ¹⁶ But Peter kept on knocking; so when they opened the door and saw him, they were astounded. ^{§†17} Mo-

‡‡‡ So far as we know, James was the first of the Apostles to die (discounting the Iscariot), and he was martyred. § Why so many? Had he heard about Peter's spiritual power? §† 'Bring him out' means to execute him. §†† The angel used supernatural power; and if we ever learn how to do it, we can too—Ephesians 3:20.

tioning to them with his hand to be silent, he related to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. Then he said, "Tell these things to James [†] and the brothers." And going out he went off to a different place. ^{††}

Poor guards!

¹⁸ Now as soon as it was day, there was no small commotion among the soldiers about what had become of Peter! ¹⁹ Well after searching for him and not finding him, Herod examined the guards and ordered that they be executed. Going down from Judea to Caesarea, he stayed there. [‡]

Herod gets his 'comeuppance'

²⁰ Now Herod was very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; so they came with one accord to him, and having won over Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country was supplied with food from the king's. ^{‡‡1} So on an appointed day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on the throne and started to deliver an address to them. ²² But the crowd started calling out, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" ²³ Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give glory to God, and being eaten by worms, he died. ^{‡‡}

²⁴ And the Word of God kept growing and multiplying. ^{‡‡‡}

The Gentile Church

²⁵ Now Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch, ^{‡‡‡} having fulfilled their mission, also taking with them John, the one called Mark.

Missionary journey I—Barnabas and Saul→Paul

13 Now in the congregation that was in Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barn-

^{§‡} *They evidently did not expect their prayer to be answered. After all, they had probably prayed for James first, and he was killed anyway. When we pray about a difficult situation, we should start out by asking what the Father is doing—John 5:19. † This James is the Lord's half-brother; he became the leader of the church in Jerusalem. †† Presumably this means that he left Jerusalem; it was prudent to disappear for a while. ‡ He had doubtless told the Jews that he had Peter, and when he couldn't produce him he lost face. But the circumstances probably left him uncomfortable as well, so he decided to get away for awhile—none of which saved the poor guards. The guards were part of an evil system, and presumably would never have converted (although, if Peter had preached to them, some may have believed before the execution). ‡† The famine mentioned in chapter eleven may have made them especially dependent. ‡‡ The worms, of unusual size and impressive number, would come out of the corpse, indicating the cause of death—really gross! ‡‡‡ Growing in influence and multiplying its effects. ‡‡‡ We have here an important set of variant readings, wherein the evidence is rather badly divided. The discussion is quite complicated and extensive, so I refer the interested reader to the Appendix: "Where to place a Comma—Acts 12:25".*

abas, Simeon (the one called Niger), Lucius the Cyrenian, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch), and Saul. ² As they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart to me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them!" ³ Then, having fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them off.

1st stop—Cyprus

⁴ So, having been sent out by the Holy Spirit, [§] they went down to Seleucia; and from there they sailed to Cyprus. ^{§†5} And upon arriving in Salamis, they started proclaiming the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews (also they had John as assistant). ⁶ Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew named Barjesus, ⁷ who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul, really wanting to hear the Word of God. ⁸ But the sorcerer Elymas (for so his name is translated) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

⁹ Then Saul, also called Paul, ^{§††} filled with Holy Spirit and looking intently at him, ¹⁰ said: "O full of all deceit and all trickery, son of a devil, enemy of all righteousness! ^{§‡} Will you not stop perverting the straight ways of the Lord? ¹¹ Well now, the Lord's hand is against you and you will be blind, not seeing the sun until *next* season!" Immediately mist and darkness engulfed him, and he started going around looking for someone to lead him by the hand. ¹² Then the proconsul believed, when he saw ^{§††} what had happened, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

On to Pisidian Antioch

¹³ Then Paul and his party set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphilia (here John left them and returned to Jerusalem). ^{§†14} Going on from Perga they arrived in Antioch of Pisidia; and entering the synagogue on the Sabbath day, they sat down. ¹⁵ After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue leaders sent to them, saying, "Men, brothers, if you have a word of encouragement ^{§‡} for the people, do speak."

[§] *Note the emphasis on the Holy Spirit's agency. §† Recall that Barnabas was a native of Cyprus (Acts 4:36); he was doubtless eager to evangelize his own country, and would also know his way around. §†† It is at this point that Luke starts using 'Paul' instead of 'Saul'. §‡ To be an 'enemy of all righteousness' one would have to be pretty bad! If 'son of a devil' is literal, Elymas was a humanoid, and would indeed be completely evil. §†† Demonstrated supernatural power has a way of lending credence to the spoken word. §† When the party arrived in Cyprus, Barnabas was the leader; when it left, Paul had taken over. Barnabas was John's uncle, and quite possibly John did not like the change. §‡ Or 'exhortation'.*

Paul expounds the Gospel

¹⁶ So standing up and motioning with his hand, Paul said: “Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen. ¹⁷ The God of this people chose our fathers, and prospered the people during their sojourn in the land of Egypt, and brought them out of it with an uplifted arm. ¹⁸ For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness. ¹⁹ And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He gave them possession of their land. ²⁰ After these things, He gave judges for about four hundred and fifty [†] years, until Samuel the prophet. ^{††21} And then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul, a son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. ^{‡22} And removing him He raised up for them David as king, about whom He gave witness and said, ‘I have found David son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.’ ²³ God, from this man's seed, according to promise, has brought [‡] Salvation [‡] to Israel, ²⁴ John having heralded beforehand, in advance of His coming, a baptism of repentance to Israel. ^{‡‡25} Well, as John was fulfilling his course, he said: ‘Whom do you suppose me to be? No I am not—but indeed He comes after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.’ ^{‡‡‡}

²⁶ “Men, brothers, sons of the stock of Abraham, and those among you who fear God: to *YOU*^s the word of this salvation has been sent. ²⁷ The Jerusalem dwellers and their rulers, understanding neither Him nor the voices of the prophets that are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning Him. ²⁸ Though they found no cause for death, they asked Pilate to have Him executed. ²⁹ When they had fulfilled all things that were written about Him, they took Him down from the cross ^{§†} and placed Him in a tomb. ³⁰ But God raised Him from the dead; ³¹ and for many days He was seen by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are ^{§††} His witnesses to the people.

³² “Yes we proclaim to you the good news: the promise that was made to the fathers, ³³ God has fulfilled the same to us, their children, when He raised up Jesus; ^{§‡} as also it stands written in the second Psalm: ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you.’ ^{§††}

[†] The events recorded in the book of Judges, plus Eli's 40 years, equal 450. ^{††} Along with his other functions, Samuel was a prophet. [‡] Saul reigned for forty years—a considerable period of time. ^{‡†} Instead of ‘brought’, some 25% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘raised up’, as in AV and NKJV. ^{‡‡} Instead of ‘Salvation’, some 15% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘a Savior, Jesus’, as in most versions. ^{‡‡†} Instead of ‘to Israel’, some 20% of the Greek manuscripts read ‘to all the people of Israel’, as in most versions. ^{‡‡‡} At first people speculated that John the Baptizer might be the Messiah, but John was quick to deny it. [§] Instead of ‘to you’, perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘to us’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). How was that word sent? By Paul and Barnabas. ^{§†} Literally ‘tree’. Note that Paul emphasizes the fulfillment of prophecy. ^{§††} Paul says ‘are’—evidently many/most of the original Apostles were still alive.

³⁴ And that He raised Him from the dead, ^{§†} no longer to return to corruption, ^{§‡} He has spoken thus, ‘I will give you the holy things guaranteed to David.’

^{§§†}

³⁵ Further, it is stated elsewhere,

‘You will not allow your Holy One to see decay.’ ^{§§‡}

³⁶ Now David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw decay; ³⁷ but the One whom God raised up did not see decay. ^{§§§38} Therefore, let it be known to you, men, brothers, that through this One forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you; ³⁹ and by Him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the Law of Moses. ¹⁸⁴⁰ So take care, lest there come upon you that which has been spoken in the prophets:

⁴¹ ‘Look you despisers, marvel and perish!

For I am working a work in your days to which you will *NOT* give credence, even if someone were to explain it in detail to you.’”

¹⁹

The reaction

⁴² Now as the Jews were going out of the synagogue, the Gentiles implored repeatedly ²⁰ that these words

^{§‡} The “raised up” here presumably refers to the incarnation; the resurrection comes in verse 34. ^{§††} See Psalm 2:7. ^{§†} The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is crucial; without it we have no Gospel. ^{§‡} People like Lazarus who were returned to life, had to die again (and decompose); with Jesus it was different: His resurrection was definitive, and involved a glorified body. ^{§§†} See Isaiah 55:3. ^{§§‡} See Psalm 16:10. ^{§§§} Only supernatural intervention could forestall decay after physical death. ¹⁸ The Law as a means of justification was sadly deficient; the resurrected Jesus is marvelously efficient. ¹⁹ See Habakkuk 1:5. According to 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11, to those who reject the love of the truth God Himself sends active delusion, so they will believe the lie. The ‘despisers’ are rendered incapable of understanding the explanation. ²⁰ We have here an important set of variant readings, wherein the evidence is rather badly divided. I have decided to give the Greek, for those who can handle it, but will here give a literal rendering of the four variants, for those who can't. However, the discussion includes ‘the Gentiles’, as being part of the puzzle: 1) now as the Jews were going out of the synagogue; 2) now as they were going out; 3) now as they were going out of the synagogue of the Jews; 4) now as they were going out of the synagogue. 1) εξιοντων δε εκ της συναγωγης των ιουδαιων f35 (60.2%) HF,RP,TR 2) εξιοντων δε αυτων (A,B,C,D (16.2%) NU 3) εξιοντων δε αυτων εκ της συναγωγης των ιουδαιων (20.8%) OC,CP 4) εξιοντων δε αυτων εκ της συναγωγης (2.3%) (two other readings) (0.4%) I believe this variant set must be considered along with the presence of τα εθνη after παρεκαλου, but TuT does not include the second set. However, from UBS3 it appears that virtually the same roster of witnesses, including the three ancient versions (!), read variant 2) AND omit “the Gentiles”. Where then is the Subject of the main verb παρεκαλου? Presumably for those witnesses it would be the Jews and proselytes who had just heard Paul and wanted to hear it all over again the next Sabbath. So why are they (Jews and proselytes) mentioned overtly again in verse 43? And on what basis would the whole city show up the next week (verse 44)? But to go back to verse 42, why would the first hearers want to hear the same thing (τα ρηματα ταυτα) again anyway? The really interested ones stuck with Paul and Barnabas to learn more (verse 43), just as we would expect. The witnesses to variants 1) and 3) join in support of “the

might be spoken to them the next Sabbath. ⁴³ The synagogue service having been dismissed, many of the Jews and the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who started addressing them, urging them to continue in the grace of God. ⁴⁴ Well the next Sabbath almost the whole city was gathered to hear the Word of God. ⁴⁵ But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with envy ^{††} and started speaking against the things said by Paul, contradicting and [‡] blaspheming.

⁴⁶ But Paul and Barnabas speaking boldly said: "It was necessary that God's Word should be spoken to you first. ^{‡†} But since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, ^{‡‡} now we are being turned to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ Because that is just how the Lord has commanded us:

'I have set you to be a light for ethnic nations,
that you should be for salvation
up to the last place on earth.'" ^{‡‡†}

⁴⁸ Now upon hearing this, the Gentiles rejoiced and glorified the Word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. ^{‡‡‡}

⁴⁹ Well the Word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. ^{§50} But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women ^{§†} and the chief men of the city, and raised up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their borders. ⁵¹ So they shook off the dust from their feet

Gentiles", giving us a strong majority (over 80%). So the Subject of παρακαλουν is τα εθνη—they

In

variant 2) αυτων presumably serves as Subject of both the participle and the main verb, but in that event the main verb should take precedence and the pronoun should be nominative, not genitive. However one might explain the motivation for such a change—from 1) to 2) and deleting "the Gentiles"—variant 2) is evidently wrong, even though attested by the three ancient versions. Perhaps someone faced with variant 1) took "of the Jews" to be the referent of the participle instead of modifying "synagogue" (like NKJV), and thought it should be Subject of the main verb as well—then, of course, "the Gentiles" were in the way and were deleted. Then 1) might have been shortened to 2) for 'clarity'. I take it that the original text had: εξιοντων δε εκ της συναγωγης των ιουδαιων παρακαλουν τα εθνη etc. † Instead of 'God' perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts have 'the Lord' (as in NIV, LB, TEV, etc.). †† Isn't human nature wonderful? ‡ Perhaps 20% of the Greek manuscripts omit "contradicting and" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡† Note the "it was necessary". The apostles had a clear conviction that the Jews should be given the first chance. ‡‡ This sounds a little bit like sarcasm to me. ‡‡† See Isaiah 49:6. The prophecy refers to the Messiah, but Paul and Barnabas are representing Him. ‡‡‡ Here God's sovereignty and human responsibility are placed side by side—God appoints, but we have to believe. § This presumably means that a fair number of local congregations sprang up there. §† When the women get stirred up, watch out!

against them, ^{§††} and went to Iconium. ⁵² But the disciples were filled with joy and with Holy Spirit. ^{§‡}

Iconium

14 Now it happened in Iconium that they went together into the synagogue of the Jews, and they spoke to such effect that a large number of both Jews and Greeks believed. ² But the disobedient Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. ³ Even so they stayed there a considerable time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, giving signs and wonders to take place by their hands. ^{§††4} Well the population of the city became divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. ⁵ But when a plot was hatched by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat and stone them, ⁶ they became aware of it and escaped to the cities of Lycaonia—Lystra, Derbe and the surrounding area—⁷ where they continued to preach the Gospel.

Lystra

⁸ Well in Lystra a certain man with helpless feet was sitting (lame from his mother's womb, who had never walked). ⁹ This man was listening to Paul speaking; who looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be healed, ¹⁰ said with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And the man jumped up and began to walk! ^{§††11} Now when the crowd saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in Lycaonian, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" ¹² And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. ¹³ Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought bulls and garlands to the gates, intending to make a sacrifice, along with the crowd. ^{§‡}

¹⁴ But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they tore their clothes and rushed into the crowd, crying out ¹⁵ and saying: "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, giving you good news, telling you to turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them; ¹⁶ who in the former generations allowed all the ethnic nations to walk in their own ways. ¹⁷ Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, doing good, giving you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

§†† They were following an instruction given by the Lord Himself (Matthew 10:14-15, Luke 9:5), and that He illustrated by example (Matthew 11:23-24), although He spoke the curse. I believe that history records that Pisidian Antioch entered into decline at that point. §‡ The apostles went on their way, but they left Life and joy behind them. §†† As stated in this verse, the signs and wonders were the result of God's initiative. §† As in chapter 3, the miracle included his head, not just his limbs, since he had never learned to walk. §‡ Within their belief system this was the appropriate thing to do.

¹⁸ Even saying these things, they barely stopped the crowd from sacrificing to them.

Paul stoned

¹⁹ Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came, and having persuaded the crowd and having stoned Paul, ^{††} they dragged him out of the city, [‡] supposing him to have died. ²⁰ But as the disciples stood around him, ^{‡†} he got up and entered the city. The next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

The return to Antioch

²¹ When they had evangelized that city and discipled a good number, they returned to Lystra ^{‡†} and Iconium and Antioch, ²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God." ^{‡†23} When they had appointed elders for them in every congregation, ^{‡††} having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord into whom they had believed. ^{§24} After going through Pisidia, they came to Pamphilia. ²⁵ When they had declared the Word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. ²⁶ From there they sailed to Antioch, from where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had completed. ²⁷ So upon arriving and gathering the congregation, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. ²⁸ And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

The Jerusalem Council

The conflict

15 Then some men came down from Judea and started teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." ² Well this provoked serious dissension and argument between Paul and Barnabas and them, so Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with cer-

[†] Now there you have an extemporaneous speech! It was a totally unexpected situation, and they had no prepared sermon. They emphasize the Creator God. ^{††} Crowds can be fickle, and the apostles had called their religion "useless". Several days had elapsed, presumably, which gave them time to mull things over. There was probably some demonic involvement as well. [‡] He was probably dragged by the feet, like an animal. ^{‡†} I suppose that the attack was sudden and unexpected (planned that way), so the disciples did not have time to try to defend him. Paul certainly looked dead, but as the disciples were standing there trying to assimilate what had happened, he got up! His recovery was such that he could set out the next day on foot. ^{‡†} One might suppose that they would avoid Lystra, but no. Perhaps upon reflection the locals were ashamed of what they had done; besides, what do you do to a man you have already killed?! ^{‡††} Is that what they preach in your church? Does that sound like 'easy street'? ^{‡†††} The congregations needed some sort of leadership. [§] People need to learn to walk with God on their own.

tain others of them, to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question. ³ So being sent on their way by the congregation, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brothers. ⁴ Upon arriving in Jerusalem, they were received by the congregation and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. ⁵ But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the Law of Moses." ^{§†}

The Council

⁶ So the apostles and the elders came together to consider this matter. ⁷ When there had been plenty of discussion, Peter got up and said to them: "Men, brothers, you know that a good while ago God made a choice among you, ^{§††} that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the message of the Gospel and believe. ⁸ And the heart-knowing God acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us; ⁹ and He made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. ¹⁰ Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? ¹¹ Rather, we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, ^{§†} in the same manner as they." ^{§††}

¹² Then the whole assembly kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul reporting what signs and wonders God had done among the ethnic nations through them. ¹³ Now when they finished, James reacted saying: "Men, brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴ Simeon has described how God first intervened to extract from the Gentiles a people for His name. ¹⁵ And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

¹⁶ 'After these things I will return,

and I will rebuild David's tent, the fallen one; yes, I will rebuild its ruins and restore it;

¹⁷ so that the remnant of mankind may seek the LORD,

even all the Gentiles—the ones, that is, upon whom my name has been called—says the LORD who does all these things.' ^{§†}

¹⁸ All His works are known to God from eternity. ^{§†}

^{§†} In essence they were demanding that the Gentiles become Jewish proselytes, as a prior condition. Those Pharisees did not understand salvation by faith. ^{§††} I follow the best line of transmission in reading 'you'; some 60% of the Greek manuscripts have 'us', as in AV and NKJV. ^{§‡} Some 5% of the Greek manuscripts add 'Christ', as in AV and NKJV. ^{§††} Peter states the crucial point: salvation comes through grace and faith, for everyone, not by keeping the Law. Legalism is out. ^{§†} See Amos 9:11-12. ^{§‡} God had not changed; it was always His purpose to include the Gentiles. Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "all His works are known to God" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

¹⁹ Therefore I judge that we should not create difficulty for those who are turning to God from among the ethnic nations, ^{†20} but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from fornication, from what is strangled, and from blood. ²¹ For from ancient generations Moses has in every city those who preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”

The edict

²² Then it pleased the apostles and the elders, with the whole congregation, to send chosen men from among them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas: Judas (the one called Barsabas) and Silas, leading men among the brothers. ²³ They wrote by their hand the following:

“The apostles and the elders and the ^{††} brothers, to the Gentile brothers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia: Greetings.

²⁴ Since we have heard that some who went out from among us have disturbed you with words, unsettling your souls, saying that you must be circumcised and keep the Law [‡]—to whom we gave no such authorization— ²⁵ it seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶ men who have risked their lives for the sake of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷ So we have sent Judas and Silas, who will also confirm these things by word of mouth. ^{††28} It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, ^{‡‡} to place no greater burden upon you than these necessary things: ²⁹ to abstain from things offered to idols, ^{‡‡‡} from ‘blood’, from anything strangled and from fornication; ^{‡‡‡} it will be in your own best interest to keep away from these things.

† This way of stating it leaves an opening for making a distinction between Gentile and Jewish believers. By chapter 21 this had become a serious problem. James begins the verse saying, “I judge”, emphasizing the pronoun, and his position was a bit of a compromise; this in spite of Peter’s plain statement in verse 11. In verse 23 the edict is addressed to the “Gentile brothers” (the distinction between Jew and Gentile is maintained). †† Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “and the” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). This changes the meaning; the three groups are reduced to two. ‡ Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit ‘saying that you must be circumcised and keep the law’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). †† The Law required at least two witnesses.

‡‡ James affirms divine approval for the decision. ‡‡† The idols represented demons, and to deliberately worship an idol would give its demon a ‘legal’ basis for working in the worshiper. ‡‡‡ In the Greek Text each item in the list is a single word; such brevity could give rise to ambiguity. However, items 1 and 4 seem clear enough. Item 3 presumably harks back to Genesis 9:4, where ingesting blood is forbidden. So item 2, ‘blood’, must mean something else. In the Bible ‘blood’ is repeatedly used to refer to violent death and the responsibility for it. This harks back to Genesis 9:5-6. The prohibition against fornication is implied in Genesis 2:24. That God did not accept Cain’s offering (Genesis 4:3-5) implies that He had given instruction on the subject, which would presumably include idolatry. So the four items in the list are all far older than the Law of Moses and are independent of it.

Farewell.”

Good results

³⁰ So when they were sent off they came to Antioch, and gathering the crowd they delivered the letter. ³¹ When they had read it, they rejoiced over the encouragement. ³² Both Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words. ³³ After some time, they were released with peace from the brothers to the apostles. ^{§35} But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the Word of the Lord, with many others also.

Missionary journey II—Paul and Silas

Paul and Barnabas separate

³⁶ Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return now and visit our brothers in each city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, to see how they are doing.” ³⁷ Now Barnabas resolved to take John (the one called Mark) along as well. ³⁸ But Paul insisted on not taking someone who had deserted them in Pamphilia and not gone with them to the work. ³⁹ Well the contention became so sharp that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; ^{§†40} while Paul chose Silas and set out, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of God. ^{§††41} He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the congregations.

Paul finds Timothy

16 So he came to Derbe and Lystra. Well now, a certain disciple was there named Timothy, son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was a Greek; ² he was well spoken of by the brothers in Lystra and Iconium. ³ Paul wanted to have him go on with him, so he took and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, because they all knew that his father was a Greek. ^{§†4} As they were go-

§ Verse 34, as in the AV, is to be found in about 30% of the Greek manuscripts, but contradicts verse 33, that seems to require that Silas returned to Jerusalem; “they were sent back...to the apostles”, and “they” refers to Judas and Silas. The ‘problem’ is that in verse 40 Paul chooses Silas to accompany him, so he had to be in Antioch, not Jerusalem. Accordingly the longer reading was created to solve the ‘problem’. The “some days” of verse 36 could well have been a month or two. From Antioch to Jerusalem would be a trip of less than 400 miles. Silas had time to go to Jerusalem and get back to Antioch. §† This is the last we hear of Barnabas, but not of Mark. Barnabas was an encourager. He had seen the potential in Saul of Tarsus and helped him along on at least two occasions. Now he sees the potential in Mark and invests in him, to such good effect that Paul himself later recognizes Mark’s value (2 Timothy 4:11). Peter had taken Mark under his wing and helped him write the second Gospel. §†† Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘Lord’ instead of ‘God’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §‡ Paul had been stoned at Lystra, at the instigation of the Jews, so why is he con-

ing through the cities they were delivering the dogmas to them, to keep—the ones that had been determined by the apostles and the elders in Jerusalem. ¹⁵ So the congregations kept on being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily. ^{††}

The 'Macedonian call'

⁶ Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia, ⁷ they approached Mysia and tried to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit [‡] did not permit them. ⁸ So they bypassed Mysia and went down to Troas. ^{††}

⁹ A vision appeared to Paul during the night: a man of Macedonia was standing, appealing to him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ So when he saw the vision, we ^{‡‡} immediately prepared to go over to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord ^{‡‡‡} had called us to evangelize them.

Philippi

¹¹ So setting sail from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day to Neapolis; ¹² and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. ^{‡‡‡} We stayed some days in that city. ¹³ On the Sabbath day we went outside the city by a river, where prayer was customarily made, [§] and sitting down we started speaking to the assembled women. ^{§†14} A certain woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God, really listened, whose heart the Lord opened to give heed to the things spoken by Paul. ¹⁵ When she and her household were baptized, she appealed saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." So she persuaded us.

cerned to please them? And after he joined Paul how much time was Timothy going to spend in his home town? A curious proceeding. † One of the dogmas was that circumcision was not necessary, so was Paul hedging? †† Evidently they were enthusiastically sharing the Good News. There must have come to be hundreds of congregations throughout Asia Minor. ‡ Perhaps 6% of the Greek manuscripts add 'of Jesus' (as in NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡† Paul and Silas were sufficiently in tune with the Holy Spirit that He could lead them. The areas mentioned were basically unevangelized, so their attempt was a 'natural', but those areas would be reached later as the News radiated out from Ephesus to all Asia. God wanted to get the Church started in Europe, and in particular the area where Greek was the mother tongue. ‡‡ At this point Luke joined the party. ‡‡† Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts have 'God' instead of 'Lord' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡‡‡ A Roman colony—this conferred status and some privileges. § Instead of "where prayer was customarily made", perhaps 2% if the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have 'where we supposed a place of prayer to be' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §† Evidently there was no synagogue in Philippi. Prayer meetings usually have more women than men.

Prison

¹⁶ Now it happened, as we were going to prayer, that a certain slave girl having a spirit of divination met us, who brought considerable profit to her owners by divination. ¹⁷ Following Paul and Silas ^{§††} this girl kept calling out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to us the way of salvation!" ^{§†18} She kept this up for many days! ^{§††} So Paul, becoming increasingly annoyed, ^{§†} turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" And it came out that very hour.

¹⁹ But when her owners saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place to the rulers, ^{§‡20} and bringing them before the magistrates they said, "These men, being Jews, are agitating our city, ²¹ and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or do." ²² The crowd joined in the attack against them, and the magistrates tore the clothes off of them and ordered a beating with rods. ²³ When they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them securely; ²⁴ who, having received such a charge, threw them into the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. ^{§§†}

The jailer converts

²⁵ Well about midnight Paul and Silas were singing hymns to God in prayer; and the *other* prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was a great earthquake, enough to shake the foundations of the prison; immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. ^{§§‡27} But the jailer, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, drew sword,

§†† I follow the best line of transmission in reading 'Silas'; some 60% of the Greek manuscripts have 'us', as in most versions. Luke, who was there, is focusing the account on the two who were put in prison. §‡ I find it to be curious that what the demon said was precisely true! So why did that truth not result in many conversions? Presumably because the Holy Spirit did not apply it, coming from a demon. Instead of "to us", perhaps 20% of the Greek manuscripts have 'to you' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). Did the demon have the girl include herself, or not? §‡† The 'hour of prayer' was observed every day by God-fearing Jews. So the apostles would pass at a predictable time each day. §† But Paul, she was giving you free advertising! Evidently he didn't want advertising from the enemy, and in this he followed the Lord's example (Mark 3:11-12). §‡ This was a put up job. It would take a day or two to make clear that the girl was now useless. The magistrates had probably been getting a 'cut'. Some rabble had been mobilized to join in—the whole proceeding had been organized in advance. They figured they could beat up on two Jews with impunity. §§† Their backs are bleeding from 'many stripes' and their feet are in stocks (you try to sit up so as not to lie on your wounded back; all of which gets pretty 'old' pretty fast)—a great time for a praise meeting! §§‡ A proper earthquake could shake the doors open, but not unlock chains (unless it was their anchors that came loose from the walls).

intending to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. †

²⁸ But Paul shouted out, "Don't harm yourself, because we are all here!" ^{††29} So calling for a light he ran in and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ He then brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ^{‡31} So they said, "Believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ [‡] and you will be saved, you and your household." ³² Then they spoke the Word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³ In that same hour of the night he took them aside and washed their wounds, and thereupon he and all his family were baptized. ^{‡‡34} Then he brought them into his house and set a meal before them, and he was really rejoicing, having believed in God with his whole family.

Magistrates rebuked

³⁵ Now when it was day the magistrates sent the officers saying, "Let those men go." ³⁶ So the jailer reported these words to Paul, "The magistrates have sent to release you; so now you can leave and go in peace." ³⁷ But Paul said to them: ^{‡‡‡} "After severely beating us in public, although we were uncondemned Romans, they threw us into prison, and now do they toss us out on the sly? No way! Rather, let them come themselves and escort us out!" ³⁸ So the officers reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans; ³⁹ and they came and appealed to them, and leading them out they asked them to leave the city. ⁴⁰ So exiting the prison they entered Lydia's place, and upon seeing the brothers they encouraged them and departed.

Thessalonica

17 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ² So Paul, as was his custom, went in to them and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and demonstrating that the Messiah had to suffer and

† Better a quick death than the humiliation that would follow (culminating in a slow death). †† For the prisoners to be free and not run was REALLY supernatural! The jailer understands that he is in the presence of a higher power. ‡ Philippi was not all that large, and the members of his household would be information gatherers. He was doubtless aware of the slave girl's 'advertising', etc. †† Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit 'Christ' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡‡ Very appropriate—he washed their wounds and restored their dignity, so they could baptize him. Note again that baptism followed immediately. (Would there have been enough water there to dunk them? Probably not.) Note that everyone in the family was baptized, which would put them under Christ's protection, but that procedure was imposed by the head of the household, whether or not there was personal commitment to Jesus on the part of each one. ‡‡‡ The officers were still there. Paul decided to give the magistrates a much-needed lesson, but then acquiesced in leaving the city without further fuss.

rise again from the dead, and that "this Jesus whom I proclaim to you is the Messiah." ⁴ Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of devout Greeks and not a few of the prominent women.

⁵ But the disobedient Jews ^{‡‡‡} rounded up some wicked men from the marketplace, and forming a mob they created an uproar in the city; and attacking the house of Jason, they wanted to bring them out to the crowd. ⁶ But not finding them they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials vociferating: "These who have upset the whole world [§] have come here too, ⁷ to whom Jason has given lodging. These all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus." ⁸ Well they agitated the crowd and the city officials when they heard these things. ⁹ Then they took a security bond from Jason and the rest and let them go.

Berea

¹⁰ Immediately, during the night, the brothers sent both Paul and Silas away to Berea; on arriving they went into the synagogue of the Jews. ¹¹ Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all goodwill, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things might be so. ^{§†12} Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men. ¹³ But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the Word of God was also being proclaimed by Paul in Berea, they came too, agitating the crowds. ¹⁴ So then, without delay, the brothers sent Paul away, as if to go by sea, while both Silas and Timothy remained there. ¹⁵ But those who were conducting Paul actually took him all the way to Athens; ^{§††} and receiving a command to Silas and Timothy that they should come to him as quickly as possible, they started back.

Athens

¹⁶ Now while Paul was waiting for them in Athens, his spirit was increasingly aroused within him as he observed that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he reasoned both in the synagogue with the Jews and devout persons, and in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ Then certain philosophers, both Epicureans and Stoics, encountered him. Some said, "What might this idea-scavenger ^{§‡} want to

‡‡‡ They were fundamentally disobedient to God, and so fell in with Satan's agenda. (Some 20% of the Greek manuscripts add 'becoming envious', but they do so in a variety of ways—the confusion is reflected in the versions.) § Of course this was not intended as a compliment, but I personally wouldn't mind having this epithet/epitaph on my tombstone (if I ever have one). §† So I wonder why Paul wrote to the Thessalonians and not to the Bereans. §†† They started toward the sea, to mislead any pursuers, but actually went

say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign deities"—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹ So taking him in tow they led him to the Areopagus and said: "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰ Because you are bringing some strange things to our ears, and we would like to know what they might mean." ^{†21} (Now all Athenians and resident foreigners spent their time in nothing else but to tell, or else to hear, some novelty.)

Paul's Areopagus address

²² So standing in the middle of the Areopagus Paul said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; ²³ because as I went along and scrutinized the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO UNKNOWN GOD. Now then, the one you worship as 'unknown', this is the One I proclaim to you: ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples built by hands, ²⁵ neither is He cared for by men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself has always given life and breath to all. ^{††26} And from one blood [‡] He made every ethnic nation of men to dwell on all the surface of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, ^{††27} so that they should seek the Lord, ^{‡‡} if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸ because in Him we live and move and have our being. ^{‡‡†} As also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also his offspring.' ^{‡‡29} Therefore, since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divinity is like gold or silver or stone—something shaped by human skill and imagination. ^{§30} Such times of ignorance God did indeed overlook, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ because He has appointed a day in which He will judge the inhabited world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained; He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." ^{§†}

overland to Athens; his escort stayed with him all the way.
^{§‡} They were not trying to be nice. [†] Here they are reasonably polite. ^{††} I would say that Paul illustrates the best strategy to use with an audience that has no biblical background—start with the Sovereign Creator. Note that Paul affirms that everyone owes his life to Him. [‡] Modern medicine has discovered this to be true; blood transfusions across racial boundaries are perfectly possible. Some 4.5% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'blood' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{††} God is involved in human history. Paul may have been thinking of Deuteronomy 32:8. ^{‡‡} Instead of 'the Lord', some 45% of the Greek manuscripts read 'God' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{‡‡†} Here is a fundamental truth, whether people recognize it or not. All God has to do is deprive you of oxygen for a few minutes and you die. ^{‡‡‡} Paul demonstrated a knowledge of their literature. [§] If we are God's offspring He must have all the capabilities we have, only bigger and better; and we are not metal or stone.

³² Well when they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some started scoffing, ^{§††} while others said, "We will hear you again about this." ^{§†33} And with that Paul went out from among them. ^{§†34} However some men believed and joined him, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, also a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Consolidation of the Gentile Church

Corinth

18 Now after these things Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ² And encountering a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to depart from Rome), he joined them; ³ and because he practiced the same trade, he stayed on with them and worked (their trade was tentmaker). ^{§†}
⁴ Every Sabbath in the synagogue he would reason with both Jews and Greeks, trying to persuade them. ⁵ But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the Spirit, ^{§†} solemnly insisting to the Jews: Jesus is the Christ. ^{§§†6} But since they kept contradicting and blaspheming, he shook his clothes ^{§§†} and said to them: "Your blood be upon your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

The house of Justus becomes the base

⁷ So he moved from there into the house of a man named Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. ⁸ Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household; and as they were hearing, many of the Corinthians were believing and being baptized. ⁹ Now the Lord said to Paul by a vision at night: "Do not be afraid; rather speak and do not keep silent, ¹⁰ because I am with you and no one will attack you to harm you, ^{§§§} because I have many people in this city." ¹¹ So he

^{§†} The resurrection of Jesus is central to our Faith for several reasons. Here Paul says it guarantees that we will be judged, righteously. ^{§††} Satan hates the resurrection, and people controlled by him almost always react adversely to it (as Festus will do in chapter 26). ^{§‡} Evidently they never got another chance. People who try to impose their agenda on God usually do not do very well. ^{§††} Corinth became the hub of the Church for Greece, not Athens (see 18:11 below). ^{§†} Paul supported himself. ^{§‡} Instead of 'Spirit', some 6% of the Greek manuscripts read 'word' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{§§†} Paul could now turn physical details over to Silas and Timothy (who evidently did not get to Athens before Paul left there) and concentrate on the spiritual. The Holy Spirit has him really bear down on the Jews, obliging them to make a choice. Paul then turned his full attention to the Gentile population. ^{§§‡} The idea was presumably to get rid of any dust; this was far less serious than shaking the dust off the feet, but he was clearly severing 'diplomatic relations' with them. ^{§§§} He had been stoned and left for dead in Lystra, and

stayed on for a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them. †

Gallio

¹² Now while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, ¹³ saying, "This fellow persuades the people to worship God contrary to the law." ¹⁴ But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews: "If there really was some misdeed or wicked crime, O Jews, there would be reason for me to bear with you; ¹⁵ but since it is an issue over a word and names and your own law, see to it yourselves; because I refuse to be a judge of such matters." ¹⁶ And he drove them from the judgment seat. ¹⁷ Then all the Greeks †† took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, ‡ and beat him in front of the judgment seat. But none of this was a delay to Gallio. ††

To Ephesus and Antioch

¹⁸ Paul still remained there a good while, then took leave of the brothers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila (he had shaved his head in Cenchrea, because he had a vow). ††¹⁹ He came to Ephesus and left them there (after having entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews). ²⁰ When they asked him to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent; ²¹ rather he took leave of them saying, "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; ††† but I will return again to you, God willing." ††† Then he set sail from Ephesus.

²² When he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church [in Jerusalem], § he returned to Antioch. ²³ After spending some time there, he departed and went through the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

Apollos

²⁴ Now a certain Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, an eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures,

been severely beaten in Philippi, so this was doubtless an encouraging word. † They got a reasonably good theological education, which, however, did not exempt them from problems. It is not enough to know the truth; it must be lived, it must be applied. †† Less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit 'the Greeks' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡ Since Crispus had 'defected' to Christianity, he was replaced as ruler of the synagogue by Sosthenes. †† Instead of 'delay', some 15% of the Greek manuscripts read 'concern', as in most versions. Gallio was doubtless a busy man, with his own plans, and did not want to be detained. †† Apparently such a vow could only be brought to a satisfactory conclusion in the temple at Jerusalem. I take it that this was a leftover from his Jewish religion. ††† Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit 'I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ††† In fact, God did will it. § Because Jerusalem was at a higher elevation than most of the rest of the country, travel to and from there is almost always described as 'up to' and 'down from'.

arrived in Ephesus. ²⁵ This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in the Spirit he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, §† although he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶ So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

²⁷ When he decided to go across into Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to receive him; §†† upon arriving he was a great help to those who had believed through the Grace; ²⁸ because he kept refuting the Jews vigorously, publicly, demonstrating Jesus to be the Christ, from the Scriptures. §†

Back to Ephesus

19 Now it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper country, came to Ephesus.

Disciples of John

And finding certain disciples ² he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "But we have not so much as heard that there *is* a Holy Spirit!" ³ So he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." §†⁴ So Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe into the One who would come after him, that is, into Jesus, the Christ." §†⁵ So upon hearing this they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And as Paul laid his hands on them the Holy Spirit came upon them, §† and they started speaking languages and prophesying. ⁷ There were about twelve men in all.

The school of Tyrannus becomes the base

⁸ During three months Paul kept going to the synagogue and speaking boldly, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the Kingdom of God. ⁹ But when some became hardened and disobedient, maligning the Way before the crowd, he withdrew from them and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of a certain Tyrannus. §†¹⁰ Now this continued for two years, so that all who lived in Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the Word of the Lord Jesus. §†

§† I follow the best line of transmission in reading 'Jesus'; some 65% of the Greek manuscripts read 'the Lord', as in AV and NKJV. §†† Letters of introduction are a good safeguard against opportunists. §‡ Since he explained the Scriptures the same way that Paul did, it was no longer just one man's interpretation. §†† Perhaps they were the result of some of Apollos' early ministry. Paul evidently sensed that there was something lacking in them. §† Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'the Christ' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §‡ This was an important confirmation that Paul's clarification was correct. §†† Paul had already done this sort of

¹¹ Further, God kept working unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, ¹² so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that he touched were applied to the sick, and the diseases left them and the wicked spirits went out from them. †

Some fake exorcists

¹³ Well some among the itinerant Jewish exorcists attempted to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had wicked spirits saying, "We adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." ¹⁴ In fact there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who were doing this. ¹⁵ But a particular wicked spirit reacted and said, "Jesus I know, and I am acquainted with Paul, but who are you?" ¹⁶ And the man in whom the wicked spirit was jumped on them and overpowered them; he was so much stronger that they ran out of that house naked and wounded. ¹⁷ Now this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was being exalted.

¹⁸ And many of those who had believed started coming, confessing and disclosing their practices. ¹⁹ In fact, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them up, in front of everybody †† (they had calculated their value and it totaled fifty thousand *pieces* of silver). ²⁰ With power like that it was that the word of the Lord kept growing and prevailing.

²¹ Now after these things were accomplished, Paul resolved in his spirit to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." ††† So he sent two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, on to Macedonia, while he himself stayed on in Asia for a time.

Demetrius

²³ Now it was during that time that a serious disturbance concerning the Way occurred. ²⁴ A certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, habitually brought in plenty of business for the artisans; ²⁵ he called them together, along with the workmen in related trades, and said: "Men, you know that our prosperity depends on this trade. ²⁶ And you observe and hear that not only in Ephesus but throughout almost all Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that handmade things are not gods. ²⁷ So not only is this

thing in Corinth; it was a good strategy. §§† Perhaps 13% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'Jesus' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

† This sort of thing is definitely 'news', and it would spread far and wide. †† When people start doing this, you know their faith is real, and to do it in public would really have an impact on the populace (that was a lot of money!). ‡ His apostolic spirit wanted not only Rome, but Spain (Romans 15:28).

trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, †† but also the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be discredited, and even her own majesty be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship."

²⁸ Now upon hearing this they were filled with anger and began shouting, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" ²⁹ So the whole city was filled with confusion, and they rushed into the theater with one accord (they had seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's traveling companions). ³⁰ When Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not let him. ³¹ Even some of the officials of Asia, being his friends, sent word to him and urged him not to venture into the theater. ††† The assembly was in confusion: some were shouting one thing and some another; most of them did not know why they had come together. ³² Then the Jews pushed Alexander forward, ††† out from the crowd. So Alexander motioned with his hand and would have made a defense to the people. ³³ But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours, ††† "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

³⁵ When the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Artemis and of what fell from Zeus? ††† Therefore, since these things are undeniable, you ought to be quiet and not do anything rash. ³⁷ You have arrested these men who are neither temple thieves nor blasphemers of your goddess. ³⁸ Now if Demetrius and his fellow artisans have a complaint against anyone, courts are available, and there are proconsuls; let them bring charges against one another. ³⁹ But if you want to debate any other matter, it will be settled in the legal assembly. ⁴⁰ Indeed, we are in danger of being charged with a riot, because of today, there being no reason at all that we can give to account for this commotion." ⁴¹ And having said these things he dismissed the assembly.

Paul makes his own plans

Greece

20 Now after the uproar had ended, Paul summoned the disciples, took leave of them, and set out for Macedonia. ² When he had gone through those parts and encouraged them with many words, he

†† The crucial point was the threat to their finances, not that to Diana's reputation! †† After two years of fruitful ministry, some of the city officials would have converted, or at least appreciate the healing and deliverance he had brought. ††† I wonder whether those Jews were friends or foes, and what they hoped to achieve. ††† How could their voices last for two hours? And what animated them to keep on going for so long? I suspect there was a little demonic participation. § They had an image that reputedly had fallen intact from the sky.

came into Greece. ³ When he had stayed three months, as he was about to set sail for Syria, the Jews made a plot against him, so he decided to return through Macedonia. ⁴ Now Sopater of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, Gaius of Derbe, Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia were going to accompany him as far as Asia; ¹⁵ so having gone on ahead, these men were waiting for us ^{††} in Troas. ⁶ But it was after the Days of Unleavened Bread that we sailed from Philippi, and in five days we joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

Troas

⁷ Now on the first day of the week, [‡] the disciples being assembled to break bread, Paul started addressing them, and because he intended to leave the next day he continued his message until midnight. ⁸ There were many lamps in the upper room where we ^{††} were assembled. ⁹ Well a certain young man named Eutychus sat in a window and was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul kept on talking; when he was overcome by the sleep he fell down from the third story and was picked up dead. ¹⁰ So Paul went down, threw himself on him and embracing him said, "Do not be distressed, because his life is in him!" ¹¹ Then he went back up and broke bread, ate, and kept on speaking until day-break—that is how he left! ¹² (On their part, they led the boy away alive, and were greatly comforted.) ^{‡‡}

¹³ As for us, we went to the ship and set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul on board there—so it had been arranged, he himself intending to go on foot. ^{‡‡‡14} When he met us at Assos we took him aboard and went on to Mityline. ¹⁵ Sailing from there, the next day we arrived opposite Chios, and the day after we crossed over to Samos and stopped in Trogylium; ^{‡‡‡} the following day we came to Miletus. ¹⁶ (Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, to avoid being detained in Asia, because he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, if he possibly could.)

Miletus

¹⁷ From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and summoned the elders of the congregation. ^{§18} So when they had

[†] Just 1.1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit 'as far as Asia' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{††} At this point Luke joins Paul again, and will stay with him until he gets to Rome, several years later. [‡] Note that the disciples are meeting on Sunday. ^{‡†} Instead of "we", perhaps 15% of the Greek manuscripts have 'they' (as in AV and NKJV). ^{‡‡} One gets the impression that Paul simply imposed his will on the local congregation (he had already taken the bit in his teeth and was doing things his own way). They let him do it, but were probably relieved when he left. Apparently they walked Eutychus back to his home. ^{‡‡†} His baggage went on the boat, so he walked without a load—good exercise. ^{‡‡‡} Samos is an island, so Trogylium was presumably a settlement on that island (though we are no longer sure just where it was). Some 6% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'and stopped in Trogylium' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). [§] The distance was some 30 miles,

come to him he said to them: "You yourselves know, from the first day that I arrived in Asia, how I lived the whole time I was with you, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility, and with many tears and trials, the ones that happened to me by the plots of the Jews; ²⁰ how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, teaching you publicly and from house to house, ²¹ solemnly proclaiming to both Jews and Greeks the repentance toward God and the faith into our Lord Jesus. ^{§†22} Now then, I am going to Jerusalem bound in my spirit, ^{§††} not knowing the things that will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit keeps warning me in every city, saying that fetters and afflictions are just waiting for me. ²⁴ However none of this moves me, nor do I regard my life as valuable to myself, ^{§†} just so that I may complete my course with joy, ^{§††} even the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to solemnly proclaim the Good News of the grace of God.

²⁵ "Furthermore, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the Kingdom of God ^{§†} will ever see my face again. ^{§†26} Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all; ²⁷ because I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. ^{§§†28} So take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers, to shepherd the congregation of the Lord and God ^{§§†} which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ Because I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Yes, men will rise up from among you yourselves, speaking distorted things, to draw away the disciples after them. ^{§§§31} Therefore be alert, remembering that during three years, night and day, ¹⁸ I never stopped admonishing each one, with tears.

³² "And so now, brothers, I entrust you to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all those who have been sanctified. ¹⁹³³ I have not coveted anyone's

as the crow flies, and the elders had not received advance warning, so at least two days would have elapsed before they arrived (even if the messenger ran, the elders would not). ^{§†} Some 25% of the Greek manuscripts add 'Christ', as in AV and NKJV. ^{§††} This was his own spirit, not the Holy Spirit. I have a hard time trying to understand what happened to Paul. The Holy Spirit kept telling him not to go to Jerusalem, but he is bound and determined to go anyway, only to spend years of his life in chains. Why did he do it? ^{§‡} Paul's statement is a non sequitur

^{§††} How can you complete your course with joy if you are disobedient? He is not thinking clearly. Some 3% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'with joy' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{§†} Some 3% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'of God' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, etc.). ^{§‡} How did he know this? ^{§§†} The congregation in Ephesus had been very well grounded indeed, but even so they lost their 'lampstand' (Revelation 2:5). ^{§§‡} The sheep belong to the Lord, not to the elders. Some 7% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'the Lord and', as in most versions. "The Lord and God" refers to Jesus. ^{§§§} Whenever you see someone trying to create his own group of followers, beware! ¹⁸ I suppose Paul is saying he was always available. ¹⁹ Yes. When we receive God's Word as hav-

silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴ You yourselves know that these hands have supplied my own needs, and of those who were with me. ³⁵ In every way I showed you that working hard like this it is necessary to help the weak, and to remember the word of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" ^{††}

³⁶ When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. ³⁷ Then they all wept freely, and falling on Paul's neck kept kissing him, ³⁸ sorrowing most of all because of the word that he had spoken, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.

Paul is warned— AGAIN

21 So after disengaging ourselves from them we were able to set sail, and running a straight course we came to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. ² We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail. ³ When we had sighted Cyprus we passed it on the left, sailed on to Syria and landed at Tyre, because it was there that the ship was to unload the cargo. ⁴ Upon finding disciples we stayed there seven days; these, through the Spirit, told Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. ⁵ But when our time was up, as we left to go on our way, they all, including women and children, ^{††} accompanied us out of the city, and kneeling down on the beach, we prayed. ⁶ After we had taken our leave of one another, we boarded the ship and they returned to their homes.

⁷ Now upon arriving in Ptolemais, the voyage from Tyre ended; so greeting the brothers we stayed with them one day. ⁸ Leaving the next day, we [‡] came to Caesarea; and entering the house of Philip the evangelist (being of 'the Seven'), we stayed with him. ⁹ (This man had four virgin daughters who prophesied.) ^{‡‡}

ing objective authority over us, and interpret it honestly under the Holy Spirit's direction (without preconceived doctrinal 'packages'), we will indeed grow in understanding and sanctification. † He did receive offerings from time to time, but material gain was never an objective. †† This precise statement is not recorded in the Gospels, but Paul got it from one of those who actually heard it. It is an important truth. (Compare Luke 14:12-14.) ‡ After repeated warnings, God plainly tells Paul not to go! What sort of mental block might Paul have had that would cause him to disobey a plain command? ‡† Luke makes a point of recording that even the children went along—interesting. Evidently those families actively involved their children in their practice of the Christian Faith. Now that is an excellent example! ‡‡ AV and NKJV have 'we who were Paul's companions', based on some 13% of the Greek manuscripts. Some 46% have 'those who were Paul's companions'. I follow the best line of transmission, with some 39% here, in reading "we". ‡‡† What does this information contribute to the account? Why are we told that they were virgins? Is it risky to marry a prophetess?

Agabus, again

¹⁰ Now as we stayed there a number of days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹ Joining us he took Paul's belt, bound his feet and hands, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit: 'In this way, in Jerusalem, the Jews will bind the man who owns this belt, and will deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" ¹² Well, when we heard these things, both we and the local residents, we pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³ But Paul answered: "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die ^{‡‡} in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." ¹⁴ When he would not be dissuaded, we stopped, saying, "Let the will of the Lord be done." [§]

Jerusalem

¹⁵ So after those days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁶ Some of the disciples from Caesarea also went with us, bringing us to a certain Mnason, of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to lodge. ¹⁷ And when we arrived in Jerusalem the brothers received us gladly. ¹⁸ The next day Paul, with us, went to see James, and all the elders were present. ^{§†19} After greeting them he reported one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

Paul submits to a false agenda

²⁰ But after listening they 'glorified' the Lord ^{§††} by saying to him: ^{§†} "You see, brother, how many tens of thousands are the Jews who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; ²¹ but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to our customs. ^{§††22} What then? The assembly will certainly gather, ^{§†} since they will hear that you have come. ²³ So do this that we say to you: There are four men with us who have taken a vow. ²⁴ Take them and purify yourself with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may

^{‡‡‡} His being willing to suffer and die was totally beside the point—God told him NOT TO GO! [§] What else could they do, short of tying Paul up? However, they were asking the Lord to overrule. ^{§†} This was obviously a put up job. They were ready and waiting for him. ^{§††} Instead of 'the Lord', some 30% of the Greek manuscripts read 'God' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{§‡} They listened politely, but had a different agenda. What follows is an obvious 'put down'. There probably were not 'tens of thousands' of believing Jews, and if they were genuine followers of Jesus Christ, they should not have been so bound to Jewish customs. Besides 'putting Paul in his place' they were imposing a false legalism on him, to which he should not have capitulated. But he was disobeying God anyway, just by being there. ^{§††} I suspect that this was a false charge. ^{§†} Perhaps 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit 'the assembly will gather' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

know that there is nothing to the things that they have been informed about you; rather that you yourself are in line, keeping the law. ²⁵ But concerning the Gentiles who believe we have written, having judged that they need observe no such thing, except [†] that they should keep themselves from that offered to idols, from the blood, from anything strangled, and from fornication.”
††

Paul arrested

²⁶ Then Paul took the men and purified himself with them; the next day he entered the temple to give notice of the completion of the days of purification, when the offering would be made for each one of them.

²⁷ Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, having seen him in the temple, mobilized a whole crowd and seized him, ²⁸ shouting: “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place. Not only that, he has even brought Greeks into the temple and defiled this holy place!” ²⁹ (They had seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.)

³⁰ The whole city was aroused and a mob of people formed. So having seized Paul they dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut. ³¹ As they were trying to kill him, [‡] news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. ³² He immediately took soldiers and centurions and ran down among them, and when they saw the commander and the soldiers they stopped beating Paul. ³³ Then the commander came up and took hold of him, ^{††} commanded that he be bound with two chains, and started inquiring who he was and what he had done. ³⁴ Well some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another; so when he could not ascertain the truth, because of the uproar, he commanded him to be taken into the barracks. ³⁵ When he reached the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers, because of the violence of the mob. ^{‡‡‡} Because the

† Some 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit ‘that they need observe no such thing except’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). †† What happened here was exceedingly serious: to James there were two classes of Christian, Jew and non-Jew. He still sees the Jew as superior to the Gentile, which is contrary to the doctrine of the Church as expounded in Paul’s letters, that we believe to be inspired. To James it was not enough for a Jew to believe into Jesus; he still had to obey the Law of Moses and

‡ Why didn’t they succeed? Maybe they got in each other’s way. †† I like this commander; he did not hide behind his men. This was a chiliarch ‡‡ But since they had really been trying to kill him, he was doubtless wounded and weak.

crowd kept following and shouting, “Away with him!”
‡‡‡

³⁷ As Paul was about to be led into the barracks, he said to the commander, “May I speak to you?” So he said: “Do you know Greek? ³⁸ Aren’t you the Egyptian who some time ago started a revolt and led the four thousand men of ‘the Assassins’ out into the wilderness?” ³⁹ But Paul said, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of a not insignificant city; but I beg you, allow me to speak to the people.” ⁴⁰ So when he had given him permission, Paul stood on the stairs and motioned to the people with his hand. When there was a great silence, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying:

Paul addresses the mob

22 “Men, brothers and fathers, listen to my defense before you now.” ² When they heard that he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, they were even more quiet, and he said: ³ “I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, just as you all are today. ⁴ I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, ⁵ as also the high priest and all the council of elders can bear me witness. I even obtained letters from them to the brothers in Damascus, to bring those also who were there bound to Jerusalem to be punished. ⁶ Now it happened, as I was going and approaching Damascus, about noon, suddenly a strong light from heaven shone around me. ⁷ I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ ⁸ So I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ He said to me, ‘I am Jesus the Natsorean, whom you are persecuting.’ ⁹ Those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, ^{‡‡‡} but they did not understand the voice of the One speaking to me. ¹⁰ So I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told about all that has been appointed to you to do.’ ¹¹ And since I could not see, because of the brightness of that light, I entered Damascus being led by the hand of those who were with me. ^{§12} Then a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived in Damascus, ^{§13} came to me, and standing by me said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I looked up at him. ¹⁴ Then he said: ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you to

‡‡‡ But really, why should they be so stirred up? Presumably there was supernatural participation. ‡‡‡ Some 10% of the Greek manuscripts omit ‘and were afraid’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). § But they too had been in that light, so the blindness was a judgment applied specifically to Paul (Saul). §† Paul is establishing the credibility of Ananias as a witness, since he will attest that it was ‘the God of our fathers’ who was dealing with Paul (Saul). Some 25% of the Greek manuscripts omit ‘in Damascus’, as in most versions.

know His will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear words from His mouth. ¹⁵ For you shall be a witness for Him to all men of the things that you have seen and heard. ¹⁶ And now, why hesitate? Get up, be baptized and wash away your sins, invoking the name of the Lord.[†] ^{††}

¹⁷ "Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I came to be in a trance ¹⁸ and saw Him saying to me, [‡] 'Hurry up and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not receive your testimony concerning me.'¹⁹ So I said: 'Lord, they know that I used to imprison and beat those believing into you, ^{††} from one synagogue to another; ²⁰ and when the blood of your witness Stephen was shed, I myself was standing there and agreeing to his murder, ^{‡‡} even guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.'²¹ And He said to me, 'Get going, because I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

A Roman citizen

²² Well they kept listening to him until this statement, and then they raised their voice and shouted, "Rid the earth of this fellow, for it isn't fitting for him to live!"

²³ As they were shouting, tearing off clothes and throwing dust into the air, ²⁴ the commander ordered him to be taken into the barracks, directing that he be interrogated with lashes, in order to learn for what crime they kept shouting against him like that. ^{‡‡25} But as they stretched him out with the thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?" ²⁶ Well when the centurion heard that, he went and reported to the commander saying, "Consider ^{‡‡‡} what

[†] *Jesus had identified Himself as 'Jesus' on the road, and was obviously supernatural. Here Ananias confirms that Saul saw the Messiah ('the Natsorean'), and adds that all is under the Father's direction. Saul was chosen to be a worldwide witness; indeed, through his letters he continues to be one! ^{††} By invoking the Lord he was placing himself under His direction and protection, which was what took care of his sins, not the baptism. There probably was not enough water in the house for a complete bath, in any case, so the baptism was by aspersion (as it was in the house of Cornelius, the house of the Philippian jailor, etc. etc.). Instead of 'of the Lord', some 6% of the Greek manuscripts read 'his' (as in NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.). [‡] This is the only record we have of this encounter. Perhaps Paul is reinforcing that his going to the Gentiles was at God's insistence. I wonder if Luke wasn't in that crowd, and close enough to hear what went on. ^{††} I follow the best line of transmission in reading "into", albeit with only 20% of the Greek manuscripts here. Almost all versions follow the 80% in reading 'upon'. ^{‡‡} Some 2.3% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit 'to his murder' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, etc.). ^{‡‡†} Poor commander! He presumably did not understand Hebrew, so Paul's speech meant nothing to him. But he saw that the mob listened quietly, and then suddenly erupted! He had already tried to get an answer from the mob, without success. He doubtless did not understand the Jewish mindset either, so by Roman logic Paul must have done something pretty awful to provoke such a violent reaction. So by proper Roman procedure, he orders a flogging. ^{‡‡‡} Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "Consider" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).*

you are about to do, because this man is a Roman!" ²⁷ So the commander went and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?" So he said, "Yes." ²⁸ The commander replied, "I acquired this citizenship at considerable cost." [‡] And Paul said, "But I was so born." ²⁹ So those who were about to interrogate him withdrew immediately; and even the commander was apprehensive when he realized that he had put chains on a Roman. ^{‡†}

The Sanhedrin

³⁰ But the next day, desiring to know for certain why he was accused by the Jews, he freed him from the bonds ^{‡††} and ordered the chief priests and all their council to come, and brought Paul down and set him before them.

23 Then Paul, looking intently at the council, said, "Men, brothers, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." ² So the high priest Ananias commanded those standing by him to strike his mouth. ³ Then Paul said to him: "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! ^{‡†} You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you command me to be struck contrary to the law!" ⁴ So those standing by said, "Do you reproach God's high priest?" ⁵ Then Paul said, "I did not know, brothers, that he is high priest; for it is written: 'Do not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'" ^{‡††}

⁶ Now when Paul perceived that one part were Pharisees and the other Sadducees, ^{‡†} he called out in the council, "Men, brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of a Pharisee; I am being judged concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead!" ⁷ When he had said this, an argument started between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. ^{‡††} (Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel or spirit, but Pharisees confess both.) ^{‡†††} There was a great clamor, and the scribes of the Pharisee party stood up and started arguing vigorously, saying, "We find nothing wrong with this man; but if a spirit or angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God!" ^{‡††††} Well

[‡] *He was not just making conversation; he was trying to be sure that Paul was not lying. ^{‡†} Perhaps the reference is to the 'when' and 'how' they were first used, since chains became part of Paul's life. ^{‡††} Some 10% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'from the bonds' (as in NIV and NASB). ^{‡‡} One is reminded of the Lord's calling the Pharisees 'whitewashed tombs' (Matthew 23:27); what Paul said was probably not as bad, but definitely not a compliment! ^{‡††} See Exodus 22:28. Ananias was presumably the true high priest, but someone else was probably the political 'high priest' that year, and the political one would be wearing the priestly attire; presumably that is why Paul did not recognize the real high priest. Note that he sort of apologizes, but he does NOT revoke the curse! ^{‡†} I follow the best line of transmission in putting 'Pharisees' first; 80% of the Greek manuscripts reverse the order, as in most versions. ^{‡‡} That was presumably Paul's intention, only the situation got out of hand! ^{‡††} The Greek term here means precisely 'both'; angel and spirit are treated as a single category. ^{‡†††} Some 4.5% of the Greek man-*

the dissension became such that the commander, fearing that Paul might be torn in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and snatch him out of their midst and bring him into the barracks.

A plot exposed

¹¹ Now the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Take courage, Paul, because as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome." ^{†12} And when it was day, some of the Jews formed a conspiracy by binding themselves with a curse neither to eat nor to drink until they had destroyed Paul. ^{††13} Now there were more than forty who formed this plot. ¹⁴ They came to the chief priests and the elders and said: "We have bound ourselves with a terrible curse not to taste anything until we have killed Paul. ¹⁵ Now you, therefore, together with the council, explain to the commander that he should bring him down to you tomorrow, as though you are going to determine more accurately the facts in his case; but we are ready to destroy him before he comes near."

¹⁶ But when Paul's sister's son heard about the ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. ¹⁷ So Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the commander, because he has something to tell him." ¹⁸ So he took him and brought him to the commander and said, "Paul the prisoner called me over and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you." ¹⁹ So taking him by the hand, [‡] the commander went aside and asked privately, "What is it that you have to tell me?" ²⁰ So he said: "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow as though intending to inquire somewhat more accurately concerning him. ²¹ But you should not believe them, because more than forty of their men are lying in wait for him, who have bound themselves with a curse neither to eat nor to drink until they have destroyed him; even now they are ready, looking for your promise." ²² Then the commander dismissed the young man commanding, "Don't tell anyone that you have revealed these things to me!"

Paul sent to Felix

²³ Summoning two of the centurions he said: "Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen ^{‡†} to go to Caesarea at the third

uscripts omit 'let us not fight against God' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). † Paul is in Jerusalem in disobedience against a clear divine prohibition, and things definitely are not going well. God appears to Paul and assures him that he will indeed get to Rome [although he is not going to enjoy the trip!]. †† When the plot failed, they presumably did eat and drink and resume normal life, but I wonder if they suffered any consequences of the curse. ‡ This is cute! The commander has a sense of humor. ‡† A centurion commanded 100 men, so there were probably at least five centurions that set out with Paul.

hour of the night; ^{‡‡24} and provide mounts to set Paul on so as to deliver him safely ^{‡††} to Felix, the governor." ²⁵ He wrote a letter with this content:

²⁶ "Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix:

Greetings.

²⁷ This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them; but I came with the troops and rescued him, having learned that he is a Roman. ^{‡‡28} And wanting to know the reason they were accusing him, I took him down to their council. ²⁹ I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, but there was no accusation worthy of death or bonds. ³⁰ When I was told that the Jews [§] were about to execute a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, also directing his accusers to state the charges against him before you.

Farewell."

³¹ So the soldiers, according to their orders, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. ³² The next day they left the horsemen to go on with him and returned to the barracks. ^{§†33} When they entered Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. ³⁴ When the governor read it, he asked what province he was from; learning that it was Cilicia, ³⁵ he said, "I will give you a hearing when your accusers also arrive." And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod's Praetorium. ^{§††}

Caesarea

Felix

24 Now after five days the high priest Ananias went down with the elders and a certain orator, Tertullus, and they informed the governor against Paul. ^{§‡2} So when he had been called in, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: "Seeing that by you we enjoy much peace, and your foresight has brought prosperity to this nation, ³ we recognize this, most noble Felix, with full gratitude, always and everywhere. ⁴ But so as not to detain you unduly, I would request that you be kind enough to hear us briefly. ⁵ We have found this man to

‡‡ Earlier in the book, referring to the Jewish hour of prayer, Hebrew time is used, and on that basis this would be 9 p.m. But I find it scarcely credible that a Roman commander (not a Jew) addressing his troops (none of whom were Jews) would use Hebrew time; I would expect him to use Roman time, which would make it 3 a.m. (People would still be awake at 9 p.m., but not at 3 a.m.) ‡†† Why more than one horse for Paul? Was he allowing for the chance that they might have to run for it? Well, the nature of the curse implied some level of desperation, and 40+ desperate men could cause unforeseen complications. ‡‡‡ Nothing like stretching the truth to make yourself look good. § Perhaps 11% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'the Jews' and 'about to' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, etc.). §† Horsemen could move faster without the footmen, and presumably the greatest danger had been in and near Jerusalem. §†† The quarters would be reasonably decent, not a dungeon. §‡ This effort represented a considerable inconvenience. They were really determined.

be a plague, a creator of discord among all the Jews throughout the world, † a ringleader of the Natsorean sect, † and he even tried to profane the temple; so we arrested him. †† By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him.”
 9 And the Jews also joined in the attack, affirming that these things were so.

10 When the governor had nodded to him to speak, Paul answered: “Knowing, as I do, that you have been an equitable ‡ judge of this nation for many years, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself, 11 because you can ascertain that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship. 12 They did not find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd—not in the temple, not in the synagogues, not around the city. 13 Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me. 14 But I do profess this to you, that according to the Way that they call a sect, that is how I worship the ancestral God, believing all things that

† Wow! They are giving Paul a reputation! †† We have here a bothersome set of variants, and the only way to do justice to the situation is to give the evidence in Greek. Even those who do not read Greek can get some notion as to the high level of confusion. The translation of the addition (more or less) may be had from AV or NKJV.1) (without the long addition) f35 (A,B (58.9%) HF,RP,NU 2) - 36):
 7

2)
 κριναί ... επι σε (9.7%) [6 variants] 8) κριναί ... επι σου (10.5%) [14 variants] 22) κριναί ... προς σε (5.3%) [8 variants] 30) κρινευ ... επι σου (4.4%) [4 variants] 34) κρινευ ... επι σε (1.7%) OC,TR [3 variants] [OC is in small print] 37) replaces απηγαγεν with five words, plus two other changes: κριναί ... επι σου (3.2%) [2 variants] 39) completely rewrites the material: κριναί ... προς σε (3.4%) CP [6 variants] (eight further variants) (2.9%) [8 variants]. Variant 2) presumably has the best claim to be the standard form of the addition: κριναί clearly bests κρινευ, επι clearly bests προς, σε barely bests σου. [Although variant 8) appears to be slightly stronger than 2) numerically, the 14 internal variants, compared to 6, effectively diminish its credibility. The main variant in 2) is far stronger than that of 8).] It is also attested by syr and latpt. However, although some form of the addition commands 41.1% of the MSS, there are no less than 51 variants! What about the context? The addition makes good sense, and it fits nicely. But, it is not really necessary; that information Felix already knew. The text reads quite well without the addition also. I conclude that the short form was judged to be abrupt or incomplete, giving rise to the addition; presumably the Autograph did not contain it. Since Tertullus was an orator he may well have actually said what is in the addition, plus a good deal more besides, but did Luke write it? (The incidents recorded in Acts were well known by many contemporaries, and there were many written accounts in circulation [Luke 1:1], so it was entirely predictable that a variety of historically correct material would be added, here and there, to Luke's account.) The external evidence, though divided, is adequate to resolve this case: 58.9% against a severely fragmented 41.1%. The ancient versions, being divided, do not help us much this time. Although 59% is not a strong majority, by any means, still, the severe fragmentation of the 41% sort of leaves variant 1) without a worthy opponent. Variant 1) wins in “Antiquity”, “Number”, “Variety” and “Continuity”, so I have no doubt that it is original. [The reading of the TR, variant 34), really has little to commend it.] ‡ I follow the best line of transmission in reading “equitable”, albeit with only 25% of the Greek manuscripts here. Almost all versions follow the 75% in omitting the word.

stand written throughout the Law and the Prophets, 15 having hope in God, which these themselves also look for, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, † both the just and unjust. †† And this is why I apply myself to always have a clear conscience before both God and men. 17 Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation, 18 in the midst of which certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, with neither crowd nor confusion. 19 They are the ones that had to be here before you and make accusation, if they had anything against me. ††† Or let these themselves say what wrong they found in me, when I stood before the council, 21 unless it be for this one statement that I called out, standing among them, ‘Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you today.’”

22 Upon hearing these things Felix, having an accurate knowledge of the things concerning the Way, adjourned the proceedings and said, “When Lysias the commander comes down I will decide your case.”

23 And he ordered the centurion that Paul should be kept in custody but have some freedom, and not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or to visit him. †††

24 Now after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith into Christ Jesus.

25 But as he expounded on righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix became afraid and answered, “Go away for now; when I have occasion I will summon you.” ††† At the same time he was also hoping that Paul would give him money, that he might release him; so he frequently summoned and conversed with him.

27 But after two years, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; so Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul in prison. †††

25 Now upon assuming the province, after three days Festus went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. 2 Then the chief priests †† and the principal men of the Jews informed him against Paul and started importuning him, 3 begging a favor from him, that he would summon him to Jerusalem—preparing an ambush to

†† Some 6.6% of the Greek manuscripts omit ‘of the dead’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, etc.). †† Everyone will be resurrected, but the two resurrections are very different—which is why Paul applied himself. ††† According to Roman law, the accusers had to be there. ††† Both Lysias and Felix knew that Paul was not really guilty; and the Jews had figured out that they were not going to get what they wanted from either of them. Felix should have released Paul, but it was not part of the Plan. § Some 45% of the Greek manuscripts omit ‘Jesus’, as in AV and NKJV. §† To believe into Jesus would require changes that Felix was not prepared to make. §†† During those two years Paul had been eating at the empire’s expense, but apparently this did not represent a problem to Felix. But why did Felix want to do the Jews a favor? Perhaps the Jews could influence the choice of governor. §† Some 60% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘high priest’, as in AV and NKJV.

kill him along the way.¹⁴ However Festus answered that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, he himself being about to go there shortly.⁵ He said, "So let those who are competent among you go down with me; if there is anything against this man, let them accuse him."⁶ When he had stayed among them more than ten days, he went down to Caesarea; the next day he sat on the judgment seat and commanded Paul to be brought.⁷ When he had come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem made a circle,^{††} bringing against Paul many serious charges that they could not prove,⁸ while he defended himself, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar did I commit any sin."⁹ But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor,[‡] answered Paul by saying, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem to be judged by me there concerning these things?"¹⁰ So Paul said: "I am standing before Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be tried. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as even you know very well.^{†††} Now if I really am in the wrong and have perpetrated anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die; but if there is nothing to the things of which these are accusing me, no one has the right to give me to them.^{‡‡} I appeal to Caesar!"¹² Then Festus, when he had conferred with his counsel, answered: "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you shall go!"^{‡‡‡}

Agrippa

¹³ Now when some days had passed, Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived in Caesarea to congratulate Festus.¹⁴ Since they were spending many days there, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying: "There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix;¹⁵ about whom, when I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, asking for punishment against him;¹⁶ to whom I answered that it is not a custom with Romans to deliver any man to destruction^{‡‡‡} before the accused has his accusers face to face and has opportunity for defense against the accusation.^{§17} So when they had assembled here, without any delay, the next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought.¹⁸ When the accusers stood up, they brought no charge against him

† Those guys were really good haters! †† This was presumably a tactic to intimidate, and to form a decent circle would require a number of people. Paul was not impressed, but Festus may have been. ‡ I wonder if those Jews had been involved in the decision to replace Felix (who didn't play ball with them) with Festus. If so, and if Festus was aware that he owed them a favor, that would account for his attitude here. †† Paul could tell that Festus was not on the 'up and up'. ‡‡ Paul knew, and Festus knew, what the Jews had in mind. ‡‡† I suspect that this took Festus by surprise; and it put him in a bad light—on what basis is he going to send an innocent man to the Emperor? Presumably he could have just released Paul, but that would have turned the Jews against him. And then there was the Plan. ‡‡‡ Some 7.5% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'to destruction' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). § I wonder if he really said that.

of such things as I supposed,¹⁹ but had certain issues against him about their religion, and about a certain dead Jesus whom Paul affirmed to be living.²⁰ And since I was at a loss how to investigate such matters,^{§†} I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and be judged there concerning these things.²¹ But when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of the Emperor, I commanded him to be kept until I can send him to Caesar."

²² Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I myself would also like to hear the man." So he said, "Tomorrow you shall hear him."²³ So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp and entered the auditorium, with the commanding officers and the more prominent men of the city, at Festus' command Paul was brought in.²⁴ And Festus said: "King Agrippa, and all you men who are here with us: consider this man,^{§††} about whom the whole Jewish community petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, vociferating that it was not fitting for him to live any longer.²⁵ But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death,^{§‡} besides he himself having appealed to the Emperor, I decided to send him.²⁶ But I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination I may have something to write.²⁷ Because it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him."^{§††}

Paul's defense

26 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." So Paul stretched out his hand and began his defense:² "I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, in that I am to make my defense before you this day concerning the things of which I am accused by the Jews,³ especially because you are expert in all the Jewish customs and issues; therefore I beg you to hear me patiently.⁴ Really, the Jews all know my way of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation in Jerusalem,⁵ since they have known me for a long time, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived as a Pharisee.⁶ And now I stand here being judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers,⁷ to which our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. It is because of this hope that I am accused by the Jews, King Agrippa.⁸ Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?^{§†}

§† This would likely be true, whether or not it was his motivation at the time. §†† Festus is not being complimentary. §‡ Festus declares Paul's innocence. §†† Precisely. Festus is in a pickle (of his own making). §† The resurrection was the sticking point.

How he persecuted Christians

⁹“However, I myself thought that I had to perpetrate many things in opposition to the name of Jesus the Natsorean; ¹⁰I actually did this in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. ¹¹Yes, I punished them often in every synagogue, trying to force them to blaspheme; I was so excessively enraged against them that I persecuted them even to foreign cities. †

How Jesus chose him

¹²“It was on one of those journeys, as I was going to Damascus with authority and a commission from the chief priests, ¹³at midday, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven brighter than the sun, blazing around me and those traveling with me. ¹⁴Well we all fell to the ground and I heard a voice speaking to ME and saying in the Hebrew language: †† ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ ¹⁵So I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And He said: ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶Now get up and stand on your feet; because I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and a witness both of the things you have seen and of the things I will reveal to you, ¹⁷delivering you from ‘the people’ and the ethnic nations, to which I am sending you: ¹⁸to open their eyes, so as to bring them back from darkness into light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified, by faith into me.’ †††¹⁹ Therefore, King Agrip-

† Paul states his blame very plainly. †† A conversation between two Jews would naturally be in Hebrew. † Of specific interest to us here is the missionary commission that Paul (he was still Saul) received. Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15, John 20:21 and Acts 1:8 took place between the resurrection and the ascension, but to commission Paul Jesus returned from Heaven! One other detail deserves special notice—the responsibility that Paul received was primarily concerned with the ethnic nations (“Gentiles” is a translation of the same word that in Matthew 28:19 is rendered “nations”). For these reasons it seems to me that this missionary commission takes on a special importance for us, and the more so for whoever is going to do transcultural work. So let us consider this commission in more detail. Paul is sent to the nations (defined ethnically), “to open their eyes so as to bring them back from darkness into light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified, by faith in Me.” I rendered the second verb as ‘bring back’ rather than ‘turn’ or ‘convert’ because I take that to be the correct nuance of the Text. It gives the impression that someone is in the wrong place or situation and needs to be brought to the correct one. And now for the main point: the purpose clause introduced by the conjunction ‘that’ is subordinated to the verbal phrase dominated by the verb “bring back”. In other words, before someone can receive forgiveness of sins, even, he must be freed from the power of Satan! Before a person can be saved someone must do something about Satan’s influence upon him. The Lord Jesus had already said the same thing in different words during His earthly ministry. We find it in Mark 3:27. “No one

pa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision ²⁰—first to those in Damascus and Jerusalem, then to all the region of Judea and to the ethnic nations, I still preach: ‘repent and turn back to God, doing works worthy of repentance.’ ²¹ That is why the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. ²² So then, having experienced the help that is from God, I stand to this day testifying to both small and great, saying nothing beyond what both the prophets and Moses said would happen ²³—that the Messiah would suffer; that as the first to rise from the dead †† He would proclaim light to both ‘the people’ and the ethnic nations.” ††

Festus interrupts

²⁴ Well as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice: “Paul, you are crazy! Your great learning

can plunder the strong man’s goods, invading his house, unless he first bind the strong man; then he may plunder his house.” I have used the definite article with the first occurrence of ‘strong man’ because the Greek text has it, the point being that this particular strong man has already been introduced in the immediate context. ‘The strong man’ here is Satan. (The Jewish leaders tried to explain Jesus’ authority over the demons by saying that He expelled them by the power of Beelzebul, prince of the demons. In His retort Jesus does not waste time with that name but uses the enemy’s proper name, Satan.) So then, the Lord Jesus declares that it is impossible to steal Satan’s goods unless we bind him first. (From His use of ‘no one’ it seems clear that the Lord is enunciating a general principle or truth.) And what might the nature of those ‘goods’ be? In the context (see Matthew 12:22-24) Jesus had delivered someone from a demon that caused blindness and dumbness, and in their comments the scribes and Pharisees include other instances where Jesus had expelled demons—it seems clear that the ‘goods’ are people who are subject to Satan’s power, in one way or another. Thus we have the same essential truth as that declared in Acts 26:18—we have to do something about Satan’s power over a person so that he or she can be saved! But what does Satan do to people that makes it necessary to ‘bind’ him? We find the answer in 2 Corinthians 4:4. Let’s begin with verse 3. “If our gospel is veiled it is veiled to them who are perishing, in whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers so that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine in them.” The Text clearly states that Satan, ‘the god of this world’, is in the business of blinding the minds of unbelievers when they hear the Gospel, so they will not understand, so they will not be convicted, so they will not repent and convert. This is a terrible truth. The enemy has access to our minds, access in the sense that he has the power or ability to invade them, whether by introducing thoughts or by jamming our reasoning. The Lord Jesus had already declared this truth previously, when He explained the parable of the sower. “These are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown; but, as soon as they hear it Satan comes and takes away the word that was planted in their hearts” (Mark 4:15). In the parallel passage in Luke 8:12 Jesus adds the following words: “lest they believe and be saved”. Note that the Word is already in the mind or heart of the person, but then Satan comes, invades the mind and ‘takes away’ that word. I am not sure just how this intrusion by the enemy works, perhaps he causes a mental block of some sort, but the practical effect is that the Word becomes ineffective, as if the person had not even heard it. It seems obvious to me that whoever does not take this truth into account will be condemning himself to produce little effect in the spiritual realm, to work hard and achieve little. †† Yes, Jesus was the first one out, but only the first! †† How did Jesus do this after His resurrection? Presumably He did it, and continues to do so, through His followers.

is driving you insane!" ^{†25} So he said: "I am not crazy, most excellent Festus; rather I pronounce words of truth and reasonableness. ²⁶ For the king knows about these things, before whom I speak freely; for I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, since it was not done in a corner. ²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe." ^{††28} So Agrippa said to Paul, "You will soon persuade me to become a Christian!" ²⁹ So Paul said, "Whether sooner or later, I would to God that not only you but also all who are hearing me this day may become such as I am, except for these chains."

³⁰ Upon his saying this, the king stood up, along with the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them; ³¹ and when they had withdrawn they started talking among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains." ³² And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free, if he had not appealed to Caesar." [‡]

Paul sent to Rome

27 Now when it was decided that we [†] should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, of the imperial cohort. ² So we embarked in a ship of Atramythium, being about to sail to points along the Asian coast, and we put to sea; Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us. ³ The next day we landed at Sidon; Julius treated Paul kindly and permitted him to go to his friends and receive care. ⁴ Putting to sea from there, we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. ⁵ And when we had sailed across the sea that is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia. ⁶ There the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy and put us on board. ⁷ When we had sailed slowly many days and scarcely arrived opposite Cnidus, the wind did not allow us to go forward, so we sailed for the lee of Crete [‡] by way of Salmone; ⁸ sailing along it with difficulty we came to a certain place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea.

A difference of opinion

⁹ Much time had been lost and sailing was already dangerous, because even the Fast had already taken place; Paul repeatedly warned them ¹⁰ saying, "Men, I perceive that the voyage is about to be with damage and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but

[†] Festus is not happy. Paul is talking to Agrippa, not to him. As a 'son of the disobedience' (Ephesians 2:2) he was open to demonic interference, and Satan does NOT like the resurrection. So Paul's mention of Jesus' resurrection is Festus' clue to interrupt, which he does in rather insulting terms. ^{††} Paul knows that the hearing is over, but he likes Agrippa and nudges him to believe. [‡] Of course, but now it is too late. ^{‡†} I take it that Luke has been around all the time. ^{‡‡} They had been sailing west along the coast of Asia Minor and now turn south to Crete.

even of our lives." ¹¹ But the centurion ^{‡‡} was persuaded by the pilot and ship owner rather than by what Paul said. ¹² And since the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised sailing on, to see if they could get to Phoenix in order to winter, it being a harbor of Crete facing southwest and northwest. ^{‡‡‡}

The storm

¹³ So when the south wind blew gently, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close to shore. ¹⁴ But not long after, a cyclonic wind blasted down from the land (it is called Euroclydon). ¹⁵ Well the ship was caught and could not head into the wind, so we gave up and were driven along. ^{§16} Running under the lee of a small island called Clauda, we barely managed to secure the skiff; ¹⁷ when they had hoisted it aboard, they used cables to undergird the ship; and fearing that they might fall into the Syrtis, ^{§†} they lowered the sea anchor and so were driven along. ¹⁸ We were being so violently battered by the storm that the next day they began to jettison things, ¹⁹ and on the third we threw off the ship's tackle with our own hands. ²⁰ When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and a major storm was still pounding us, all hope that we would be saved was now taken away.

²¹ Now after long abstinence from food, Paul stood up in the midst of them and said: "Well men, it would have been better to take my advice and not sail from Crete, only to 'gain' this damage and loss. ^{§††22} But now I urge you to take heart, because there will be no loss of life among you, only of the ship. ²³ This night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood by me ²⁴ and said: 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. Furthermore, God has granted you all those who sail with you.' ²⁵ So take courage, men, because I believe in God that it will be just as it was told me. ²⁶ Also, we must run aground on a certain island."

²⁷ Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were being driven here and there in the Adriatic, ^{§†} about midnight the sailors sensed that they were nearing some land. ²⁸ They took a sounding and found

^{‡‡†} It appears that the centurion had the last word. ^{‡‡‡} I suppose the point to be that it was completely open to the west; there is such a spot on the present coastline of Crete, though the name 'phoenix' has disappeared. [§] The blast of wind was sudden and they were too close to the shore to have much room to maneuver. To remain broadside to the wind was to be swamped, so they turned tail and the wind drove them out to the open Mediterranean. I imagine that a little supernatural activity was involved. ^{§†} By the time they finished undergirding the ship they were probably about a fifth of the way across the Mediterranean (the wind was driving them south, in a hurry). The Syrtis evidently referred to two shallow bays on the African coast that had shifting sand bars and liked to snare boats. The sea anchor was presumably dropped off the stern to provide drag and slow their progress. ^{§††} Paul's 'I told you so' is really quite bland, and is followed by good news. ^{§‡} This term presumably took in a larger area than it does today.

twenty fathoms; going on a little they took a sounding again and found fifteen fathoms. ²⁹ So fearing that we might be driven into a rocky area, they dropped four anchors from the stern and started praying for day to come. ³⁰ Now under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow, the sailors lowered the skiff into the sea, intending to flee from the ship; ³¹ so Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "Unless these stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." ³² Then the soldiers severed the ropes of the skiff and let it fall away. †

³³ While the day was coming on, Paul started urging them all to receive food, saying: "Today is the fourteenth day of waiting—you continue without eating, having taken nothing. ³⁴ Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, because this is for our survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you." ³⁵ Upon saying this he picked up some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all; then he broke it and began to eat. ³⁶ So they all were encouraged and took food themselves. ³⁷ (In all, we were two hundred seventy-six souls on the ship.) ³⁸ So when they had eaten enough, they started lightening the ship by throwing out the wheat into the sea.

³⁹ When it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship, if possible. ⁴⁰ Casting off the anchors they left them in the sea, at the same time untying the rudder ropes; and hoisting the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. ⁴¹ But they fell into a place where two seas met and ran the vessel aground; the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern began to be broken up by the violence of the waves.

⁴² Now the plan of the soldiers was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. ⁴³ But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, stopped them from doing it and ordered those who could swim to jump in first and go toward the land, ⁴⁴ followed by the rest, some on planks and some on things from the ship. And in this way they all escaped safely to the land.

Malta

28 Following the rescue, they learned that the island was called Malta. ² Now the natives showed us unusual kindness, in that they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold. ³ But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and placed them on the fire, because of the heat a viper came out and fastened itself on his hand. ⁴ So when the natives saw the beast hanging from his hand, they started saying to each other, "This man must be a murderer, whom Justice has not allowed to

† This seems a pity, since a skiff would have been useful in getting people to land later. But in any case, the centurion believed him!

live, even though rescued from the sea." ⁵ But he just shook the beast off into the fire and suffered no harm. ⁶ Well they were expecting him to swell up, or suddenly fall down dead; but after waiting for quite a while and seeing nothing unusual happening to him, they changed their mind and started saying he was a god.

⁷ Now in that region there were properties belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius, who welcomed us and in a friendly manner took care of us for three days. ^{††} Well it happened that the father of Publius was sick in bed with fever and dysentery; Paul went in to him, prayed, and laying his hands on him, healed him. ⁹ So, when this had happened, the rest of those on the island who had diseases started coming and being healed; ¹⁰ who also honored us in many ways, and when we put to sea they provided the necessary things. ‡

Rome

¹¹ Now after three months we put to sea in an Alexandrian ship that had wintered in the island, whose figurehead was 'the Twin Brothers'. ¹² We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days; ¹³ from there we tacked back and forth †† and arrived at Rhegium. After one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli, ¹⁴ where we found brothers who urged us to stay there seven days ‡—that was how we went toward Rome. ¹⁵ And the brothers there, when they heard about our circumstances, came out to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them he thanked God and took courage.

¹⁶ Now when we entered Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the commander; ††† but Paul was allowed to live by himself, with the soldier who guarded him. †††

Paul and the Jews

¹⁷ It happened that after three days Paul called together the leaders of the Jews; and when they had assembled he said to them: "Men, brothers, though I had done nothing against 'the people' or the ancestral customs, still I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, ¹⁸ who, when

†† To feed 276 people for three days would be a considerable expense—and they were hungry! ‡ Paul proved to be a valuable person to have along, the more so since they were there for three months. †† Since Luke makes a point of saying that at Rhegium they got a south wind, between Syracuse and Rhegium the wind was not favorable and they had to tack. Most versions miss the point here. †† The seven days gave them time to send news on ahead so there would be a welcoming committee at Three Inns. The centurion evidently cooperated. ††† Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'the centurion delivered the prisoners to the commander' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ††† This was surely an unusual proceeding; I assume it was a privilege granted in recognition of services rendered.

they had examined me, were intending to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. ¹⁹ But when the Jews spoke against it, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar; not that I had anything about which to accuse my nation. ²⁰ For this reason therefore I asked to see you and speak with you; it is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain." ²¹ So they said to him: "We have neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brothers who came reported or spoken any evil about you. ²² But we desire to hear from you what you think; because as for this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere."

²³ So arranging a day with him, even more people came to him at his lodging, to whom he kept expounding from morning until evening: solemnly testifying about the Kingdom of God and trying to convince them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets. ²⁴ Well some were persuaded by what had been said, and some kept refusing to believe.

²⁵ So being in disagreement among themselves they started to leave, after Paul had said this one word: "The Holy Spirit spoke correctly to our ^{††} fathers through Isaiah the prophet, ²⁶ saying: 'Go to this people and say,

[†] When Paul appealed to Caesar, his enemies evidently gave up, knowing they did not have a valid case. ^{††} Instead of "our", some 20% of the Greek manuscripts have 'your' (as in NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.).

"You will keep on hearing, but never understand; you will keep on seeing, but never perceive"; ²⁷ because the heart of this people has become sluggish, and their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; in order that they not see with their eyes, nor hear with their ears, nor understand with their heart, nor turn back, so I could heal them.' [‡] ²⁸ Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; *THEY* will listen!" ²⁹ And when he had said these things the Jews went their way, having a great dispute among themselves. ^{‡‡}

Two tranquil years

³⁰ Paul stayed two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to see him, ³¹ proclaiming the Kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, with all boldness, without hindrance. ^{‡‡}

[‡] See Isaiah 6:9-10. Here we have a chiasmic structure: heart, ears, eyes; eyes, ears, heart. ^{‡†} Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit verse 29 entire (as in NIV, NASB and LB, but all three have a footnote saying that "some manuscripts" add the verse—their way of referring to 95%! Will not the uninformed reader be misled?).

^{‡‡} It has often been observed that the book seems to lack a proper conclusion. If we consider that the book is actually about God working through people, then of course that work has been in operation throughout the intervening centuries and continues in our day—even through us.

1 Corinthians

Opening Considerations

Greeting

1 Paul, a called apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and brother Sosthenes, ¹² to the church ^{††} of God that is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, [‡] called saints, ^{‡†} along with all those everywhere ^{‡†} who call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord—yes, theirs and yours: ^{‡††3} Grace and peace to you from God our Father and Sovereign Jesus Christ. ^{‡††}

A word of thanksgiving

⁴ Concerning you, I always thank my God because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus; ⁵ for in Him you were enriched in every way, in all speech and all knowledge, ⁶ even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, ⁵⁷ so that you lack no spiritual gift as you expectantly await the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, ^{5†8} who will also confirm you until the end, blameless in the Day of our Lord, Jesus Christ. ^{5††9} God is faithful, by whom you were called into fellowship ^{5‡} with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. ^{5††}

† He acknowledges a junior partner. †† Since there were probably several local congregations meeting in homes in Corinth, not to mention “everywhere”, I have rendered ‘church’. Note that Paul obviously intended that his letter have a wide circulation, very wide. ‡ If your life style is still that of the world, you have not been ‘sanctified’. ‡† Called by God. ‡†† Clearly Paul knows that he is not writing just for the Corinthians. But just how is this letter going to get to believers “everywhere”? If Paul himself did not make copies, presumably the congregation that received the ‘original’ would set about making certified copies. ‡†† “Yours” is the reading of the best line of transmission, as I see it, being part of 25% of the total of manuscripts. But the idea is a bit awkward, and the change of one letter solved the ‘problem’, as in the 75%—‘theirs and ours’ is straightforward. ‡†† Where ‘Lord’ occurs without the definite article, as here, I usually render ‘Sovereign’; with either ‘the’ or ‘our’ I usually render ‘Lord’. § As the Message was progressively confirmed in them, they were progressively enriched with the things mentioned. §† It appears that the early Christians expected the Lord to return at any time, which would tend to have a sobering effect upon one’s style of living. §†† The “Day of our Lord Jesus Christ” includes the accounting for all those who are in Him. So the promise here is major, and verse 9 starts with ‘God is faithful’. §‡ “Called into fellowship” sounds like an ongoing exchange. §‡† To the ‘Western’ mind it may seem like Paul was being a bit repetitious; but Paul was a Jew—he is making very sure that they know where he is coming from, and where he wants to take them.

A word of exhortation

¹⁰ Now I appeal to you, brothers, by the name ^{5†} of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing ^{5‡} and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be restored ^{5‡†} to the same mind and to the same purpose. ¹¹ You see, my brothers, it has been reported to me concerning you, by some from Chloe’s household, ^{5‡‡} that there are contentions among you. ¹² What I mean is that you are individually saying: “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ!” ¹³ Has Christ been divided? It was not Paul who was crucified for you, was it? You were not baptized into the name of Paul, were you?

A disclaimer about baptism

¹⁴ I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ lest anyone should say that I had baptized into my own name. ¹⁶ O yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanus; besides them I do not remember if I baptized anyone else. ¹⁷ Because Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel ^{5‡‡‡}—not with eloquent ‘wisdom’, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of power. ¹⁸

§† The name represents the person. §‡ They are not being told to repeat things like parrots, but to be in essential agreement about important points. §‡† They have drifted. §‡‡ Paul cites his source. §‡‡‡ If water baptism were essential to salvation, I fail to see how Paul could have expressed himself in this way—he is clearly implying that water baptism is not an essential part of the Gospel. In the early Church people were baptized immediately, not after weeks of ‘preparation’, because the convert was publicly breaking with Satan and his kingdom and formally placing himself under Christ’s protection. Such baptism is an important procedure, and its value should be explained to any new convert. ¹⁸ Dear me, is eloquence the enemy of power? Does not eloquence give glory to the speaker rather than to Christ? Perhaps not inescapably, but the tendency is definitely there.

The nature of the Gospel

Foolishness to the lost

¹⁸ The message of the cross, you see, is foolishness to those who are being wasted, [†] but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written:

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and confound the shrewdness of the intelligent.” ^{††}
²⁰ Where is the wise one? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through its ‘wisdom’ did not get to know God, it pleased God to save the believing ones through the ‘foolishness’ of what was preached—
²² since Jews request a sign while Greeks seek after wisdom, ²³ but we proclaim a crucified Christ: an offense to Jews, foolishness to Greeks. ^{‡24} Now to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, ²⁵ because the ‘foolishness’ of God is wiser than men, and the ‘weakness’ of God is stronger than men. ^{‡†}

God uses ‘nothings’

²⁶ Just look at your calling, brothers: not many are wise, not many are powerful, not many are of noble birth, by human standards; ²⁷ but God has chosen the foolish things of the world that He might put the wise to shame, and God has chosen the weak things of the world that He might put the strong things to shame; ²⁸ and God has chosen the lowly things of the world and the despised things—even the ‘nothings’—that He might nullify the ‘somethings’; ²⁹ so that no flesh should boast in God's presence. ^{‡‡30} It is from Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who was made to us wisdom from God—also righteousness and sanctification and redemption ^{‡‡†}—³¹ so that, as it is written: “He who boasts, let him boast in the *LORD*.” ^{‡‡‡}

[†] We are accustomed to ‘perishing’. The verb here has a considerable semantic area and can be rendered—destroy, kill, deprive, void, lose, perish—depending on the context, but I believe the root idea is ‘waste’. The only way to fulfill the purpose for which you were created, to realize your potential, is to turn your life over to Jesus. The alternative is to waste your life, both now and forever. Of course the enemy works to make people think the opposite. ^{††} See Isaiah 29:14. [‡] To the Jews, their Messiah would be a conquering king, and since death on a cross was viewed as a curse (Deuteronomy 21:23, Galatians 3:13), a crucified Messiah was simply unthinkable. What did the Greeks want with someone else's Messiah, especially a dead one—sheer nonsense! ^{‡†} We like to forget this, but it is best not to do so. Arrogant servants of Satan often use stronger terms than ‘foolishness’—they will use ‘repugnant’, ‘ridiculous’, ‘intolerable’, etc. ^{‡‡} This is the bottom line. Several times the Text declares that God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. “Flesh” here refers to human beings. ^{‡‡†} We receive Christ's righteousness to get started; the sanctification is to keep us clean along the road; the redemption is the final victory. Now really, isn't that a wonderful sal-

Not with human wisdom but with God's power

2 So when I came to you, brothers, I did not come proclaiming God's testimony [§] to you with a ‘superior’ speech or wisdom. ² For I determined to ‘know’ nothing while among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. ³ Also, I was with you in weakness, in fear, and with much trembling. ⁴ Yes, my message and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith not be in men's wisdom, but in God's power. ^{§†}

Wisdom for the mature

⁶ However, we do speak wisdom among the mature, ^{§††} albeit not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are being set aside; ^{§‡7} but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden ^{§††} wisdom that God ordained before the ages for our glory, ⁸ that none of the rulers of this age have understood (because if they had understood, they would not have crucified the Lord of the glory). ⁹ However, as it is written:

“Things no eye has seen and no ear has heard, and no heart of man has imagined, such things has God prepared for those who love Him.” ^{§†}

¹⁰ But to *us* God has revealed them by His Spirit; ^{§‡} because the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

¹¹ Now who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man that is in him? So also no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² We have not received the spirit of the world ^{§§†} but the Spirit who is from God, so that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God; ^{§§†13} which things we also expound, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the

vation? Thank you, Jesus! ^{‡‡‡} See Jeremiah 9:24. Since God has given us all we have, to glory in self is wrong. [§] Instead of “testimony”, less than 5% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘mystery’, to be followed by the eclectic Greek text currently in vogue (as in some versions). ^{§†} How many missionaries and pastors today are following Paul's example? How many of us know how to demonstrate God's power? Faith is to be based on power, not human wisdom. If we don't know how to use God's power, we had better cry out to Him until we learn how. Certain theological systems virtually condemn their adherents to never use God's power. ^{§††} This is important. Paul is not championing ignorance or stupidity. In teaching Christians he certainly used God's wisdom. It was in his evangelizing that he avoided ‘human wisdom’. ^{§‡} ‘Being set aside’ how, and when? If God's people would really be ‘salt’ and ‘light’ (Matthew 5:13-14) they could transform any culture. ^{§††} In the Bible a ‘mystery’ is something hidden, something yet to be revealed, not something ‘mysterious’. ^{§†} Wonderful! Thank you, God! See Isaiah 64:4. ^{§‡} To us has been granted the privilege of having a fuller understanding of God's purposes than was granted to OT saints. ^{§§†} ‘The spirit of the world’ evidently must exist. If the reference is not to Satan directly, he is certainly behind it. ^{§§‡} Evidently one of the things the Holy

Holy Spirit, † interpreting spiritual things to spiritual people.

¹⁴ Now a soulish †† man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; indeed, he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ But he who is spiritual evaluates everything, while not being himself subject to anyone's judgment. ¹⁶ For "who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him?" †† But we have the mind of Christ. †

The nature of the ministry

It is not to be sectarian

3 Brothers, I was not able to address you as spiritual, but as fleshly, as infants in Christ. ² I gave you milk and not solid food, because you were not ready yet. Alas, you are still not ready, ³ because you are *STILL* fleshly! For since there is envy, strife and divisions †† among you, are you not carnal and acting like ordinary people? ⁴ For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?

God's coworkers

⁵ Who then is Paul, who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord has given to each one? ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God keeps making it grow. ⁷ So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who makes it grow. †††⁸ Now he who plants and he who waters are at one, but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. ⁹ Yes, we are God's coworkers; you are God's 'field', God's 'building'.

Spirit wants to do is to illumine us on the subject of God's free gifts—if we would only listen! † Note that Paul is plainly stating that he receives instruction from the Holy Spirit. If he could do it, we can too. Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit "Holy", to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. †† That is what the Text says. A 'soulish' person CANNOT understand spiritual things, which sounds rather like a congenital defect, no spirit—the reference might be to humanoids à la

‡ The same verb is used three times, to which I have given different renderings—'discerned', 'evaluates', 'subject to judgment' (the middle one is in the active voice, the other two in the passive). The king of interpretation is the context, and the verb (αὐακρίνω) covers a considerable semantic area. †† See Isaiah 40:13. Compare John 3:8, where the Lord Jesus says that the Spirit controlled person is like the wind, unpredictable—other people will have trouble figuring him out; when they expect him to 'zig', he will 'zag'. †† Well now, do we or don't we? How many people do you know who think like Jesus did? ††† Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "and divisions", to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. ††† God is the One who makes things grow. No farmer should call himself an atheist. § This is a point worth remembering. The lazy will not get much.

There will be an Accounting

¹⁰ According to the grace of God that was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid a foundation, while another builds on it. But let each one be careful how he builds; ¹¹ for no one can lay any foundation other than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ the work of each will become evident; because the Day will make it clear, because it will be revealed by fire. Yes, the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone built endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, albeit so as through fire. ††

§† I would say that the primary reference here is to leaders of local congregations, who need to be careful how they 'build' God's 'house'. But I believe it also clearly applies to anyone whose personal life is based on Jesus Christ. Each of us will give an account of how we built our lives on that foundation. Note that we are not offered the option of changing the foundation. Anyone who attempts to do so does not belong to God. †† Paul is talking about the Day of Christ wherein those in Christ will be called to account. The Text plainly states that what we have done will be tested by fire. Someone who spent most of his time living for himself rather than for Christ's Kingdom will be surrounded by nice, dry straw (all that any fire could ask for!). So the angel aims the blowtorch at the straw—the fire is high, hot, but short-lived. The person is left standing in a pile of fine ash, somewhat the worse for the wear. The price you pay for not living for Christ's kingdom is to lose your life. That is all it costs, just your life! Consider the words of the Lord Jesus recorded in Luke 9:24-25. Let us begin with verse 23. "If anyone desires to come after me let him deny himself, take up his cross each day and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it. For what will it profit a man to gain the whole world but waste or forfeit himself?" What does the Lord mean when He speaks of losing one's "life"? One does not lose one's soul for love of Christ. Nor is the reference to being killed. Rather, Jesus has in mind the life we live, the accumulated results of our living. All that I have done up to this moment plus all that I will yet do until overtaken by death or the rapture of the Church, whichever happens first—that is the "life" that is at risk (in my own case). Let us look at our Lord's words a little more closely. There seems to be a contradiction here—if you lose, you save; if you want to save, you lose. How can it work? The following context helps us out. In verse 26 Jesus explains verses 24-25 in terms of His second coming. The parallel passage, Matthew 16:27, is clearer. "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he will repay each according to his deeds." Christ was thinking of the day of reckoning. In other words, "we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10) and "each of us will give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive his due according to what he has done while in the body, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). I understand that 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 is referring to the same occasion, the day of reckoning. After declaring that Jesus Christ is the only foundation, Paul speaks of different materials that one might use in building on it: "gold, silver, precious stones" or "wood, hay, straw". The point is, our deeds will be tested by fire. If fire has any effect upon gold or silver it is only to purify them, but its effect on hay and straw is devastating! Okay, so what? Let us go back to the beginning. God created the human being for His glory; to reflect it and contribute to it. I suppose we may understand Psalm 19:1 and Isaiah 43:7 in this way, at least by extension. But Adam lost this capacity when he rebelled

We are a temple of God

¹⁶ Do you (pl) not know that you are a temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you? ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; because God's temple, which you are, is holy. [†]

¹⁸ Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become 'foolish' so that he may become wise. ¹⁹ Because the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; ^{††20} and again, "The LORD knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are futile." ^{‡21} So then, let no one boast in men, for all things are yours: ²² whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, whether the world or life or death, whether things present or things to come—all are yours, ^{‡23} and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

As stewards we must be faithful

4 Let a man consider us like this: as Christ's subordinates and stewards of God's mysteries. ^{‡2} Moreover, what is required of stewards is that each be found faithful. ^{‡3} So to me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court; in fact, I do not even judge myself. ⁴ For I am conscious of nothing against myself, although I am not justified by this; it is the Lord who judges me. ⁵ Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who

against God. For this reason the sentence that weighs against our race is that we "fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). But the Son came into the world to restore our lost potential. Ephesians 1:12 and 14 tell us that the object of the plan of salvation is "the praise of His glory" (see also 2 Corinthians 1:20). And 1 Corinthians 10:31 puts it into a command

So there it is. To be a slave of Christ means to live with reference to the Kingdom; it means to do everything for the glory of God. In this way the slave "saves" his life because he will be building it with "gold and silver", which will pass through the fire at the judgment seat of Christ without loss. In contrast, the believer who refuses to be a slave of Jesus builds his life with "hay and straw", which will be consumed by the fire—and so he "loses" his life; he lived in vain; the potential that his life represented was wasted, thrown away. What a tragedy! [†] This passage contrasts with 6:19; there each individual believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit, while here the local congregation is stated to be God's temple, with the Holy Spirit indwelling the members. Note that God does not take kindly to any effort to damage His temple. ^{††} See Job 5:12. [‡] See Psalm 94:11. ^{‡†} In what sense? I suppose this refers to potential use, not ownership. ^{‡‡} What does a steward of God's mysteries do? He explains them to others. The function of a teacher is similar. ^{‡‡†} By the owner; see the last clause of verse 4, below.

will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and expose the motives of the hearts. ^{‡‡} At that time the praise that comes to each will be from God. [§]

No room for boasting

⁶ I have illustrated these things using myself and Apollos, brothers, for your sakes, so that you may learn from us not to think beyond what is written, ^{§†} that no one of you be puffed up in favor of the one against the other. ⁷ Now who is distinguishing you? Or what do you have that you did not receive? ^{§††} So if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? ⁸ You are already stuffed! You are already rich! You have become 'kings' without us! I could wish that you really did reign, so that we might be kings with you too! ^{§‡}

The cost of being an apostle

⁹ For I keep thinking that God has displayed us, the apostles, at the end of the line, like men sentenced to death; ^{§††} because we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. ¹⁰ We are fools for Christ while you are wise! We are weak but you are strong! You are esteemed, we are despised! ¹¹ To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty; we are poorly dressed, brutally treated, and wander homeless; ¹² yes, we labor, working with our own hands. Upon being reviled, we bless; upon being persecuted, we endure it; ¹³ upon being slandered, we exhort. We have been made as the refuse of the world, the off-scouring of whatever, to this moment. ^{§†}

‡‡‡ Part of judging correctly is knowing why the accused did it. Since 'knowing the motives of the hearts' is generally beyond us [even our own at times], we had better leave the judging up to the Judge. [§] I was brought up on the AV that says: "then shall every man have praise of God", which led me to believe that everyone would get some praise. However, I believe the Text says something different, as indicated in my rendering. Paul is not affirming that all will get praise (of what use is 'praise' to someone in the Lake of fire?), but that the Judge will distribute whatever praise is merited. ^{§†} Written where? By whom? I suppose the reference is to principles in the Scriptures. ^{§††} Here is the fundamental recipe against boasting. None of us chose who our parents would be, where we would be born, what language would be our native tongue. But these circumstances dictate the opportunities that a person will have, quite apart from talents and abilities. Things that were given to us do not form a proper basis for boasting. ^{§‡} Presumably a bit of sarcasm. ^{§‡†} The reference seems to be to a returning Roman commander's victory march, where some of the conquered enemy soldiers would be displayed at the end of the line, and be executed later. ^{§†} Wow, what a 'job description'! Any applicants? How many of the plague of self-styled 'apostles' in our day meet these qualifications? We need to understand what Paul is saying here. To be looked down on and criticized by believers among whom one has labored is one thing. Local people with personal ambition know how to do that. For God to make us "as the refuse of the world" is something very different. How should we understand this? If we insist on proclaiming a 'gospel' that the world considers to be stupid, abject foolishness, we will certainly be ridiculed. But if we insist on biblical values that the world has declared to be 'hate crimes', we will certainly be hated and persecuted, treated as refuse. The choice of He-

Children imitate fathers

¹⁴ I am not writing these things to shame you; I am admonishing you as my dear children. ¹⁵ Because even if you were to have thousands of tutors in Christ, you would not have many fathers, because I am the one who begot you in Christ Jesus, through the Gospel. ¹⁶ Therefore I am urging you, become my imitators. ¹⁷ That is why I sent you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful son in Sovereign, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every congregation.

Not in word but in power

¹⁸ Now some have been puffed up, as though I were not coming to you. ¹⁹ But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who have been puffed up, but the power. ²⁰ Because the Kingdom of God is not in word but in power. ²¹ What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a gentle spirit?

The nature of the Christian life

Immorality must be punished

5 It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as not even pagans talk about [‡]—that someone has his father's wife! ² And you are puffed up and not even grieved, so as to exclude the one who has done this deed from your fellowship. ³ For I indeed, as present in spirit ^{††} though

brews 13:13 is upon us: "So then, let us go out to Him, outside the camp, bearing His disgrace." † Our spiritual children will naturally look to us for example. If people imitate us, how badly will they be damaged? †† Here is a plain statement. On this basis, how many churches and ministries that you know of are part of God's Kingdom? Notice that I did not capitalize 'word'; the reference is presumably to human speech, not the Sword. ‡ It was reported that a man had his father's wife, a type of fornication such that not even the pagans talked about it. However, the eclectic Greek text currently in vogue (following 3.2% of the Greek manuscripts—this includes the earliest ones, that are of objectively inferior quality) affirms that this type of incest does not even exist among the pagans, a plain falsehood. Every conceivable type of sexual perversion has existed throughout human history. Strangely, such evangelical versions as NIV, NASB, LB and Berkley propagate this error. †† Interpreters have generally spiritualized 'present in spirit', but I suspect that it may be literal. A number of people who converted out of Spiritism have told me personally that they used to project their spirits away from their bodies (with demonic assistance), something that Spiritists and Satanists openly avow (they call it 'astral projection'). When I lived among an indigenous people in the Amazon jungle, the shamans claimed the same thing. At first I resisted the idea, but the accumulated evidence became too strong. Then I began to think of possible cases in the Bible. In 2 Kings 5:26 Elisha tells Gehazi that his 'heart' went along and witnessed what he did. According to 2 Kings 6:12 apparently Elisha projected his spirit over to the Syrian king's bedroom! How about the Lord Jesus? In Mark 6:47-48 the boat was in 'the middle of the sea', or several miles from land (John 6:19), and it was night; yet Jesus 'saw them straining at the rowing' (He per-

absent in body, have already judged the one who created this situation, as though I were present: ⁴ in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, [‡] you and my spirit being together, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, ^{††5} we must hand such a one over to Satan for a destruction of the 'flesh', that the spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus. ^{‡‡}

Down with moral 'yeast'

⁶ Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? ⁷ Therefore purge out the old leaven, so that you can be a new batch, like you are, without yeast. Especially since Christ our Passover has been sacrificed in our place. ⁸ So then let us observe the feast, ^{§†} not with old leaven, nor with the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened loaves of sincerity and truth.

Avoid contaminators

⁹ I wrote to you in my letter ^{§††} not to associate with fornicators— ¹⁰ not of course the fornicators of this world, or the greedy, or the swindlers, or the idolaters;

ceived by the eye). In John 1:48 Jesus tells Nathanael that He saw him 'under the fig tree' (perceived by the eye), something that was physically impossible; so much so that Nathanael immediately declares Him to be God. (See also Matthew 17:25, and so on.) How about Paul? In Colossians 2:5 Paul says that he 'observes' their orderliness. The basic meaning of the verb rendered 'observe' is to observe with the physical eye, which implies being within range and with no obstacles. But Paul obviously was not there as he wrote, in fact had never been there. He affirms that it is his spirit that is doing the seeing and rejoicing. The Protestant Reformation was a result, in part, of the Renaissance, with its emphasis on reason, so Protestants in general have had trouble understanding the spirit world. So the tendency of commentators has been to 'spiritualize' Paul's statement, rather than take it literally. Of course they have done the same with 2 Kings 5:26 and 6:12, not to mention John 1:48. Here in Brazil we have many former Spiritists and Satanists who have been converted and they affirm that they used to project their spirits outside their bodies and go all over the place—several of my former students, now genuinely converted, have told me they used to do it—but they could do so only with the assistance of a fallen angel (demon). Satan's 'thing' is to be like the Most High, so he is always trying to imitate Him; perhaps God's servants used to know how to do this, only without such assistance [I have heard of a few in our day who still do]. Returning to 1 Corinthians 5, notice that in verse 4 Paul says, "you and my spirit being together", which sounds sort of literal to me. ‡‡ Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit "Christ", to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. ‡‡‡ Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "Christ", to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. ‡‡‡ I do not understand this. If while in the group the man fell into such sin, how can excommunicating him (verse 13) and turning him over to Satan bring about an improvement? I would expect Satan to lock him up tight. Unless it be that the shock treatment would somehow wake the man up. Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "Jesus", to be followed by NIV, LB, TEV, etc. § Some 3% of the Greek manuscripts omit "in our place", to be followed by NIV, NASB, TEV, etc. §† Presumably the Passover (our Easter)—having mentioned Christ as our Passover lamb, he applies the idea to their daily life. §†† Evidently this was a prior missive, so this present letter is really number two. Not everything that Paul wrote was inspired; anything not inspired would not be included in the NT Canon.

since then you would have to exit the world! ¹¹ But now I write you not to associate with anyone *WHO CALLS HIMSELF A BROTHER* who is a fornicator, or greedy, or an idolater, or abusive, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such. [†]

¹² Now just why should it be up to me to judge those who are outside? Will you not judge those who are inside? ¹³ Those who are outside God will judge, and you must exclude the wicked one from among you.

Down with lawsuits!

6 How can anyone of you who has a dispute with another dare to have it judged before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? ² Do you not know that the saints are to be judging the world? ^{††} So if the world is to be judged by you, are you not competent to judge the smallest matters? ³ Do you not know that

[†] *Since we cannot exit the world, we are obliged to deal with the sinners in it; but we do so without identifying with them and their life style. But within the circle of believers there is identification, communion, mutual commitment, and a life style very different from that of the world [well, at least it is supposed to be]. What is at stake is not only the spiritual power of the congregation, but also its testimony before the world—someone who wants to keep on sinning like the world has not been transformed and does not belong in the circle, and this should be made very clear to one and all. Paul is saying that they should not do anything that could be construed as an acceptance of his conduct. †† The question, “Do you not know?” indicates that if the person addressed does not know, he should, and his ignorance is culpable. For Paul to write in this way, his addressees had to have had a reasonable opportunity of knowing, or it would be an unfair gambit on Paul's part. On such a topic the information should be available in God's written revelation, and I believe it is. Consider Psalm 149:5-9. “Let the saints exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the nations, and punishments upon the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the written judgment. This honor is for all His saints.” Note that the saints are in their beds! So the activity that is described in the following verses must take place in the spiritual realm. I assume that the ‘kings’ and ‘nobles’ includes both men and fallen angels. It seems clear to me that the intent of the Text is that we be doing this right now, in this life. There is no lack of ‘written judgments’ to be imposed: Zechariah 5:2-4, against thieves and liars; Proverbs 20:10, against those who use diverse weights and measures; Isaiah 10:1-2, against those who make unjust laws; Romans 1:26-32, against homosexuals and a variety of others (note that verse 32 says that “those who practice such things ARE*

turning to 1 Corinthians 6:2, the only difference between present and future tense for ‘judge’ is the accent, and since the earliest Greek manuscripts generally do not have accents, in them the verb is ambiguous as to tense. Most, but not all, later manuscripts accent the verb as future and every version that I have seen follows suit. But if Paul is thinking of Psalm 149, then the present tense is correct—in fact, the immediately following passive form of the verb is present tense. I take Paul's point to be: if we are supposed to be judging the world, how can we possibly ask the world to judge us? To do so is illogical.

Re-

we will judge angels? [‡] How much more the things of this life! ^{‡‡} Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint those who are least esteemed in the congregation to judge! ^{‡‡‡} I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is not a single wise man among you who would be competent to judge between a man and his brother? ⁶ Instead, brother goes to law against brother, and this before unbelievers! ⁷ Actually, the very fact that you have lawsuits among you already represents a defeat for you. ^{‡‡} Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why not rather accept being cheated? ⁸ No, you yourselves do the wronging and cheating, and to brothers!

How to avoid inheriting the Kingdom

⁹ Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, ^{‡‡‡} nor catamites, [§] nor sodomites, ¹⁰ nor the greedy, nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor the abusive, nor swindlers can inherit the Kingdom of God, absolutely. ¹¹ And that is what some of you were; ^{§†} but you were bathed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. ^{§††}

Fornication is *BAD!*

¹² All things are ‘permissible’ for me, but not all things are expedient. All things are ‘permissible’ for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. ¹³ Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. ^{§†} Now the body is not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ^{§††14} Further, God both raised up the Lord and will also raise up us by His power. ¹⁵ Do you not know

[‡] *When will this happen? I do not know, but see the note above. In any case, the implication is clear that we are superior to them.*
^{‡†} *Obviously, if we are to judge the things of this life, it has to be during this life! ‡† This is almost cute. In effect Paul is saying that the humblest believer will be a more competent judge than whatever is in the world! Of course, a genuine believer will have the Holy Spirit, who makes the difference. ‡†† They are allowing themselves to be controlled by the world's values—clearly a defeat! ‡††† Note that ‘fornicators’ and ‘adulterers’ receive separate mention, so they cannot refer to the same thing. ‘Adultery’ does not include ‘fornication’, nor vice versa. § ‘Catamites’ refers to those who fulfill the role of ‘female’ in anal sex, the ‘passive’ partner. ‘Sodomites’ refers to those who fulfill the ‘male’ role in anal sex. A catamite is someone who participates voluntarily; a victim of rape is altogether different. Please note that the Holy Spirit, through Paul, is emphatic: practicing homosexuals absolutely will not inherit the Kingdom of God—period! §† Paul makes clear that it is possible to be saved out of any of the practices mentioned, but anyone who dies while still practicing is out, ‘absolutely’. §†† The Spirit is the agent. §‡ We have to eat to live, but anyone who lives to eat will face an angry Creator. §‡† At first glance this seems awkward; however, that the body is not for fornication is obvious—that is not why the Creator gives us bodies. And we are to consecrate our bodies to the Lord's service, but how is “the Lord for the body”? I don't know, unless it be that ‘body’ is used with two different meanings, first referring to our physical body, next referring to the Church.*

that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Not ever! ¹⁶ Can you not know that the one who joins himself with a prostitute is one body *with her*? For “the two,” He says, “will become one flesh.” ¹⁷ But he who is joined with the Lord is one spirit *with Him*.

¹⁸ Flee from fornication! Every sin that a man may commit is outside the body, but he who fornicates sins against his own body. ^{††19} Do you not know that your [‡] bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰ Because you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. ^{‡†}

About marriage

7 Now concerning the things about which you wrote to me: it is good for a man not to touch a woman. ² But because of the fornications, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. ^{‡‡3} Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. ⁴ The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; similarly also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. ⁵ Do not deprive one another except by mutual consent for a season, so that you may devote yourselves to fasting ^{‡††} and to prayer, and come together again so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. ^{‡‡}

⁶ Now I say this [§] as a concession, not as a command ⁷ (though I wish that all men were even as I myself; but each has his own gift from God, one like this and one

† See Genesis 2:24. †† Precisely. Verse 16 above states plainly that whoever joins himself to a prostitute becomes one flesh with her. “The two will become one flesh” is not a poetic expression; it is a medical fact. During coitus there is an exchange of enzymes, such that the participants are affected in their bodies, literally. It follows that a promiscuous person is damaging his body, progressively. But it may be worse even than that. Proverbs 6:32 says: “Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; he who does so destroys his own soul.” Verses 33-35 describe the social consequences, but I believe the participants suffer consequences within themselves as well. I suspect that along with the enzymes goes a bit of the soul, so a professional prostitute has a seriously weakened soul, and a promiscuous male keeps on lousing up his soul, quite apart from the physical consequences. No wonder the Text says to flee!! ‡ In 3:16 the pronoun was plural, here it is also plural, but since ‘bodies’ is also plural, the reference appears to be to each person's body. ‡† The eclectic Greek text currently in vogue omits, “and in your spirit, which are God's”, following 3.7% of the Greek manuscripts—this includes the earliest ones, that are of objectively inferior quality (it is followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡‡ Observe that it is just one wife, and just one husband. ‡†† Less than 7% of the Greek manuscripts omit “to fasting and”, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. (It is a simple case of ‘like ending’.) ‡‡‡ The whole paragraph is talking about sexual intercourse. § I take the pronoun to be cataphoric, referring to what follows (most are anaphoric, referring to something in the prior context).

like that). ⁸ Yes I say to the unmarried and the widows: it is good for them if they should remain even as I; ^{§†9} but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry; since it is better to marry than to burn. ^{§††}

Mixed marriages

¹⁰ Now to the married I command (not I but the Lord): a wife is not to be separated from her husband ¹¹ (but if she does separate herself, ^{§†} let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband), and a husband is not to divorce his wife. ¹² But to the rest I (not the Lord) say: if any brother has an unbelieving wife and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. ¹³ And a woman who has an unbelieving husband and he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. ¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are consecrated. ^{§††15} But if the unbeliever separates, let him separate—in such cases the brother or the sister is not enslaved, but God has called us to peace. ^{§†16} For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife? ^{§†}

About other situations

¹⁷ Otherwise, as God has distributed to each, as the Lord has called each one, so let him live (this is what I command in all the congregations). ¹⁸ Was anyone already circumcised when called? Let him not reverse it. ^{§§†} Was anyone uncircumcised when called? Let him not be circumcised. ^{§§†19} Circumcision is nothing and

§† As a practicing Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus would almost certainly have been married, so at this point he is presumably a widower. §†† This is usually understood as ‘burn with passion’, but if practicing fornicators do not enter the Kingdom, the more literal meaning may obtain. §‡ Note that it is the woman taking the initiative, for whatever reason. §‡† The believing parent consecrates the child to God. §† In verses 10 and 11, where both are believers (evidently), the LORD forbids divorce and remarriage. Here in verse 15 the subject is a mixed marriage where the unbeliever wants out (verses 12-14 make clear that the believer is not to take the initiative in a separation). There are those who argue that if the unbeliever leaves, the believer is free to remarry, but how can that be true? If remarriage is not allowed if a believing partner leaves (verses 10-11), with what logic can it be argued that the rule changes if the partner is an unbeliever? It simply does not follow. On the contrary, the believer is called upon to make a special effort to win the other. However, if the unbeliever is determined to leave, an effort by the believer to go along at any cost will only prolong a climate of strife, and God has called us to peace. The point of marriage is not to make one's life a hell on earth—it is better to live ALONE than in unrelenting strife. §‡ In any place where the Gospel arrives for the first time, it is predictable that at first only one partner in a marriage will convert. This causes a strained atmosphere in the home, but if they can stick it out, the second partner stands a good chance of converting as well. §§† Attempting to reverse a circumcision was a known surgical procedure at that time, but would be totally unnecessary for a Christian. §§‡ Dear me, Paul, so why did you circumcise Timothy (Acts 16:3)?

uncircumcision is nothing, compared to keeping God's commandments. ²⁰ Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. ²¹ Were you called while a slave? Do not let it bother you, but if you can really become free, do so. ²² For the one in the Lord who was called while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Similarly, the one who was called while free is Christ's slave. ²³ You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. ²⁴ Brothers, let each one remain with God in the social condition in which he was called. †

About virgins

²⁵ Now about the virgins I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who has obtained mercy from the Lord to be trustworthy. ²⁶ I consider therefore that this is good because of the current distress—that it is good for a man to remain as he is: ²⁷ Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek release. Have you been released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. ²⁸ However, should you marry, you have not sinned; †† and if a virgin should marry, she has not sinned. Still, such will have trouble in the flesh, and I want to spare you. ‡

A sense of urgency

²⁹ Now I say this, brothers, the time has been shortened, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none, ³⁰ and those who weep as though not weeping, and those who rejoice as though not rejoicing, and those who buy as though not possessing, ³¹ and those who use this world as though not abusing it; because this world's mode is passing away. ††

Marriage again

³² Now I want you to be without anxiety. He who is unmarried cares about the things of the Lord: how he will please the Lord. ³³ While he who is married cares about the things of the world: how he will please his wife. ††³⁴ The wife and the virgin are also different. She who is unmarried cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; while she who is married cares about the things of the

† We are not to fret, but if the Lord opens the opportunity to improve our situation, I take it that we may (and should) do so, as with the slave. †† Verses 26-28a are addressed to males. ‡ Since we have the indwelling Holy Spirit, we should ask His specific direction before taking on such a serious responsibility. †† If the time was short two thousand years ago, it is now that much shorter. The point is that our lives should revolve around Jesus Christ and His Kingdom, not around our own desires and ambitions. There is no lack of marriage seminars that teach how to make each other happy, as if that were the major purpose in life. Not so. Everything in our lives should be subordinated to the interests of Christ's Kingdom, not stroking each other's ego. We like to forget 1 John 2:15-17, but to do so is not smart. †† Paul is not being sarcastic; he is just stating a plain fact (as we who are married know).

world: how she will please her husband. ³⁵ I am saying this for your own profit, not to put a leash on you, but for what is appropriate, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction. †††

³⁶ Now if anyone thinks he is behaving inappropriately toward his virgin, if she is past her prime and thus it should be, let him do what he desires; he does not sin; let them marry. ³⁷ But he who stands steadfast in his heart, not having necessity, but has control over his own will, and has determined in his heart to preserve his own virginity, does well. ³⁸ So then, he who gives in marriage does well, but he who does not give in marriage does better. †††

³⁹ A woman is bound by law for as long as her husband lives, but if the man should die, she is free to be married to whom she wishes—only in the Lord. ⁴⁰ But she is more blessed if she remains as she is, according to my judgment—and I think I also have God's Spirit.

About things offered to idols

8 Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. ² And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he has come to know nothing yet as he ought to know. ³ But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him. ††

Idols are really nothing

⁴ Therefore, concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and no one else is God except the One. ⁵ For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on the earth (since there are many 'gods' and many 'lords'), ⁶ yet for us there is one God, the Father, out of whom are all things and we into Him, and one Sovereign Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and we through Him. †††

Respect the other's conscience

⁷ However, this knowledge is not in everyone; but some, with consciousness †† of the idol, still eat it as of-

††† The level of our commitment to Christ and His Kingdom has a direct bearing upon the 'strength' of physical distractions. ††† I suppose that for a couple that is considering marriage, both of them being sincere disciples of Sovereign Jesus, the question should be: "Can we make the greatest contribution to Christ's Kingdom together, or apart?" Verses 36-38 have given considerable exercise to modern commentators, as also to copyists of Greek manuscripts since the third century. The 'difficulty' appears to have been to understand just what Paul meant by "virgin", which resulted in the variant 'marry', instead of "give in marriage". † It is probably true that none of us has complete knowledge on any subject. I follow that we should refrain from acting as if we did! †† That is one way to make sure God knows who you are! ††† Everything starts with the Father, including the possibility that we become His children. Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:10 and John 1:10 make clear that the Son was the principal agent in the Creation (although the Trinity was doubtless involved), which includes our own existence. †† Instead of

ferred to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ⁸ But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we better off, nor if we do not eat are we worse off. [†]

⁹ But take care lest somehow this 'right' of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. ¹⁰ For if someone who is weak sees you with your knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not his conscience be emboldened to eat things offered to idols? ¹¹ And so the weak brother, for whom Christ died, will be wasted because of your knowledge. ¹² But when you thus sin against the brothers and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. ¹³ So then, if food causes my brother to fall, I will never eat meat again, lest I cause my brother to fall. ^{††}

The 'rights' of an apostle

9 Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? [‡] Are you not my work in the Lord? ² If I am not an apostle to others, yet at least I am to you, because you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. ³ My defense to those who are judging me is this: ⁴ Do we have no right to eat and drink? ⁵ Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, just as the rest of the apostles and the Lord's brothers ^{††} and Cephas? ⁶ Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to forego working? ⁷ Who ever serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink ^{‡‡} of its milk? ⁸ I am not saying these things as a mere man, am I? Does not the Law also say the same? ⁹ For it stands written in the Law of Moses: "You shall not muzzle an ox that is threshing." ^{†††} Is it really about the oxen that God is concerned, ^{†††10} or does He surely say it for our sakes? Yes, it was written for us, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should partake of his hope.

To live from the Gospel

¹¹ Since we planted spiritual things in you, is it a big deal if we reap material things from you? ¹² If others have a share in this right from you, do not we even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but

"with consciousness of", less than 5% of the Greek manuscripts have 'accustomed to', to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.—clearly an inferior proceeding. † Spiritually speaking. †† The 'fall' here is serious, including the possibility that he may not get up again. This is sometimes called the 'law of love', giving up a right for the sake of a brother. ‡ One of the requirements for a replacement for Judas Iscariot was to have seen the risen Christ (Acts 1:22). Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "Christ", to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. †† This refers to the sons that Mary had with Joseph after Jesus was born. 'Cephas' was another name for Peter. †† Actually the Text says 'eat', but milk is a liquid; unless it be that Paul is thinking of cheese, that is derived from milk. ††† See Deuteronomy 25:4. ††† Obviously human beings are more important to God than are the animals, but God is telling us to treat the animals with some consideration.

we put up with everything so as not to cause any hindrance to the Gospel of Christ. ¹³ Do you not know that those who minister the sacred things eat from the temple, and those who serve at the altar have a share in the altar? ¹⁴ So also the Lord has instructed those who proclaim the Gospel to live from the Gospel. [§]

To forego a right

¹⁵ Now I have not used any of these rights, nor have I written these things that it should be done so in my case; for it would be better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void ¹⁶—I cannot boast because I preach the Gospel, because I am compelled to do so; indeed, woe is me if I do not preach it! ¹⁷ (If I do this of my own volition, I have a reward; but if otherwise, I have been entrusted with a commission.) ¹⁸ So what is my reward? That when I evangelize I may present the Gospel of Christ ^{§†} without charge, so as not to use my rights in the Gospel. ^{§††}

All things to all men

¹⁹ Though being free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, in order that I might win the more: ²⁰ To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those under law as under law, that I might win those under law; ²¹ to those without law as without law (not being without law toward God but under law toward Christ), that I might win those without law; ²² to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. ²³ Now I do this for the sake of the Gospel, so as to become its partner. ^{§†}

Even an apostle can be rejected

²⁴ Do you not know that in a stadium race all the runners run, but one gets the prize? Run like that, so that you may win. ²⁵ All athletic competitors exercise general self-control—they do it in order to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one. ²⁶ So that is how I 'run', with a definite goal; that is how I fight, with well-aimed blows. ²⁷ Yes, I discipline my body and

[§] *When was that? When Jesus sent out the twelve and later the seventy, He told them not to take money but to depend on the hospitality of those to whom they ministered. Later on, however, He reversed that instruction, but "to live" refers to basic needs, not luxury. §† Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit "of Christ", to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. §†† If you only do something because you are compelled, because you can't get out of it, you get no credit for it. Paul preaches the Gospel because he has to, he is compelled, so gets no credit. But Paul wants some credit, some reward! So how can he get it? Not by preaching, since that is obligatory—by preaching without charge! Paul has the right to charge but foregoes it so as to get some credit/reward. Evidently this was rather important to him (verse 15)—I confess that I don't understand why he said it would be better to die. §‡ If you are a partner, you get a share of the profits; evidently Paul's share was being deposited in the Bank of Heaven.*

bring it into subjection, lest, having preached to others, I myself should be rejected. †

Learn from Israel

10 Now I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea ²—all were baptized into Moses by the cloud and by the sea— ³ and all ate the same spiritual food ⁴ and drank the same spiritual drink; because they kept drinking from a spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that Rock was the Christ. ††⁵ For all that, God was not pleased with most of them—their *carcasses* were scattered around the desert! ‡

Examples

⁶ Now these things became examples for us, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. ⁷ And do not become idolaters, just like some of them; as it is written: “The people sat down to eat and drink, and got up to amuse themselves.” ††⁸ And let us not fornicate, just as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand died! ††⁹ Neither let us test the Christ, just as also some of them did—and were destroyed by the snakes! †††¹⁰ And do not grumble, just as also some of them did—and were executed by the destroyer! †††

¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples and were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends [§] of the ages have come. ¹² So then, let him who thinks he stands be careful that he does not fall! ¹³ No testing ^{§†} has overtaken you except what is common to man, and God is competent, ^{§††} who will not allow you to be tested beyond what you can stand, but

† This is a strong term. If Paul was concerned, we had better be too! Note that this has to do with disciplining the BODY. †† I would say that wherever Jehovah appears in the Old Testament it is Jehovah the Son, who became the Christ at His incarnation. But in what sense did they keep “drinking from a spiritual rock that accompanied them”? The physical rock did not move around, presumably, but the “spiritual rock” did. ‡ The apostle is not concerned to spare our sensibilities; quite the contrary. He is issuing a very strong warning. God's blessing does not necessarily indicate His approval. †† See Exodus 32:6. †† See Numbers 25:1-9. Another thousand died after the first day, giving a total of twenty-four thousand deaths. ††† See Numbers 21:6-9. ††† See Numbers 14:37 and 16:49. Just because God is no longer striking us down like that, people think they are getting away with doing the same things. They are in for an unpleasant surprise. If the examples were written “for our admonition”, it is because they are still relevant to us. § One would expect the singular here, but the Text is plainly plural. Well, I suppose each of the ages (plural) would have a distinct end, and the effect could be cumulative. §† The Greek word here can mean either ‘test’ or ‘tempt’ (test with a moral nuance), depending on the context. James 1:13 states plainly that God does not tempt us, and since in this context God is clearly involved, the correct choice is ‘test’. §†† The best line of transmission (albeit representing only a third of the manuscripts) has ‘competent’ rather than ‘faithful’; that fits very well with the idea of testing, especially if it is God who is doing it.

with the testing will also provide the way out, that you may be able to endure it. §†

Eschew idolatry!

¹⁴ Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry! ¹⁵ I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. §†¹⁶ The cup of blessing that we bless, §† is it not a sharing of the blood of Christ? §† The bread that we break, is it not a sharing of the body of Christ? §†¹⁷ Since the loaf is one, we, the many, are one body, because we all partake of that single loaf. §†¹⁸ Consider the physical Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices partakers of the altar?

Idol = demon

¹⁹ So what am I getting at? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? ²⁰ Rather, that the things pagans sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do NOT want you to become participants with the demons. §§²¹ You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. ²² Are we going to provoke the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

About conscience

²³ All things are ‘permissible’ for me, ¹⁸ but not all things are expedient. All things are ‘permissible’ for me, but not all things edify. ²⁴ Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's *well-being*. ²⁵ Eat whatever is being sold in the meat market, asking no question for the sake of conscience; ²⁶ since “the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness.” ¹⁹²⁷ If some unbeliever invites you and you decide to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no questions for the sake of conscience. ²⁸ But if anyone says, “This was offered to idols,” do not eat it for the sake of the speaker and of the conscience; since “the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness.”

§† This is an important declaration, although I suppose we have all had moments when we wondered if we would continue to ‘stand’. The Text affirms that there will always be a way out—not always easy to ‘see’. §†† This is cataphoric; they are to judge what follows. §† Those officiating bless the ‘cup’, which then blesses those who partake. Yes, to partake worthily brings blessing. §† Although one finds it difficult to agree with the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation, that the words of the one officiating transform the wine into literal blood, Paul evidently takes a very serious view of the ‘Lord's Table’. It is not a mere symbolism. §†† “The body of Christ” here refers to His physical body on the cross, just as “the blood of Christ” refers to His blood shed on the cross. §§† Evidently they did not cut/break the bread up into little pieces beforehand—there was a whole loaf on the table. §§§ Obviously demons exist. The visible idols represent invisible demons. When you worship an idol you subordinate yourself to its demon. There are ‘idols’ that are not physical images. ¹⁸ Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts omit “for me” (both times in this verse), to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. The difference in meaning is significant. ¹⁹ See Psalm 24:1.

†29 'Conscience' I say, not your own but that of the other.

Do all to the glory of God

Now just why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience? ³⁰ If I partake with thanks, why be slandered over something I give thanks for? ^{†31} Therefore, whether you eat or you drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. ^{‡32} Give no offense, either to Jews or to Greeks or to the Church of God ^{‡‡33}—even as I try to please everyone in every way, not seeking my own profit but that of the many, that they may be saved.

11 Become my imitators, just as I am Christ's. [‡]

The nature of Church life

About women

² Now I praise you, brothers, that you remember me in all things and hold the traditions just as I delivered them to you. ³ But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, while a wife's head is the man and Christ's head is God. ⁴ Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. ⁵ But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head *un*covered dishonors her own head—it is one and the same as if it had been shaved. ⁶ So if a woman does not cover herself, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. ^{‡‡}

⁷ Indeed, a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; ^{‡‡‡} but woman is the glory of man. ^{§8} For man did not come from woman,

† At first blush this repetition of the quote seems out of place. I suppose Paul's point to be that the stated truth cuts both ways: it allows me to eat or to refrain. Indeed, some 8% of the Greek manuscripts omit the repetition, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.

†† Paul wants to avoid being slandered, even if it is for doing something good and legitimate. ‡ Here is a basic principle that furnishes us with the key for deciding about doubtful things, and things produced by modern technology that are not mentioned in the Bible. If I want to go watch a movie, I should ask myself, "Why do I want to do this? Is it for the glory of God?" If I want to buy a new, super-duper cell phone, I should ask the same questions. If we really want to please God, we will give an honest answer and act accordingly. ‡† This text makes clear that during the Church Age there are three categories of people: Jews, non-Jews and the Church (made up of both Jews and non-Jews who are in Christ). Before Pentecost there were two categories: Jews and non-Jews. There are those who think that after Pentecost there were still just two: Church and non-Church, wherein the Church replaced Israel. But it is not so; Israel still exists as a separate entity in God's plan. Chapters nine, ten and eleven of Romans go into some detail on this point. ‡‡ Well now, how many of us would have the nerve to say that to someone? It is a good goal to aim for. ‡‡† This does not make for very popular teaching nowadays, but there it is. But is it "shameful" before God, or before men? If only before men, it is not sin. ‡‡‡ Paul would appear to be saying that the male represents the image of God in a way that the female does not. § If woman is

but woman from man; ⁹ and neither was man created for the woman, but woman for the man ^{§†10}—for this reason the woman needs to have authority upon her head, because of the angels ^{§††}— ¹¹ nevertheless, in the Lord neither is man independent of woman nor woman independent of man. ¹² Because as the woman came from the man, so also the man comes through the woman; ^{§‡} but all things are from God.

¹³ Judge among yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God uncovered? ¹⁴ Does not nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? ¹⁵ But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her, because that hair has been given for a covering.

¹⁶ But if anyone decides to be contentious, neither we nor the congregations of God have any other practice. ^{§††}

About the Lord's Supper

Some local abuses

¹⁷ Now in giving the following instruction I do not praise you, since you are not coming together for the better but for the worse. ¹⁸ Because, to begin, I hear that when you come together in an assembly there are divisions among you, and I partly believe it. ¹⁹ For there would really need to be factions among you so that the 'approved' ones may be recognized among you. ^{§†}

²⁰ So when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. ²¹ Because in eating, each one tries to get his meal first, ^{§‡} and one goes hungry while another gets drunk! ²² Now really, do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise God's congregation, and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? Indeed not!

the glory of man, how is man the glory of God? Might it have something to do with the Bride? §† The Creator's purpose in making the woman was to give the man an appropriate helper, which means that it is the man who is supposed to have a project, to which his wife is supposed to contribute. §†† I believe verse ten constitutes an aside that derives from verse nine, not from verses five and six. The general practice in the versions of adding 'symbol of' before 'authority' is unwarranted, and does damage to the Text. The woman was created for the man, but since there are no female angels, the angels are very fascinated by the female of our species (remember Genesis 6). For this reason women need the protection of male authority. (Those feminists who peremptorily reject any semblance of male authority are just asking for a demon, and what little demon is going to object?) §‡ That is to say, every man since Adam receives birth through a woman. §†† Back in verse 2 above Paul mentions 'traditions', and traditions are not the same as commandments. To disobey God's commands is sin, but what of disobeying a tradition? The impression I gain is that disobeying a tradition is not sin, although it does have consequences. §† I take it that Paul is using a bit of irony here, but maybe not—to have levels of society in a congregation there must be criteria to define such levels. But does God want levels of society in a congregation? §‡ Compare verses 33-34 below.

How the Lord inaugurated it

²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also transmitted to you: The Lord Jesus, during the night in which He was betrayed, took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said: "Take, eat; this is my body that is being broken † on your behalf; do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way, after they had dined, He took the cup, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death, †† until He comes.

Be careful to partake worthily

²⁷ So then whoever eats this bread or drinks the Lord's cup unworthily ‡ will be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. ²⁸ But let a man examine himself, and then let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ Because he who eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks judgment to himself, not distinguishing the Lord's †† body. ³⁰ Because of this many among you are weak and sick, and a good many have died. ††

³¹ If we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. ³² But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord, so that we may not be condemned with the world. †††

³³ So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. ³⁴ But if anyone is hungry, let

† The eclectic Greek text currently in vogue omits 'take, eat' (following 8.3% of the Greek manuscripts) and 'broken' (following some 2% of the manuscripts); and so NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. do the same. †† The bread and the cup have to do with the physical body that died on the cross, not with the Church. ‡ About 1.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "unworthily", to be followed by NIV, NASB, TEV, etc. †† The eclectic Greek text currently in vogue omits 'Lord's' (following just 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, to be followed in turn by such versions as NASB and LB). Here in Brazil there are many who claim, based on this variant, that 'the body' here is the church, not Jesus' physical body. So they walk around, trading bread and wine with each other, laughing, talking, slapping each other on the back, having a general good time [their way of distinguishing the church]. Surely the appropriate way to 'remember the Lord's death' is to be in an attitude of penitent thanksgiving, confessing any sin, renewing one's commitment—this is something you do alone with God. Those who party instead of examine may well discover that they were partaking unworthily. †† Ever since the Flood the Creator has imposed and exacted the death penalty for those who shed innocent blood (Genesis 9:5-6). There are dozens of passages in the Old Testament that deal with the theme of blood guiltiness. Here are a few: Genesis 21:12, "shall surely be put to death"; Exodus 21:14, a murderer was even to be dragged away from the altar and killed; Numbers 35:31, "you shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer, ...he shall surely be put to death"; 2 Kings 24:4, "he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the Lord would not pardon

††† Remember Hebrews 12:6.

him eat at home, lest you come together into judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

About spiritual gifts

12 Now concerning the spiritual things, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. ² You know that when you were pagans you were always led toward the mute idols, ††† being carried away. ³ Therefore I inform you that no one speaking by God's Spirit calls Jesus accursed, and no one can declare Jesus to be Lord § except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴ Now there are allotments of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ And there are allotments of ministries, and the same Lord. ⁶ And there are allotments of activities, but the same God is He who works them all, in all. §†† But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the common good. §††

A list of gifts

⁸ So to one a word of wisdom is given, by the Spirit; to another a word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; ⁹ to a different one faith, by the same Spirit; to another presents of healings, §† by the same Spirit; ¹⁰ to another workings of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discernings of spirits; §†† to a different one kinds §† of languages, to another interpretation of languages. ¹¹ However, the one and the same Spirit produces all of these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. §†

††† By whom or what? I would say that it was by Satan's emissaries, in one way or another. § Of course anyone, including demons, can mouth the phrase, 'Jesus is Lord'; Paul is talking about personal commitment. §† If gifts, ministries and activities are all allotted by God, then the life of any congregation is supposed to be under His direct control. §†† Nothing that God gives is with the intent of feeding our ego. §† There is no such thing as 'the gift of healing', at least not in the Text. 'Healings' is always a noun, not a verb, and is always plural; 'gifts' is also always plural, never singular. So the Spirit distributes gifts or presents of healings. That said, it also appears to be true that certain people receive an unusual number of such presents, giving rise to a 'ministry of healing'. §†† Why 'discernings' (pl), which is what the Text says? I suppose one could say it was discerning at different times, but if a gift is used more than once, that meaning is automatic. Could it refer to the different kinds of spirit beings? I can think of five: the Holy Spirit, good angels, demons (fallen angels), a normal human spirit, and a projected human spirit (all of which are usually invisible to us, which is why special discernment is needed). I would now say that humanoids (demon with woman) should be added to the list. §† The Text plainly says 'kinds' (plural) of languages. I never understood this until I heard a student of mine using more than one language. I am a linguist (PhD) and I know when I am listening to a real language (it has structure). This student had (and presumably still has) one language for worship, another for intercession, another for warfare, and I think there was at least one more—they were very different, but were clearly real languages. Later I got to know a competent surgeon who has at least four languages. Whoever claims to have the gift of tongues should have more than one; after all, in all Bibles 'tongues' is plural, and plural means more than one. §† No one gets a gift just because he wants it; the Holy Spirit has His own criteria for distributing them. However, in verse 31 below we are com-

An analogy from the body

¹² Now just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of that one body, though being many, are one body, so also is the Christ. ¹³ For we also were all baptized into one body by one Spirit †—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and were all given to drink into one Spirit. ††¹⁴ For in fact the body is not one part but many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” it would not therefore cease to be of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” it would not therefore cease to be of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would the smelling be? ¹⁸ But God has really placed the members in the body, each one of them, just as He pleased. †††¹⁹ (If the whole were just one member, where would the body be? ²⁰ But in fact the parts are many but the body one.) ††

²¹ Further, the eye cannot say to the hand, “I do not need you”; nor again the head to the feet, “I do not need you.” ²² Much to the contrary, those members of the body that seem to be weaker are necessary. ²³ And the parts of the body that we consider to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentables have special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentables do not need it. Yes, God has blended the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacks it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another; ²⁶ and if one member suffers, all the members should suffer along, or if one member is honored, all the members should rejoice along. ††

Functions in the Church

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. ²⁸ And those whom God has appointed in the Church are: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; after that miracles, then ††† presents of heal-

*manded to desire the best gifts. We are to ask, and the Holy Spirit takes it from there. † It is the Holy Spirit who places us into the Body of Christ. †† The imagery here seems awkward; but if you drink something, it is then inside you, and once regenerate we have the Holy Spirit inside us. But He is much, much bigger than we are, so we wind up inside Him (perhaps a little like swallowing water while swimming). † This is true of our physical bodies, but it is also true of any congregation. †† To the ‘Western’ mind this may seem redundant, but recall that Paul was a Jew. Can you imagine a body that is nothing more than a huge, monstrous tongue? †† Since both the *Textus Receptus**

ings, helps, administrations, kinds of languages. ²⁹ All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not miracle workers, are they? ³⁰ All do not have presents of healings, do they? All do not speak languages, do they? All do not interpret, do they? †††³¹ But earnestly desire the best gifts.

About agape love

And now I show you a most excellent way. [§]

13 If I speak the languages of men, even of angels, ^{§†} but have not love, I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, ^{§††} but have

cy]. Next, if God has appointed these functions, there must be a good reason for them, and to deliberately exclude any of them is to go against God. Here in Brazil, with a few exceptions, the churches have no place for teachers; they simply are not allowed. The consequences are not pretty. Presumably even the most ardent ‘cessationist’ will grant that “teachers”, “helps” and “administrations” are still around. But this letter was written around 55 AD, well into the Church Age, therefore. Why would God “appoint in the Church” things that would be extinguished in a few decades. If miracles come “after” teachers, how can miracles be gone if teachers are still here? We have the command to “earnestly desire the best gifts”, so which ones are the best? Presumably those at the top of the hierarchical list. Why would God command us to earnestly desire a gift like apostleship, if He was going to extinguish it before the end of the first century? In such an event the command would be meaningless for the last 1900 years! ††† The Greek grammar of verses 29 and 30 is plain: no gift is given to everybody—not everyone is an apostle and not everyone speaks languages. Those churches that teach that speaking in tongues is the NECESSARY sign of being ‘baptized in the Spirit’ (and until you are ‘baptized’ you are a 2nd class citizen, if a citizen at all), have done untold damage to their people. Since the Holy Spirit simply does not give ‘tongues’ to everybody, those who do not get it are out in the cold. But the social pressure is intolerable, so many end up faking it. Since many of the leaders are also faking it, the social problem is solved; the person is ‘in’. But since Satan is the source of all lies, someone who fakes it is living a lie and invites Satan into his life. I have been in many Pentecostal, neo-pentecostal, charismatic, whatever churches and have heard thousands of people ‘speaking in tongues’—a large majority were faking it, while a few were speaking a real language, but under demonic control. A church that teaches a lie invites Satan into the church, and he does not hesitate. Of course some had the genuine gift. § Most versions oppose love to the gifts, either by calling it ‘more excellent’ or by adding the definite article (that is not in the Text) ‘THE most excellent’. I seriously doubt that the author had that in mind. The term hyperbole

§† I would say that this is an argument a fortiori

§† I would say that this is

††† It should be observed that the terminology here is clearly hierarchical: ‘1st, 2nd, 3rd, then, then...’ (similar lists in other places lack this terminology) [the Kingdom of God is not a democra-

§†† Evidently it takes a

not love, I am nothing. ³ Even if I give away all my possessions and hand over my body to be burned, [†] but have not love, it profits me nothing.

Love described

⁴ Love is patient and kind; love does not envy; love does not brag, is not proud, ⁵ is not indecent, is not self-seeking, is not 'short-fused', is not malicious; ^{††6} it does not take pleasure in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷ it bears all, believes all, hopes all, endures all; ^{‡8} love never fails.

Love contrasted

Now as for prophecies, they will be set aside; as for languages, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will be superseded; ⁹ since we know in part and prophecy in part. ¹⁰ But whenever the complete should come, *THEN* the 'in part' will be done away with. ¹¹ (When I was a small child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; but when I became a man, I put away the things of the child.) ¹² Because *NOW* we see blurred images as in a metal mirror, but *THEN* face to face. *NOW* I know in part, but *THEN* I will know fully, just as I also am fully known. ^{‡†}

special level or quality of faith to actually move a mountain, a level to which I myself have yet to attain. † We have here a rather bothersome set of textual variants. For those who can handle Greek I reproduce the statement of evidence from my Greek Text: καυθησομαι f35 (50.6%) OC || καυθησωμαι C (44.7%) HF,RP,TR,CP || καυθησεται (1%) || καυθη (0.8%) || καυχησωμαι 46(A,B (1.5%) NU || καυχησομαι 048 (0.5%) || four further variants (0.8%). Until 1991, when the collations for select variant sets done by the Institute for New Testament Textual Research in Münster, Germany appeared, statements of evidence presented the Future Subjunctive form (that of the Textus Receptus

Textus Receptus

^{††} All the negative qualities mentioned derive from self. [‡] Wow! But presumably agape

^{‡†} Verses 8b-10 have received more than their fair share of mistreatment, partly because commentators have not linked verse 12 to them (seeing verse 11 as parenthetical). Consider verse 10: "But whenever the complete should come, *THEN* the 'in part' will be done away with." If we can pinpoint the 'then', we will have also pinpointed the 'when'; and verse 12 pinpoints the 'then'. When will we see 'face to face', when will we know as we are known? 1 John 3:2 has the answer: "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." It is at the return of Christ that we will see 'face to face', so "whenever the complete should come" refers to Christ at His second coming. The problem with 'prophecy', 'tongues' and our present 'knowledge' is that they are 'in part', but after the return of Christ we will have no further need for them.

¹³ For now these three obtain: faith, hope, love; and the greatest of these is love. ^{‡†}

Prophecy is better than Tongues

14 Pursue love, and desire the spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. ² Because he who speaks in a 'language' is not speaking to people but to God, since no one understands; in spirit he speaks mysteries. ³ But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to people. ^{‡††4} The one speaking in a 'language' edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the congregation. ⁵ I could wish ^{‡††} that you all spoke in 'languages', but even more that you might prophesy; because the one prophesying is greater than the one speaking in 'languages' [§] (unless he interprets), ^{§†} so that the congregation may receive edification.

Messages need to be intelligible

⁶ Now then, brothers, what good will I do you if I come to you speaking in 'languages' instead of addressing you with revelation, or with knowledge, or with prophecy, or with teaching? ⁷ Take lifeless things like a flute or a harp; if they make no distinction in the notes when they produce sound, how will it be known what is being piped or harped? ⁸ Also a trumpet; if it gives an indistinct sound, who will prepare for battle? ⁹ So it is with you: if you do not deliver an intelligible message with the 'language', how will it be known what is being said? You will just be speaking into the air. ¹⁰ There are probably a great many kinds of sounds in the world, and none of them is without significance.

Since Christ has not returned yet, these 'in part' things are still certainly with us. The claim that 'the complete' refers to the completed New Testament canon and that the miraculous gifts ceased when the last shovel of dirt fell on the Apostle John's grave is an historical falsehood, besides doing violence to the Text. Christians who lived during the 2nd, 3rd and 4th centuries, whose writings have come down to us, affirm that the gifts were still in use in their day. No 20th or 21st century Christian, who was not there

charismata

^{‡††} We will not need faith and hope in Heaven, but love will continue. ^{‡††} Prophecy is not only for foretelling the future, but all true prophecy comes directly from God. Many churches today give 'prophecy/prophecy' an unbiblical meaning, wherein the people tell each other all the good things they hope will happen to them. That is just wishful thinking, not true prophecy. ^{‡††} The verb here is ambiguous as to mode; it could be either Indicative or Subjunctive. Since Paul has already stated that not everyone receives 'languages', and that the Holy Spirit distributes as He chooses, the Subjunctive is the correct choice. [§] For someone to argue that he is being humble in seeking and using the lesser gift will not pass muster, because in 12:31 we are **COMMANDED** to seek the best gifts. ^{§†} According to verse 27 below, only one interpreter should perform his function during a given meeting. So if someone says he is going to interpret his own language, he must have the genuine gift and be able to interpret any other languages. (I have witnessed no end of people faking a language and then faking its interpretation.)

¹¹ But if I do not know the force of the sound, I will be a foreigner to the speaker, and he will be a foreigner to me.

¹² And you too: since you are zealous for spiritual things, aim at the edification of the congregation, that you may *all* grow. ¹³ Therefore the one speaking in a 'language' should pray that he may interpret. ¹⁴ For if I pray in a 'language', my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. ¹⁵ So what then? I will pray with the spirit, but I will also pray with the mind; I will sing with the spirit, but I will also sing with the mind. ¹⁶ Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the outsider say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷ You, of course, give thanks quite well, but the other is not edified.

Paul's example

¹⁸ I thank my God speaking in 'languages' more than you all, ¹⁹ but in the congregation I would rather speak five words with my understanding, precisely so as to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a 'language'.

²⁰ Brothers, stop thinking like children—well, in malice be 'infants', but in thinking be adults. ²¹ In the law it stands written:

"I will speak to this people in foreign languages and with different 'lips', but not even then will they listen to me," [†] says the LORD.

²² Therefore the 'languages' are for a sign, not to believers but to unbelievers; ^{††} while prophesying ^{‡‡} is not for unbelievers but for believers. ²³ So if the whole congregation comes together and all are speaking in 'languages', but outsiders or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are raving? ²⁴ But if everyone is prophesying, and an unbeliever or outsider comes in, he is reproved by all, he is examined by all. ²⁵ And thus the secrets of his heart are exposed, and so, falling on his face he will worship God, affirming, "Truly God is among you!"

[†] I do not understand this, since someone with the gift of interpretation does not need to ask. If no interpreter is present, perhaps the speaker could ask God to give him the interpretation. ^{††} Since Paul obviously would not use a 'language' in public, he made heavy use of them when alone with God. People who follow Paul's example have told me that it recharges their spiritual 'battery' in short order. No wonder Paul did it! [‡] See Isaiah 28:11-12 and Deuteronomy 28:49. ^{‡‡} Like on the day of Pentecost, to be a 'sign' a 'language' would have to be one that the unbeliever knew, but that the speaker would have no way of knowing. If the unbeliever thinks you are raving (verse 23), where is the 'sign'? To argue that 'tongues' is the sign that you have been 'baptized in the Spirit' does not follow from this verse, since that would be for believers. ^{‡‡‡} The term here can mean either 'prophecy' or 'prophesying'; the context calls for the second option. God normally speaks through believers, not unbelievers.

There are limits

²⁶ So what goes on, brothers? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a 'language', has a revelation, has an interpretation. ^{‡‡‡} Let all things be done for edification. ²⁷ If anyone speaks in a 'language', let it be two—at the most three—and in turn, and let *ONE* interpret. ^{‡‡‡28} But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church; let him speak to himself and to God. ²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others evaluate. ^{§30} But if another who is sitting by receives a revelation, the first should stop speaking. ³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be encouraged. ³² Yes, spirits of prophets are subordinate to prophets. ^{§†33} Further, God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

Wives are not to speak

As in all the congregations of the saints, ³⁴ your wives ^{§††} should keep silent in the assemblies, for they are not permitted to speak, but to be in subordination, as the law also says. ³⁵ If they want to learn about something, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is shameful for women to speak in church. ^{§†36} Or was it from you that the Word of God went forth? Or was it only to you that it came? ^{§††}

Paul gets 'authoritative'

³⁷ If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write to you are the Lord's commands. ^{§†38} But if anyone is ignorant, let him remain so. ^{§†}

^{‡‡‡} Can it be that there was a little competition going on? ^{‡‡‡} Since someone with the gift of interpreting can interpret any and all such utterances, there should be only one interpreter at work during a particular session. [§] Prophecy must always be evaluated. ^{§†} A prophet cannot control what messages he receives from God, but he can control when and how he delivers them (and may even decide not to). ^{§††} The eclectic Greek text currently in vogue omits 'your' (following some 3% of the Greek manuscripts), which allows the translation 'women' rather than 'wives', as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. Since 'wives' excludes single women, the difference is significant. ^{§‡} The crucial factor here is authority, and the underlying need is to protect the structure of the home, the foundational unit of society, including the church. If a woman teaches her husband in church, crossing the street to their house will not make her want to submit to him; the human being just does not work that way. That is why the Text does not allow for female pastors or teachers, since to teach is to exercise authority. But here in verses 34 and 35 Paul goes even further; to protect the husbands' authority, wives should not publicly request an explanation from pastor or teacher, since that could allow a wife to play the teacher against her husband in the home. If a wife requests an explanation from her husband, and he does not know the answer, he can consult the pastor and then transmit the explanation—this preserves the authority structure in the home (which goes back to Genesis 3:16). ^{§††} Either of these situations would constitute a special privilege, which could give rise to a little spiritual pride. ^{§†} Was Paul on an ego trip, or was he aware that he was writing under inspiration? Since he says something simi-

³⁹ So then, brothers, seek to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in 'languages'. ^{†40} Let all things be done properly and in order.

About resurrection

A review

15 Now, brothers, I want to add information to the Gospel that I proclaimed to you, that you also received, and in which you stand; ² through which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word that I proclaimed to you—unless you believed in vain. ^{††3} Because I transmitted to you at first that which I also received: [‡] that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the Twelve. ^{††6} After that He was seen by over five hundred brothers at once, most of whom are still living, while some have fallen asleep. ^{††7} After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸ And last of all He was seen by me also, like one born out of season. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me has not been in vain; in fact, I have worked harder than all of them—well, not I, but the grace of God that was with me. ¹¹ So whether it was I or they, thus we preached and thus you believed.

Resurrection is a fact

¹² Now if Christ is being proclaimed as having been raised from among the dead, how can some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is empty, and so is your faith! ¹⁵ Further, we are even discovered to be false witnesses of God, because we have testified about God that He raised the Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact

lar in a number of his letters, it is clear that he believed he was writing Scripture. §‡ I do not understand this. If the definition of "ignorant" here is one who does not do the acknowledging required in verse 37, then Paul may be saying that such a person is not worth arguing with. † Here is the inspired conclusion to the extended discussion of the charismatic gifts. Isn't it strange that most churches disobey this verse, in one way or another? 'Traditional' churches tend to forbid not only tongues but also prophecy (to 'seek' it is totally out of the question). 'Pentecostal' churches generally elevate tongues above prophecy, which is plainly contrary to the Text. †† Is this just a 'scarecrow'? ‡ Received from whom? From God, either directly, or indirectly (through people like Peter). †† Evidently 'the Twelve' became like a technical term to refer to the recognized group of apostles. When Jesus first appeared to that group during the evening of Resurrection Day, there were actually only ten present—the Iscariot was no longer a member and Thomas was absent. †† A euphemism for death used mainly of believers in the New Testament.

the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if no dead are raised, neither has Christ been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is useless; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If it is only for this life that we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable. ^{††}

The sequence of events

²⁰ But indeed, Christ has been raised from the dead; He became the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, resurrection of the dead also came through a man. ^{††22} For as all in Adam are dying, so also all in the Christ will be made alive. ^{§23} But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then those who belong to Christ at His coming; ²⁴ then the end, ^{§†} when He hands over the Kingdom to the God and Father, whenever He puts an end to every ruler and all authority and power. ²⁵ Because it is necessary that He reign until He has put all the enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. ^{§††27} For "He has put all things under His feet." ^{§†} But when it says that all things have been subordinated, it is obvious that He who put all things under Him is excepted. ²⁸ Now whenever all things have been subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subjected to Him who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.

Consequences of denial

²⁹ Otherwise, what will they do who are being baptized in place of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, just why are they being baptized in the place of the dead? ^{§††30} And why do we face danger every hour? ³¹ I die every day ^{§†}—so I affirm by the boasting about you that I have in Christ Jesus our Lord. ³² If I fought hu-

††† We would be 'pitiable' because of contrast between reality and our expectations—our high hopes would be dashed; the higher the hopes, the greater the disappointment. The Christian lifestyle is the best available, even without a resurrection. Paul comes at the question from several angles precisely because the resurrection of Christ is the center piece of our faith. Without it there is no Gospel. ††† Although Jesus was God, it was as a man that He defeated Satan. § Since all human beings are in Adam, all are dying; but it is only those who are in Christ who will be made alive. §† The 'first' resurrection refers to that of the saved (the 'second' being that of the lost), and apparently occurs in three stages: 1) Christ, the firstfruits, and those He took with Him at that time; 2) the Rapture; 3) after the Millennium. §†† Death is definitely our enemy, having been introduced into human experience by sin. §‡ See Psalm 8:6. §†† To be 'dead', they were once alive, and will be judged on the basis of what they did while alive; once dead their account is closed. So Paul is here presumably referring to those who are replacing the dead in the ranks of believers by being baptized. If there is no resurrection, what is the point of doing so, especially if all you are going to get is persecution? §† Paul could not have been referring to actual physical death, obviously, since Hebrews 9:27 affirms that it is appointed to men to die only once (no reincarnation). He may well have faced possible death often enough, but I suppose he is referring to dying to himself, to his own ambitions, ideas and wishes, so as to embrace God's will.

man ‘animals’ in Ephesus, † what did I gain? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!” ††³³ Stop kidding yourselves: evil associations corrupt good habits. †³⁴ Sober up righteously, and stop sinning, for some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame. †

A philosophical objection

³⁵ But someone will say, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” ³⁶ Ignorant, what you plant is not brought to life unless it dies. ³⁷ And what you plant is a bare seed (perhaps of wheat or some one of the others); you do not plant the body that it will become. ³⁸ But God gives it a body just as He determined, to each of the seeds its own body. ³⁹ All flesh is not the same flesh: that of humans is one kind, and the flesh of animals is another, †† that of fish is another, that of birds is yet another. ⁴⁰ There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the heavenly is one, while that of the earthly is another. ⁴¹ There is one splendor of the sun, another splendor of the moon, and another splendor of the stars; and star differs from star in brightness.

⁴² The resurrection of the dead is like that: the body is ‘planted’ in deterioration and it is raised in incorruptibility; ⁴³ it is ‘planted’ in dishonor and it is raised in glory; it is ‘planted’ in weakness and it is raised in power; ⁴⁴ it is ‘planted’ a natural body and it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. ††

⁴⁵ So also it is written: “The first man, Adam, became a living being”; ††† the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was of the earth, of soil; the second man was the Lord ††† from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the earth-man, just so are the earth-people; and as was the heaven-man, just so are the

† Many versions have Paul actually fighting wild animals, but had he done so as a punishment in an arena, he would have lost his Roman citizenship, which he claimed to have until the end. (And presumably the only place in the city of Ephesus where you could fight with wild animals would be in the arena.) The Text has ‘against man’, that the above mentioned versions give as ‘for human purposes’ or ‘in the manner of men’. But 16:9 refers to many adversaries in Ephesus, and if their tactics were especially nasty, Paul may have felt it appropriate to liken them to animals. †† See Isaiah 22:13. † Dear me, what is Paul saying? As long as anyone around us does not know about God, we should be ashamed. Since he speaks of ‘evil associations’ and ‘sobering up’, I suppose that they had not made a clean break with their surrounding culture, and their former associates were not seeing all that much difference in their lifestyle. A clean break would require an explanation. †† Human meat is not the same as animal meat! †† The spiritual body is still a body. Verses 42-44 are describing the saved, not the lost. ††† See Genesis 2:7. ††† The eclectic Greek text currently in vogue omits ‘the Lord’ (following 2.4% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality); and so NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. do the same—now really, to omit ‘the Lord’ is clearly an inferior reading, and to do so on such slender evidence is irresponsible and reprehensible.

heaven-people. ⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the image of the earth-man, we should also bear the image of the heaven-man. §

Our turn is coming

⁵⁰ Now this I say, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither will deterioration inherit incorruptibility. ⁵¹ And now, I tell you a mystery: we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed ⁵²—in a split second, in an eye twinkle, at the last trumpet—the trumpet will blast and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. ⁵³ Because this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So whenever this corruptible puts on incorruption and this mortal puts on immortality, then this written word will happen: “Death has been swallowed down into victory.” ††

⁵⁵ “Where, O Death, is your sting?

Where, O Hades, is your victory?” †††

⁵⁶ The stinger of death is sin, and the adjunct of sin is the law.

⁵⁷ Now thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! ⁵⁸ So then, my dear brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Concluding topics

About a special collection

16 Now concerning the collection for the saints, you must do just as I instructed the congregations in Galatia. ² On the first day of the week, each of you should set something aside, saving up as he is being prospered, that there be no collections when I come. ³ And when I arrive, I will send whomever you approve by letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴ But should it be fitting that I go as well, they will go with me. ††

Personal plans

⁵ Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am coming through Macedonia). ⁶ And perhaps I will stay with you awhile, or even winter, that you may send me on my way, wherever I go. ⁷ I do not wish to see you now just in passing, since I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. ⁸ So

§ Since both the Textus Receptus

†† See Isaiah 25:8. This whole paragraph is addressed to “brothers” (verse 50). ††† See Hosea 13:14. Hades is not the Lake of fire. Less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have ‘death’, instead of “Hades”, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. †† Paul clearly considers that he is in charge.

I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹ because a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

This and that

¹⁰ Now if Timothy should come, see to it that he may be with you without fear, [†] because he does the Lord's work just as I do. ¹¹ Therefore no one should despise him; ^{††} but send him on his way in peace, that he may come to me; I am expecting him along with the brothers. [‡]

¹² Now about brother Apollos: I repeatedly urged him to go to you with the brothers, but he just did not want to go at this time; he will go whenever he has an opportunity.

¹³ Watch! Stand firm in the faith! Be courageous! Be strong! ¹⁴ Do all you do in love.

¹⁵ Now brothers, you know that the household of Stephanas is the firstfruits of Achaia and that they have really devoted themselves to ministering to the saints, ¹⁶ so I urge you to submit to such people, to all the fellow-workers and laborers. ¹⁷ I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they have supplied;

[†] Presumably about having his physical needs supplied. ^{††} I suppose it could be because he was young. [‡] In passing we may note that there was evidently quite a bit of traffic between the congregations in different places.

¹⁸ for they refreshed my spirit and yours; so give recognition to such men.

Final greetings

¹⁹ The congregations of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla, with the congregation in their house, greet you warmly in the Lord. ²⁰ All the brothers greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

²¹ I, Paul, personally sign this greeting. ^{‡‡22} If anyone does not love [#] our Lord Jesus Christ, ^{‡‡‡} let him be accursed. The Lord is coming! ^{‡‡‡}

²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

²⁴ My love is with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

^{‡†} The letter was dictated to a scribe or secretary, but Paul wrote the last bit himself; this was his signature, authenticating the letter.

^{‡‡} The verb here is φιλεω αγαπω

^{‡‡†} The eclectic Greek text currently in vogue omits 'Jesus Christ' (following some 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality); and so NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. do the same—ho hum. I have supplied 'our' on the basis of 58% of the manuscripts, including the best line of transmission. ^{‡‡‡} All commentators appear to be in agreement that Maranatha

2 Corinthians

Opening Considerations

Greeting

1 Paul, apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and brother Timothy, [†] to the church ^{††} of God that is in Corinth, together with all the saints throughout Achaia: ² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and Sovereign [‡] Jesus Christ.

Praise for deliverance

³ All praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion ^{‡†} and God of all encouragement, ⁴ who encourages us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in whatever affliction, by means of the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God. ^{‡‡5} Because just as the sufferings of the Christ flow over into us, ^{‡‡†} so also our encouraging overflows, through Christ. ⁶ Now then, if we are afflicted, it is for the sake of your encouragement and deliverance, that are effective for enduring the same sufferings that we also are suffering ⁷ (yes, our hope concerning you is steadfast); ^{‡‡‡} if we are encouraged, it *also* is for the sake of your encouragement and deliverance, since we know that you will share in the encouragement just as you do in the sufferings. [§]

⁸ And so, brothers, we do not want you to be in ignorance concerning the affliction that came upon us in

[†] *He acknowledges a junior partner.* ^{††} *Since there were probably several local congregations meeting in homes in Corinth, not to mention “throughout Achaia”, I have rendered “church”. Note that Paul obviously intended that his letter have a wide circulation. Rather than give up their copy, would not the congregation that received the ‘original’ set about making verified copies to distribute to other locales? (Such a procedure would give us the beginnings of a ‘majority text’ in that region from the start.)* [‡] *Where ‘Lord’ occurs without the definite article, as here, I usually render ‘Sovereign’; with either ‘the’ or ‘our’ I usually render ‘Lord’.* ^{‡†} *Literally, ‘the compassions’ or ‘the mercies’.* I suppose the point to be that He is the Source of all genuine compassion (you won’t get any from Satan). ^{‡‡} *One important reason God sends suffering our way is so that we can help others later.* ^{‡‡†} *We get our share of suffering, we participate in Christ’s sufferings—Colossians 1:24 and 1 Peter 4:13. Evidently for God’s Kingdom to increase among men, as we continue to undo Satan’s works in the world, we have to suffer.* ^{‡‡‡} *I take it that he is affirming his confidence that they will not cave in under the suffering.* [§] *We cannot stop people from going through their share of suffering, but we can encourage them.*

Asia: we were under extreme pressure, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life. ⁹ Yes, we ourselves have had the sentence of death within ourselves, so that we not place confidence in ourselves, but in the God who raises the dead; ^{§†10} He did deliver us from that deadly peril, and still delivers; in whom we trust that He will keep on delivering, ¹¹ you also adding your cooperation in prayer, ^{§††} on our behalf; that thanks may be given by many persons for the gift bestowed on us by means of many, on your behalf. ^{§‡}

A change of plans

¹² Now this is our boast: the testimony of our conscience that we have conducted ourselves in the world with openness and godly sincerity, not by fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and especially toward you. ¹³ For we do not write you any other things than what you can read and understand; ^{§††} and I do hope that you will keep on understanding to the end ¹⁴ (as indeed some of you have acknowledged) that we are your boast, just as you are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus. ^{§†}

¹⁵ It was in this confidence that I was planning to come by you first, ¹⁶ and by you to proceed into Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia (that you might benefit twice), ^{§‡} and then to be sent by you on my way to Judea. ^{§§†17} Now then, when I was deciding this, I was not acting frivolously, was I? Or the things I decide, do I decide according to the flesh, so that with me there would be both “Yes, yes” and “No, no”? ¹⁸ As God is faithful, our word to you was not “Yes” and “No”, ^{§§†19} because the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was proclaimed among you by us—by me and Silvanus and Timothy ^{§§§}—was not “Yes” and “No”. In fact, with Him it has *always* been “Yes”, ²⁰ because all the

^{§†} *If you look to the God who heals the sick, it is because you are sick; if you look to the God who raises the dead, it is because you are facing death. Paul evidently figured he had been pretty close.*

^{§††} *Prayer makes a difference.* ^{§‡} *They will get a return on their ‘investment’, the time they spent in prayer. Some 25% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘our behalf’, as in most versions.* ^{§††} *I take it that Paul is saying that he never writes with the intention of obfuscating an issue. That would be a good example for everyone to follow.*

^{§†} *Paul seems to be speaking of a reciprocal boasting, and that before Christ’s Judgment Seat! We probably all know a father and son who are proud of each other; the idea may be similar.* ^{§‡} *The “benefit” is presumably spiritual; Paul seems to be saying that he imparts such benefit wherever he goes. I would like to be able to say the same thing.* ^{§§†} *Here Paul is probably referring to financial help.*

promises of God in Him are “Yes”; indeed, in Him they are “Amen”, that there be glory to God through us.

^{†21} Now He who establishes us together with you into Christ, and who anointed ^{††} us, is God, ²² who also sealed us and gave us the down payment of the Spirit in our hearts. [‡]

The change explained

²³ For my part, I call on God as witness, upon my soul, that it was to spare you that I have not yet returned to Corinth. ²⁴ (Not that we have control over your faith, ^{††} but we work with you for your joy, for it is by faith that you stand firm.)

2 Actually, I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow. ² For if I make you sorrowful, then who will make me glad, besides the one whom I made sorrowful? ³ And I wrote this very thing to you so as not to have sorrow from those who ought to make me rejoice, when I come, having confidence in you all that my joy is also yours.

About the first letter

⁴ Now I wrote to you out of great distress and anguish of heart, with many tears, not that you should be made sorrowful, but that you might know the greatness of my love for you. ⁵ So, if anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has all of you, to some extent—not to be too ‘heavy’. ⁶ This punishment that was inflicted by the majority ^{††} is sufficient to such a one, ⁷ so that now, on the other side, you should forgive and comfort him, so that he not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸ Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him. ^{†††}

⁹ Now I also wrote to this end: to put you to the test, to see whether you are obedient in all things. ¹⁰ If you forgive anyone, I do too; further, if indeed I have forgiven anything to someone, I have done so for your sakes in the presence of Christ, ^{†††11} so that we not be exploited by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his intentions. [§]

^{§§‡} Paul took a clear stand on things; he was not ambiguous. ^{§§§} Paul gives credit to his associates. [†] As we take advantage of the promises, God gets the glory. God's promises are positive, with the ‘yes’. ^{††} The anointing is in the past, but the establishing is an ongoing process—note that it is “*ἰντο*” Christ. [‡] The Holy Spirit in us is like God's brand on us, but is also our guarantee that we have been regenerated. Verses 21-22 refer to all three persons of the Godhead. ^{††} This is an important point: in Matthew 23:8-10 the Lord Jesus forbids any attempt to dominate someone else's faith or conscience. As He said to the Samaritan woman, the Father wants worship in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24)—the worship must not be faked, forced or controlled. ^{†††} Note that it is not necessary for ‘everyone’ to be in agreement with disciplinary action. ^{††††} The purpose of the discipline was to restore, not destroy. ^{†††††} An interesting concept: Paul does the forgiving ‘in the presence of Christ’. He clearly believes that his forgiving, or otherwise, makes a difference. Well, he had ordered the disciplinary action, so it was appropriate for him to address the consequences. [§] Well, at least we shouldn't

An afterthought

¹² Also, upon arriving in Troas for the Gospel of Christ, a door having been opened to me by Sovereign, ^{§†13} I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; so taking leave of them I went on into Macedonia.

We have a glorious ministry

A fragrance of life

¹⁴ Now thanks be to the God who always leads us in triumph in the Christ, ^{§††} and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Him ^{§†} in every place. ¹⁵ Because we are the aroma of Christ for God, among those who are being saved and among those who are being wasted ^{§††}—¹⁶ to these a smell of death into death, while to those a fragrance of life into life ^{§†}—and who is adequate for such things? ¹⁷ However, we are not like the rest ^{§†} who retail ^{§§†} the word of God; rather, we speak in Christ, out of sincerity, as of God in His very presence. ^{§§†}

An aside

3 (Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, ^{§§§} or commendation from you? ² You are our letter, inscribed on our hearts, known and read by all men; ³ you are manifestly a letter of Christ, mediated by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the

be, but how many Christians today really take the enemy seriously? Paul will refer to Satan by name several times. §† If it was the Lord who opened the door, was that not indicative of His will? So did he move on against that will? §†† The title ‘Christ’ is usually accompanied by the definite article, ‘THE Christ’—we are not to forget what the title really means. §‡ The antecedent of the pronoun could be either the Father or the Son, but in this context most likely refers to the Son—getting to know Him is in view. §†† We are accustomed to ‘perishing’. The verb here has a considerable semantic area and can be rendered—destroy, kill, deprive, void, lose, perish—depending on the context, but I believe the root idea is ‘waste’. The only way to fulfill the purpose for which you were created, to realize your potential, is to turn your life over to Jesus. The alternative is to waste your life, both now and forever. Of course the enemy works to make people think the opposite. §† The Gospel of Christ represents both life and death: if you receive it, you get life; if you reject it, you get death. Naturally, those in rebellion against God do not enjoy being reminded that they have chosen death. §‡ The Greek manuscripts are about evenly divided between “the rest” and ‘the many’, but I follow the best line of transmission. §§† A retailer makes his living by buying goods wholesale and reselling them piecemeal, at a profit. In our day there is no lack of those who dole out their teaching, precisely with a view to getting more money out of it. §§‡ To be objectively aware that you are in God's presence does have a way of encouraging you to make the right choices! §§§ Note that the early church used letters of introduction to help them in evaluating new arrivals.

living God, † not on stone tablets but on 'tablets' that are hearts of flesh.)

Competent ministers

⁴ Now we have such confidence before God because of the Christ; ⁵ not that we are competent of ourselves to reckon anything as being from ourselves, but our competence is from God †— ⁶ indeed, He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant; ‡ not of letter but of Spirit, because the letter kills, while the Spirit gives life. ††

A greater glory

⁷ Now if the ministry of death, engraved in letters on stones, came with glory—so that the children of Israel could not gaze at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance (that was fading)— ⁸ how can the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? ⁹ For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, how much more glorious is the ministry of righteousness! ¹⁰ Because what had glory could actually be said to be without glory, compared to the surpassing glory— ¹¹ if what is being set aside had glory, that which is continuing is much more glorious. ††

¹² Therefore, since we have such a hope, we use great boldness of speech— ¹³ *not* like Moses, who put a veil over his own face, so that the children of Israel would not observe the end of what was fading. ††¹⁴ *BUT*, it was their minds that were closed, because to this day that very veil remains in place when the Old Testament is read, since only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Yes, even to this day, when Moses is read a veil lies on their heart. ¹⁶ However, whenever anyone turns to the Lord the veil is removed. ††¹⁷ Now the Spirit is the Lord, † and where the Lord's Spirit is there is freedom. ††¹⁸ So we all, contemplating as in a mirror the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, †† are being transformed

† In some sense all of us are 'letters' that those around us read. To the extent that we invest in others, build into their lives, we contribute to their 'letters'. Of course it is our lives that people see, not what is inscribed on the heart. †† Competence is basic to everything that is done in this world; anything done by an incompetent will almost always be inferior. This is certainly true in the spiritual realm, where work done 'in the flesh' is poor work. ‡ Note that Paul is clearly aware that he is promoting a new covenant. The old covenant was characterized by "letter", while the new is characterized by "Spirit" (or "spirit"). †† I have capitalized 'Spirit', but 'spirit' is also true. The 'spirit' of a message has to do with its purpose, which should take into consideration the local context. †† Paul is being emphatic about the superiority of the new covenant. ††† At first he used the veil because the people found the shine to be disconcerting, but the shine faded, and he kept on using the veil so they couldn't see that it was gone. Any reflected light depends on the source, and constant exposure to that source. ††† Any Jew can escape that veil—here is how. † A clear statement that the Holy Spirit is God. †† "The Truth will make you free" (John 8:32). Several times the Lord Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Truth. ††† Comparing this text with others like Psalm 1:2-3, James 1:22-25, 2:12, Ephesians 6:17 and Hebrews 4:12, I conclude that the

into the same image from glory to glory, precisely from Lord Spirit. ††

But it isn't easy

⁴ Therefore, since we have received mercy along with this ministry, we do not lose heart. ² Rather, we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in deception nor falsifying the Word of God, †† but by the open proclamation of the Truth †† commending ourselves to every man's conscience, in the sight of God. ³ So where our Gospel has actually been concealed, it has been hidden from those who are being wasted, ⁴ among whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, †† so that the light of

'mirror' here refers to God's Word. As we spend time in the Word with "unveiled face" (sincerely open to what it says), the Holy Spirit moves us up from one plane of glory to another—the goal is "the same image". †† Had Paul been writing in Hebrew, I imagine we would have 'Jehovah-Spirit', or 'Jehovah the Spirit'. He here reinforces what he already said in verse 17—the Holy Spirit is part of the Triune God. ††† Alas, there is no lack of those who deceive and falsify. †† The importance of this is enlarged upon in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. †† The Text clearly states that Satan, "the god of this age", is in the business of blinding the minds of unbelievers when they hear the Gospel, so they will not understand, so they will not be convicted, so they will not repent and convert. This is a terrible truth, the most terrible truth in the world, at least as I see it. The enemy has access to our minds, access in the sense that he has the power or ability to invade them, whether by introducing thoughts or by jamming our reasoning. The Lord Jesus had already declared this truth previously, when He explained the parable of the sower. "These are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown; but, as soon as they hear it Satan comes and takes away the word that was planted in their hearts" (Mark 4:15). In the parallel passage in Luke 8:12 Jesus adds the following words: "lest they believe and be saved." Note that the Word is already in the mind or heart of the person, but then Satan comes, invades the mind and "takes away" that word. I am not sure just how this intrusion by the enemy works, perhaps he causes a mental block of some sort, but the practical effect is that the Word becomes ineffective, as if the person had not even heard it. The crucial question then becomes, what can we do about it? We find the answer in Mark 3:27. "No one can plunder the strong man's goods, invading his house, unless he first bind the strong man; then he may plunder his house." I have used the definite article with the first occurrence of 'strong man' because the Greek Text has it, the point being that this particular strong man has already been introduced in the immediate context. "The strong man" here is Satan. (The Jewish leaders tried to explain Jesus' authority over the demons by saying that He expelled them by the power of Beelzebub, prince of the demons. In His retort Jesus does not waste time with that name but uses the enemy's proper name, Satan.) So then, the Lord Jesus declares that it is impossible to steal Satan's goods unless we bind him first. (From His use of "no one" it seems clear that the Lord is enunciating a general principle or truth.) And what might the nature of those 'goods' be? In the context (see Matthew 12:22-24) Jesus had delivered someone from a demon that caused blindness and dumbness, and in their comments the scribes and Pharisees include other instances where Jesus had expelled demons—it seems clear that the "goods" are people who are subject to Satan's power, in one way or another. Thus we have the same essential truth as that declared in Acts 26:18—we have to do something about Satan's power over a person so that he or she can be saved! So what can we do? Since the point of handcuffs is to keep someone from acting, I believe that in so many words, aloud or in thought, we must forbid Satan from interfering in the minds of

the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn on them.

⁵ Now we do not proclaim ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Sovereign, † and ourselves as your servants †† for Jesus' sake; ⁶ because the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness ‡ is He who shined in our hearts to give the light that comes from the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. ††† Further, we have this treasure in jars of clay, †† so that this all-surpassing power may be of God and not from ourselves †††† —we are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, yet not abandoned; knocked down, but not out; ††††† always carrying about in the body the putting to death of the Lord § Jesus, so that also the life of Jesus may be manifested in our body. †††††† For we, the living, are always being handed over to death for Jesus' sake, so that also the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. ††††††† So then, death is at work in us, but life in you. ††

Momentary affliction; eternal glory

¹³ Now since we have the same spirit of faith, just like it is written, "I believed; therefore I spoke," ††† we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴ knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us through Jesus †† and present us together with you. ¹⁵ So all this is for your benefit, so that the grace that has spread through the many may cause the thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God. ††

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart—even though our outer man is wasting away, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day— ¹⁷ because our light, momentary affliction is working out for us an eternal and limitless measure of glory, ††††† as we do not focus on the

our hearers, before we preach. For more on this subject the reader may consult my site: www.PRUNCH.ORG. † That is what the Text says; Christ Jesus must be proclaimed as Lord/Sovereign, nothing less. †† Literally, 'slaves'. ‡ See Genesis 1:3. †† Did you get that? When you really look at Jesus you see God's glory; that knowledge becomes a light shining in your heart. Wonderful! †† That we are clay pots does not change the nature of the "treasure". ††† God gives us the privilege of using His power, but we had better not try to take the credit! †††† Dear me, this really doesn't sound like 'easy street' or a 'bed of roses'! Paul is talking about very real struggle. § Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "Lord", to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. † One is reminded of 1 Corinthians 15:31, where Paul says, "I die daily". Clearly he cannot be referring to physical death, so it must be a dying to self. As I die to myself, to my own ideas and desires, the life of Jesus will be manifested in and through me. Or as he put it in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ, so it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me; what I now live in this body I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself in my place." ††† You can't have resurrection without death. †† There are stages in Christian life and ministry: at their beginning stage, Paul is paying the price for them to have life; later, they should pay the price for others to have life; and so on. ††† See Psalm 116:10. We speak on the basis of what we believe. †† Our resurrection depends upon that of Jesus. †† The more people are reached by God's grace, the more thanksgiving God gets.

seen, but on the not seen; for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal. †††

We live by faith

⁵ Now then, we know that though our earthly, tent-like 'house' may be destroyed, we have a building from God (not a handmade house), eternal in the heavens. ² Further, in this one we do groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly habitation; ³ since, obviously, once clothed we will not be found naked. ⁴ Yes, being in this 'tent' is a burden, so we groan—not enough to want to strip, but to be really clothed; that what is mortal may be swallowed up by the Life. †††

⁵ Now it is God who has prepared us for this very purpose, who also has given us the down payment of the Spirit. ††† So we are always confident, even knowing that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord's home ⁷ —we walk by faith, not by sight— ⁸ indeed, we are confident in preferring to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. †††† Yes, that is why we make it our aim (whether at home or away from it) to be well pleasing to Him. ¹⁰ Because we must all be exposed before Christ's Judgment Seat, that each one may receive his due for the things he did while in the body, whether good or bad. ††††† Therefore, since we know the Lord's intimidation, ²¹ we try to convince people.

Why Christ died

We are well known to God, and I hope in your consciences as well. ¹² We are not commending ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity of boasting on our behalf, that you may have *an answer* for those who boast in appearance and not in heart. ††

††† Using the language in 1 Corinthians 3:12-14, whatever we build in gold, silver and precious stones will contribute to that glory. What we do for the Kingdom down here goes into our savings account in the Bank of Heaven. ††† Where is your focus? †††† This paragraph relates only to the redeemed; only we have the prospect of improving our 'clothing'. As for the lost, the mortal will be swallowed up by the Death, and they will be left naked (but not cease to exist). ¹⁸ If you don't have the Holy Spirit, you don't have a 'contract'. He is the down payment on 'the Life' (verse 4); eternal life being a quality of life, we can start living it down here. ¹⁹ Paul is talking about facing death with confidence, knowing it is the doorway to something much better than this life. Of course this only applies to those who belong to Sovereign Jesus. ²⁰ If we are wise, like Paul, we will never forget the Accounting. He was 'confident' that upon leaving his physical body he would be at home with the Lord. To have the same confidence we also must consciously live so as to be well pleasing to Him. Notice that the emphasis is on what we **DO**. ²¹ God's holiness is an aggressive quality that attacks anything evil that tries to approach. That holiness is truly intimidating, and we will all be judged by it. Jonathan Edwards preached on that basis, with extraordinary effect, but there are few in our day who follow his example. On a lower level, worldly people tend to feel uncomfortable in the presence of someone who is holy, sometimes to the point of reacting aggressively. As Satan increases his hold on the world, such aggressive reaction will become ever more common. ²² Paul will enlarge on this later on in the letter.

¹³ If we are 'out of our senses', it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you. ¹⁴ For Christ's love impels us, having concluded this: if One died for all it follows that all died; ^{†15} and He died for all so that those who *now* live should no longer live for themselves but for the One who died for all ^{††} and was raised again. ‡

We are Christ's ambassadors

¹⁶ So then, from now on we regard no one from a fleshly perspective—even if we have 'known' Christ in this way, we do so no longer ^{††}— ¹⁷ so then, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old things have passed on; look, all has become new! ^{††18} And that 'all' is from the God who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus ^{†††} Christ and given us the ministry of the reconciliation, ^{†††19} namely that in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, [§] not imputing their trespasses to them, including committing to us the message of this reconciliation.

²⁰ So then, we are Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God! ²¹ Because He made the One who did not know sin to be sin on our behalf, so that in Him we might become God's righteousness. ^{§†}

6 So working together ^{§††} we really urge you not to receive God's grace in vain, ² for He says:

"At a favorable time I listened to you,
and in a day of salvation I aided you."
Well, right now is a really favorable time; indeed, the day of salvation is *NOW!* ^{§†}

† They all died in Him; just like all sinned in Adam. †† I follow the best line of transmission, along with a minority of the manuscript total (35% here), in reading "all" instead of the familiar 'them'.
‡ The clearest statements giving *why* Christ died begin with Romans 14:9, "that He might be LORD of both the dead and the living"; followed by this verse, that we should no longer live for ourselves, but for HIM. Philippians 2:8-11 refers to the final victory. Hebrews 2:14 refers to destroying Satan; saving us from hell is a by-product. As it says in Romans 10:9, "if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord...'; you will be saved". †† The unregenerate are forever trying to explain or understand Jesus in purely humanistic terms. We who are in Christ must not do so. Further, we should not try to understand anyone in such terms—we need to take account of what is happening in the spiritual realm. (As a student Saul of Tarsus had certainly seen and heard Jesus.) †† This is neither immediate nor automatic; it is potential. No benefit of the shed blood of God's Lamb is automatic; it must be appropriated. ††† Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts omit "Jesus", to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. ††† Yes, *THE* reconciliation—no other reconciling compares with reconciling men to God. § Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful!
§† Here we are face to face with the mystery of our redemption. Jesus, God's Son, never sinned, did not 'know' sin, experientially, but He was "made to be sin" on our behalf. It is a grim picture, as though on the cross He was changed into a bundle of sin. And in exchange He gave us His righteousness. How can we 'measure' or understand such love? It is beyond our comprehension. As Romans 11:33 expresses it: "Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" §†† 'Working together' with whom? Presumably with other ambassadors, but also with God. §† See Isaiah

What it costs to be Christ's ambassadors

³ (We give no occasion for offense in anything, that the ministry not be faulted; ⁴ rather we commend ourselves as God's servants in every way with great endurance—in afflictions, in hardships, in distress, ⁵ in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in hard work, in sleepless nights, in fastings; ⁶ by purity, by knowledge, by patience, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, ⁷ by truthful speech, by God's power, with the weapons of the righteousness in the right hand and in the left; ^{§††8} through glory and dishonor, through defamation and good repute; as 'deceivers' and true, ⁹ as unknown and well known, as dying and we live on, as chastened and not killed; ¹⁰ as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing everything!) ^{§†}

An aside

¹¹ O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is open wide. ¹² You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your affections. ¹³ Now in return for the same (I speak as to my children), you also be wide open.

Separation is a 'must'

¹⁴ Do not enter a mismatch with unbelievers; ^{§†} for what do righteousness and lawlessness have in common? And what fellowship does light have with darkness? ¹⁵ And what agreement is there between Christ and Belial? Or what portion can a believer share with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ Further, what agreement can a temple of God have with idols? Because *YOU* ^{§§†} are a temple of the living God, just as God said:

"I will dwell in them and walk among them;

I will be their God and they will be my people." ^{§§†}

¹⁷ Therefore,

"Come out from among them and be separate," says the Lord,

"Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." ^{§§§}

¹⁸ And,

"I will be a Father to you,
and you will be sons and daughters to me,
says the *LORD* Almighty." ¹⁸

49:8. The 'window' of opportunity for any individual does not last forever. §†† Why right and left? A right-handed soldier would have a shield in his left hand, for defense, with a sword or spear in his right, for offense—our weapons are for both offense and defense. §† Well, well, well, there really ought to be an easier way to make a living! Well, it depends on what kind of living quarters you want in Heaven. When I get there I hope to see many individuals who can say to me, "You made me rich; thank you!". §† This does not refer only to marriage, as the explanation that follows makes clear. §§† Instead of "you", perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts have 'we'; to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. §§† See Leviticus 26:12 and Ezekiel 37:27. §§§ See Isaiah 52:11 and Ezekiel 20:34. ¹⁸ This appears to be an application based on several passages.

7 Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. †

Titus, and the first letter

Introduction

2 Make room for us; we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. 3 I do not say this to condemn you; I have said before that you are in our hearts, whether to die together or to live together. 4 I have great confidence in you; I do a lot of boasting about you. I am filled with encouragement, overflowing with joy in spite of all our affliction.

Enter Titus

5 Now indeed, when we came into Macedonia we had no physical rest, but were surrounded by affliction—conflicts on the outside, fears on the inside. 6 But the God who encourages the lowly encouraged us by the coming of Titus; 7 and not only by his coming, but also by how much he was encouraged over you as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal in my stead, so that I rejoiced even more.

The effect of the first letter

8 Even though that letter caused you sorrow, I do not regret it (though I almost did), because I perceive that the letter made you sorry, though only for a while. 9 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry as God intended, so as not to be harmed by us in any way. ††10 Now godly sorrow produces repentance into salvation without regret, but the world's sorrow produces death. ‡

11 Just consider your own being caused to sorrow in a godly manner, how much diligence it produced in you—what self-defense, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have demonstrated yourselves to be clear in the matter. 12 So even though I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the wrongdoer, nor for that of the victim, but, before God, so that your real commitment to us might be made clear to you. ††13 We have been encouraged by all this.

† "Perfecting holiness in the fear of God"—how long since you heard, or preached, a sermon on that? †† The implication is that it is possible for those in spiritual authority to cause harm, through the misuse of that authority. I imagine that we have all seen this sort of thing happen in fact. ‡ The Creator made us with emotions, which when properly used are beneficial, but that under the world's control are destructive. †† God's agenda in dealing with us often includes several objectives.

Titus again

Because of your † encouragement, we rejoiced all the more over the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. 14 Because wherein I boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame, but just as everything we spoke to you was true, so also our boasting to Titus proved to be true. 15 Also, his affection for you is all the greater, as he remembers your collective obedience as you received him with fear and trembling. 16 I am so glad that I have complete confidence in you. ††

The collection for the church in Jerusalem

The Macedonian example

8 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace of God that has been bestowed upon the congregations of Macedonia, 2 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their extreme poverty produced their extravagant, sincere generosity. 3 Because according to their ability, I bear witness, even beyond that ability, of their own accord, 4 they begged us with much entreaty to receive the gift, the sharing in the ministry to the saints 5—and more than we had hoped, they first gave themselves to the Lord †† (and due to God's will, to us).

6 So we urged Titus that as he had made a beginning so he should also bring to completion in you this grace as well; 7 that as you excel in everything—in faith, in word, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—that you excel in this grace too.

†† Instead of "your", perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts have 'our', to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. ††† Paul knew how to 'accentuate the positive', as we used to say. ††† Is obeying the commands of Christ the exclusive privilege of the rich? How about the first believers, there in Jerusalem, were they rich or poor? It would appear that the vast majority were poor; so much so that the few well-to-do were selling their property to feed the rest. (That is what gave rise to the case of Ananias and Sapphira [Acts 4:32-5:11].) They evidently did not want to leave Jerusalem, in spite of the Lord's words recorded in Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8. So God Himself sent the persecutions to disperse them. And they scattered, preaching as they went, poor though they were. Here in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 we find an account that is very much to the point. Those Macedonian believers were very poor ("extreme poverty"). Furthermore, they were experiencing a "severe test of affliction". Even so, they insisted on giving. From verse 4 it almost seems that Paul felt a bit embarrassed about asking them to give—they needed help themselves! But they insisted; they wanted to give. And they gave more than they properly could ("beyond their ability"). But how was that possible? They had the mentality of the Kingdom—in verse 5 we read that "first

Christ's example

⁸ I am not giving a command, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others. ⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our [†] sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich. ¹⁰ So here is my advice in this (since already a year ago you began to give and to plan, this is to your advantage): ¹¹ now you must really finish the doing—not only of the enthusiastic planning but also of the completing—out of what you have ¹² (because when the intention is presented, it is acceptable according to what one may have, not what he does not have). ¹³ Now this is not to distress you so as to relieve others, ¹⁴ but by way of balance—at this juncture your surplus alleviates their lack, so that later their surplus may alleviate your lack—yes, that there be balance; ^{††15} as it is written: “He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little.” [‡]

When handling money, avoid criticism

¹⁶ Now thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you in the heart of Titus; ¹⁷ because he not only welcomed my appeal but being very diligent he went to you of his own accord. ^{††18} But we have sent together with him the brother whose praise in the Gospel is throughout all the congregations; ¹⁹ and not only that—he was actually chosen by the congregations as our traveling companion with this gift, that is being administered by us with a view to the glory of the Lord Himself, and to our own goodwill, ²⁰ avoiding any criticism about how we are handling this abundance; ²¹ giving thought to blamelessness, not only before the Lord but also before men. ^{‡‡22} Further, we have sent with them our brother whom we have often proved to be diligent in many things, but now much more so, because of *our*^{‡‡†} great confidence in you. ²³ As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker toward you; as for our brothers, they are envoys of the congregations, a glory of Christ. ^{‡‡‡24} Therefore show

[†] Although some 60% of the Greek manuscripts, and most versions, have ‘your’ (thereby agreeing with the complement), I take it that the best line of transmission has “our”, that is more inclusive. ^{††} Note that I have replaced the usual ‘equality’ with ‘balance’. God is not egalitarian; He likes diversity—no two snowflakes are identical, no two drops of water, no two leaves or blades of grass, and much less two human beings. God hates laziness, so we should never do anything to encourage it (2 Thessalonians 3:10). [‡] See Exodus 16:18. Maybe there was some sharing involved in that picture. ^{‡†} Evidently Titus was bearing this letter, and it was he who delivered it to them. ^{‡‡} As we say in Brazil, ‘all care is little’ when handling God’s money. Carelessness, not to mention dishonesty, reflects negatively on the Gospel. The Macedonian Christians took the matter seriously. ^{‡‡†} There is no possessive pronoun in the Text to show whose confidence, so it could be ‘his’, but in the context it seems to me to be more likely to be ‘our’. ^{‡‡‡} An interesting concept—Paul affirms that Christ was proud of those men. Now that is

the proof of your love (and of our boasting about you) to them as representatives of the congregations.

A little precaution

⁹ Now concerning the ministry to the saints, it is unnecessary for me to write to you; ² for I know your readiness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia has been ready since last year, and your zeal has stirred up the majority. ^{§3} Still, I have sent the brothers so that our boasting about you in this matter not prove to be empty, so that you may be ready, like I said ⁴—if any Macedonians were to go with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention, you!) would be put to shame by this confident boasting. ^{§†5} So I considered it necessary to urge the brothers to go to you in advance and finish preparing the ‘blessing’ you had promised, that it be ready, representing generosity and not stinginess.

Kingdom economics

⁶ Now then, whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ^{§††7} Each one *should give* as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a glad giver. ⁸ Further, God is able to make all ‘grace’ abound toward you, that always having all sufficiency in everything you may abound to every

a compliment that I would really like to hear: “he is a glory of Christ”. [§] Nothing like a good example. ^{§†} Maybe Paul should not have boasted quite so much. Do we ever get ‘carried away’ by our enthusiasm? Some 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit “boasting”, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. ^{§††} All of chapters 8 and 9 of 2 Corinthians deal with money, in one way or another. But the description of how God’s economy operates begins at 9:6. This verse enunciates a fundamental principle that has global application. “Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.” Any farmer understands this. If he only plants a few beans that is all he will get. If he wants more he has to plant more. Any businessman will also understand it. If he wants money he has to invest it. But there is one detail that can be quite bothersome—we must plant first, and reap later. It is better to tighten your belt than to eat the seed, no matter how hungry you are. Isn’t it obvious? If you eat the seed you will not have anything to plant, and if you plant nothing you reap nothing! In the Creator’s goodness nature is often quite generous. I suppose corn is the champion. We usually plant three or four kernels in a hill, but suppose we just plant one. If that grain germinates we get one stalk. That stalk should produce two good ears (a third ear will likely be a nubbin). Now then, have you ever counted the number of kernels on an ear of corn? I have. A poor ear may have 300 kernels. A good ear will have around 500. A *super*

As already noted the context is financial, and verse 7 makes clear that when the author speaks of planting and harvesting he wants us to apply the principle to giving. “God loves a glad giver.” I believe the following conclusion is beyond reasonable doubt: whoever gives nothing receives nothing. Maybe that is why many believers, including those in ‘full-time Christian service’, often seem to be in a financial bind. They do not give; they never contribute. Luke 6:38 shows the reaction of men and Proverbs 3:9-10 that of God when someone gives.

good work †—⁹ as it is written: “He has distributed around, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever” ††—¹⁰ yes, the One who supplies ‡

† I believe verse 8 gives the ‘secret’; let’s consider the meaning with care. It is God

*I understand that it is as follows: God wants us to be channels, conduits through which He can send a flow of blessings, both material and spiritual, to others. Much of what we receive may not be intended for our own use—it has another address and we are supposed to pass the blessing along (the precise address must be discerned through the Spirit). When we get the point and cooperate with God, He sends more. The more sensitive and faithful we are, the more God sends, an ever increasing flow of blessings. But if God sends a blessing, suppose a sum of money, that has another destination and we choose not to understand, decide not to cooperate, if we retain it for ourselves we become like a water pipe that corrodes shut. (Now a plugged pipe is a sad thing; it has lost its reason for being.) With that, the flow of God’s grace through our lives is stanchied, because He stops sending it. Surely. Why should God keep on sending if we will not let it pass? Can it be that our churches are full of ‘plugged pipes’? When we cooperate with God He gains, the others gain, and we gain. But whoever holds back or abstains will be cheating himself, others and even God. Consider verses 9-14. Verse 9 is a quote from Psalm 112:9, bearing on the last clause of verse 8. Now verses 10 and 11: “The One who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, so as to supply and multiply your seed for sowing and to increase the yield of your righteousness; you being enriched in everything so as to always be generous, which passing through us produces thanksgiving to God.” This is marvelous! God even gives the seed to be planted, and lest we eat the seed He also gives us bread to eat. He wants us to plant, He wants to see fruit! When we are faithful and cooperate, then God not only meets our needs but augments our planting; in other words, He increases our generosity, or at least He will do so to the extent that we cooperate with His purpose. As a reasonable and proper consequence of this process God receives what He deserves: the beneficiaries give praise and thanks to Him. Verses 12 and 13 elaborate on this aspect. When we line ourselves up with God’s economy He receives the glory due Him, the needs of the saints are supplied, and we are blessed. First, the people who receive the benefits from our ministry will pray for us, and certainly God will listen to those prayers. Next, even if they do not pray, our obedience will receive the effects of God’s faithfulness. This we know, not only from the promises and affirmations in this passage, but as an inference from God’s own interests—a faithful and useful ‘water pipe’ must not die of hunger. So there it is, my friends. God is no man’s debtor. That is worth repeating: **God will not be anybody’s debtor***

†† See Psalm 112:9. ‡ This verb is used of an authority furnishing what is necessary for a subordinate to carry out an order.

seed to the sower and bread for food, so as to supply and multiply your seed for sowing and to increase the yield of your righteousness; ¹¹ you being enriched in everything so as to always be generous, which passing through us produces thanksgiving to God. ¹² Because the administration of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God ¹³—on the basis of the proof that this service gives, they are glorifying God for the obedience of your confession into the Gospel of Christ, and for the generosity of your sharing with them and everybody—¹⁴ and in their prayer for you, longing for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you.

¹⁵ Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! ††

Paul’s defense of his apostolic authority

Weapons of spiritual warfare

10 Now I, Paul, am myself appealing to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ (I who am ‘humble when present’ among you, but ‘bold when absent’ toward you). ² Yes, I beg you, that when I am present I may not have to be bold with the confidence that I will ‘dare’ to visit upon some who think that we are walking in a fleshly manner. ³ Well, we do walk about in flesh, but we do not wage war that way, ††† because the weapons of our warfare are not physical, but are powerful in God for demolishing strongholds: †††† demolishing sophistries ††† and every arrogance that sets itself up against the knowledge of God; taking captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ; ⁶ being ready to punish every act of disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete. ⁵

Paul is criticized

⁷ Do you only look at the ‘face’ of things? If anyone has persuaded himself that he is Christ’s, let him consider this again with himself, that just as he is Christ’s, so also we are Christ’s. ⁸ Now even if I boast a little to

†† Amen! †† Well, at least we shouldn’t! ††† The subject of biblical spiritual warfare is generally not well understood in Christian circles. Much of what has been written concerns defensive procedures, but this text speaks of demolishing strongholds (presumably the enemy’s, since no one will want to destroy his own), that has to do with taking the offensive. For more on this subject the reader may consult my site: www.PRUNCH.ORG. †††† A sophistry is a false argument that is presented in such a way as to appear correct, and impressive, especially if not properly analyzed. Satan has purveyed a number of sophistries designed to keep people from the knowledge of God, such as humanism, relativism, materialism, Freudianism, and so on. § I suppose that the three gerunds—‘demolishing sophistries’, ‘taking captive every thought’ and ‘being ready to punish’—are some of our weapons, being grammatically subordinated to ‘demolishing strongholds’. In the context, the thoughts we take captive are not our own (though that also is a good thing to do), but those of the enemy’s servants. I do this in so many words, aloud or in thought, and thereby avoid unnecessary complications.

excess about our authority (which the Lord gave us for building up, not to tear you down), I will not act ashamed, ^{†9} so as not to appear *to agree* that it is only with letters that I 'terrify' you. ¹⁰ Because some say, "His letters are 'heavy' and forceful, but his physical presence is weak, and his speech can be disdained." ¹¹ Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters while absent is just what we will be in action when present.

Proper limits for boasting

¹² Now we do not dare to class or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves; but they, measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding. ^{††13} We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will stay within the boundaries that God assigned to us, a field that includes you. ¹⁴ For we are not overextending ourselves, as though we had not reached you, because we did indeed get to you with the Gospel of Christ; ¹⁵ nor do we boast 'off limits' in the labors of others, but we have hope that as your faith grows our boundaries will be greatly expanded through you, ¹⁶ so as to evangelize the regions beyond you [‡] (not to boast in work already done in someone else's field).

¹⁷ "He who boasts, let him boast in the *LORD*." ^{††18} Because it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but whom the Lord commends. ^{‡‡}

A godly jealousy

11 I could wish that you would put up with a little of my foolishness, but indeed you already are. ² For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, because I betrothed you to one man to present you to Christ as a pure virgin. ³ But I am afraid that somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve with his cunning, so your minds may be corrupted ^{‡‡} from the integrity that is in Christ. ⁴ For if someone comes and preaches another 'Jesus' whom we did not preach, or you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you easily put up with it. ^{‡‡‡}

[†] *He is not going to pretend to be ashamed of having overdone the boasting (in the event), since his greater concern here is to cut the ground from under his critics.* ^{††} *If you compare yourself with a weakling, you can tell yourself that you are strong, which could get you beaten up. In any case, our standard is "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).* [‡] *Who does the actual evangelizing? Presumably the Corinthians, not Paul himself, so he is saying that their work will contribute to his 'boundaries'. As my spiritual children pass on my teaching, they are increasing the area that my teaching has reached.* ^{‡†} *See Jeremiah 9:24.* ^{‡‡} *Just because God uses or 'blesses' someone does not necessarily mean that He is approving of them.* ^{‡††} *The implication is clear: Satan does the corrupting, directly or indirectly, and it is their thinking that he is corrupting (and that is serious—Proverbs 23:7).* ^{‡‡‡} *The impression one gets is that the Corinthian believers were lacking in discernment, or commitment, or both.*

Paul ministered without charge

⁵ Now I consider that I am not at all inferior to the very best apostles. ⁶ Though I may not be a trained speaker, I do have knowledge—but we have been fully manifested to you in all things. ⁷ Or did I commit a sin in humbling self so that you might be exalted, in that I proclaimed God's Gospel to you free of charge? ⁸ I 'robbed' other congregations, receiving support from them so as to serve you, ⁹ and when I was with you and in need, I did not burden anyone; because the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. Yes, I kept myself from being a burden to you in anything, and will keep on.

Exposing deceivers

¹⁰ The truth of Christ is in me: this boasting will not be silenced in me in the regions of Achaia. ¹¹ Why? Because I do not love you? God knows! ¹² Further, I will keep on doing what I do in order to cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things of which they boast. ¹³ Such men are really false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into 'apostles' of Christ. ^{§14} And no wonder, because Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. ¹⁵ So it is no great thing if his servants also masquerade as ministers of righteousness, ^{§†} whose end will be according to their works.

A little 'necessary' boasting

¹⁶ Again I say, let no one think me a fool. But should anyone do so, at least receive me as a fool, that I also may boast a little bit. ¹⁷ What I am going to say I do not say according to the Lord, but as though foolishly, ^{§††} in this confident boasting. ¹⁸ Since many are boasting according to the flesh, I will too ¹⁹ (for you put up with fools gladly, being so wise yourselves!). ²⁰ In fact, you even put up with someone who enslaves you, who 'devours' you, who takes advantage, who exalts himself, who beats on your face! ^{§†21} Is it disrespectful to say that we were 'weak'? ^{§††}

[§] *There have always been those who want to 'get on the bandwagon', to get a free ride; who traffic in spiritual things for personal, temporal advantage. Since such people only do damage, Paul's desire to expose them stems from his concern for the Corinthians' welfare.* ^{§†} *It is well to remember that neither Satan nor his servants are in the habit of appearing with horns and tails. Just because someone 'looks good' doesn't mean that he is.* ^{§††} *The implication would appear to be that whatever we do that is not 'according to the Lord' is foolish.* ^{§‡} *Paul is really worked up. Even allowing for his sarcasm, there were evidently negative things going on at Corinth that we do not know about.* ^{§††} *I found this sentence to be especially difficult to translate, and am not sure I got it right. Compared to the types described in verse 20, he might have come across as being 'weak'.*

In whatever anyone is bold (I speak foolishly), I am bold also. ²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. ²³ Are they ministers of Christ? (I'm being irrational) I am more: in labors more abundantly, in beatings beyond count, in prison more frequently, in 'deaths' often [†]— ²⁴ five times from the Jews I received the 'forty lashes minus one'; ^{†25} three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked (I spent twenty-four hours in the open sea)— ²⁶ in frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, in danger from robbers, in danger from my countrymen, in danger from Gentiles, in danger in cities, in danger in wildernesses, in danger in the sea, in danger among false brothers; ²⁷ in toil and hardship, in many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, in frequent fastings, in cold and nakedness [‡]— ²⁸ quite apart from the other things, my daily disturbances, my concern for all the congregations. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I do not feel it? Who is caused to stumble, and I do not burn *with indignation*?

When I am weak, then I am strong

³⁰ Well, if I must boast, I will boast of the things that concern my weakness. ³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, ^{‡‡} who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. ³² In Damascus the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of the Damascenes, wanting to arrest me; ³³ but I was lowered in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped from his hands. ^{‡‡}

A visit to the third heaven

12 It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast; still, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. ² I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or outside of it, I do not know, God knows. ³ Yes, I know such a man—whether in the body or outside of it, I do not know, God knows— ⁴ how he was caught up into Paradise ^{‡‡} and heard inexpressible things, things that a man is not permitted to tell. ⁵ I can boast about someone like that, but not about myself, unless it be

[†] Verses 24 and 25 spell out the 'deaths'; verse 26 resumes with the 'in's. We have no record of most of the experiences listed, an impressive list! Humanly speaking, he should have died several times. ^{††} Deuteronomy 25:3 forbids exceeding forty blows, so the Jews always stopped one short, just in case they had miscounted. [‡] When the Lord told Ananias to go and restore Saul's sight, and he protested, the Lord continued, "For I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:16). Paul paid for what he did against the early Church. By the way, we usually have to pay for our misdeeds down here (how can you pay in Heaven?). ^{††} Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit "Christ", to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. ^{‡‡} Apparently Paul considered this to be a humiliating experience. ^{‡‡†} "Paradise" here evidently refers to Heaven. In Luke 23:43 it refers to the half of Hades (Sheol in the OT) that was reserved for the righteous dead.

my weakness. ⁶ Now even if I wanted to go on boasting, I would not be stupid but speak the truth; ^{‡‡‡} but I refrain, so that no one will think more of me than what he sees in me and hears from me.

The 'thorn in the flesh'

⁷ Because of the incredible importance of the revelations, to keep me from feeling too important, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan [§] to beat on me—to keep me from feeling too important. ⁸ Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more cheerfully about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may take up residence upon me. ^{§†10} So then, I take pleasure in weaknesses, ^{§††} in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Apostolic signs were produced

¹¹ I have been boasting foolishly, but you drove me to it. I ought to have been commended by you, because in nothing have I been inferior to the very best apostles, though I am nothing. ¹² Truly the apostolic signs were produced among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles. ¹³ Now in just what were you treated as inferior, compared to the other congregations, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong. ^{§‡}

Still not burdening

¹⁴ Well now, I am ready to come to you a third time, and I will *still* not burden you, because I want you, not your things—children should not have to save up for parents, but parents for children. ¹⁵ So I will gladly spend and be spent for the sake of your souls, even if the more I love you the less I am loved. ¹⁶ 'Ok, ok, I didn't burden you, but being crafty I took you by deception.' ^{§‡†17} Come now, did I actually take advantage of you by any of those whom I sent to you? ¹⁸ I urged

^{‡‡‡} To exaggerate would be stupid. [§] 'Satan' is Satan. Down through human history God has always used Satan, demons and evil men, both to punish evil and to restrain it (usually in those who are evil). Here God does so with Paul before the fact, that is, to forestall the sin. The procedure was sufficiently unusual that God actually explained to Paul why He did it. ^{§†} That is what the Text says, 'take up residence'. I would say that for most of us unusual manifestations of God's power are sporadic (if there are any at all)—if the power 'takes up residence', the manifestations should be a regular occurrence. The trouble is, there is evidently a considerable price in suffering that must be paid. ^{§††} Well, I must confess that I have not gotten there yet. ^{§‡} Yes, it probably was a 'wrong', because they were not taught how God's economy works. If Paul had taught them the content of chapter nine of this letter early on, a considerable portion of this letter would not have been necessary. ^{§‡†} In verse 16 Paul repeats a criticism that someone might falsely level at him.

Titus and sent the brother along—did Titus take any advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit, in the same footprints?

A little veiled threatening

¹⁹ Do you still think that we are defending ourselves to you? It is before God we speak, in Christ; but all of it, dear ones, is with a view to your edification. ²⁰ Yes, I am afraid that when I come I may not find you such as I wish, and you not find me such as you wish—may there be no strife, jealousies, outbursts of anger, factions, slanders, gossipings, conceits, disorders—²¹ that when I come again my God may not humble me before you, and I will mourn for many who have previously sinned and not repented of the impurity and fornication and licentiousness which they practiced. †

I will not spare

13 This is the third time I am coming to you. “At the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.” †² As I already said while with you the second time, I now repeat in writing ‡ while absent, to those who sinned before and to all the rest: If I come again I will not spare, ³ since you want proof that Christ is speaking through me—He who is not weak toward you but powerful among you ⁴ (although He was crucified in weakness, He lives by the power of God). Now we also are weak in Him, but we will live with Him by the power of God toward you. ‡†

† There is only one definite article for the three nouns, and ‘which’ is singular, so the three are regarded as a single ‘package’. Unfortunately there have always been, and continue to be, those who go back to a sinful lifestyle, and stay there. Like Paul, about all we can do for such is ‘mourn’. †† See Deuteronomy 19:15. It almost seems that Paul is comparing his visits to witnesses. ‡ Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts omit “in writing”, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc. ‡† Being weak in God’s presence is one thing; being weak in our work for Him is quite another. I take Paul to be

Examine yourselves

⁵ Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you yourselves really not know that Jesus Christ is in you? ‡—unless indeed you are disqualified. ⁶ Well I trust that you will know that *WE* are not disqualified.

⁷ Now I pray to God that you do no evil; not that we may appear approved, but that you may do what is right (even though we may appear to have failed). ‡†⁸ For we cannot do anything against the Truth, but only for the Truth. ⁹ Now we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And we also pray for this, your perfecting. ¹⁰ This is why I write these things while absent, so that when present I may not have to deal harshly, according to the authority that the Lord gave me, for building up and not for tearing down.

Conclusion

¹¹ Finally, brothers, rejoice; restore each other; encourage one another; be of one mind; live in peace; and the God of the love and the peace will be with you.

¹² Greet one another with a holy kiss.

¹³ All the saints greet you.

¹⁴ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. ‡†

Amen.

saying that being weak in God’s presence triggers the outflow of His power in our work. ‡† Sin does have a way of undermining confidence. A Christian who keeps on sinning tends to become less and less sure of his salvation. ‡†† I don’t understand this. ‡†† Here we have a clear reference to the Trinity.

Galatians

Introduction

Salutation

1 Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through a man, † but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead ††—² and all the brothers with me, ‡ to the congregations in Galatia: ††‡ Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave Himself †† for our sins, so that He might deliver us out of this present malignant age, ††† according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Paul is disappointed

⁶ I am sadly surprised that you are turning away so quickly from the one who called you by the grace of Christ, to a different gospel ⁷—it is not a mere variation, but certain people are unsettling you and wanting to distort the Gospel of the Christ. ⁸ Now even if we, or an angel out of heaven, should preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed! ⁹ As we have just said, I here emphatically repeat: If anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed!! †††

¹⁰ Am I just now appealing to men, or to God? ⁵ Or am I trying to please men? You see, if I were still pleasing men I would not be a slave of Christ. ††

† Paul's apostleship did not depend upon human ordination or recognition. So what about apostleship today? †† The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is absolutely central to the Christian Faith (1 Corinthians 15:14,17). ‡ It would be interesting to know who those "brothers" were. †† "The congregations in Galatia"—Paul evidently intended that the letter be widely circulated. Would not each congregation want its own copy? ††† In John 10:17-18 Sovereign Jesus made this clear. ††† The word 'malignant' properly refers to Satan, the 'god of this world', so "this present malignant age" presumably refers to the whole world system controlled by Satan. All human cultures have suffered satanic influence, and all true followers of Sovereign Jesus should place biblical values above those of their surrounding culture. The second (last) Adam came to recover all that the first Adam lost—precisely the will of the Father. ††† 'Other gospels' would seem to be in plentiful supply; those who promote them are under a curse. Note that Paul is claiming to be competent to define the only true Gospel of Christ, and he can only do so genuinely by divine inspiration. § Since it is God who applies the curse, he is appealing to God to back him up. I myself do this habitually. §† Oops! Come on Paul, you cannot be seri-

Paul's credentials

¹¹ Now I want you to know, brothers, that the Gospel preached by me is not according to man; ¹² because I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather it came through a revelation from Christ. †††

How he was before

¹³ You have heard of my former conduct while in Judaism, how I was rabid in my persecution of God's Church and tried to annihilate it; ¹⁴ indeed I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age, being far more zealous for the traditions of my forefathers.

How he was recycled

¹⁵ But when God—who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace—resolved ¹⁶ to reveal His Son in me so that I might proclaim Him among the nations/Gentiles, I did not start by consulting with flesh and blood, ¹⁷ nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before I was; rather I went off into Arabia, †† and then returned to Damascus.

A new life and ministry

¹⁸ Subsequently, after three years, ††† I went up to Jerusalem to compare notes with Peter, †† and stayed with him fifteen days. ¹⁹ (I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. †††²⁰ Really, before God, I am not lying in what I write to you.) ²¹ Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. ²² So I re-

ous. Do you really mean that pleasing men and being a slave of Christ are mutually exclusive? On the basis of my experience I would have to agree with Paul, with the understanding that fellow slaves are not included in the 'pleasing men'. (When I am pleasing Christ His other slaves should be pleased as well.) §†† I follow what I understand to be the best line of transmission (though in a minority here, 30%) that reads 'Christ' without 'Jesus'. I take it that 'Christ' is in the ablative case: 'from' rather than 'of'. Paul is claiming revelation—this is the plain meaning of verses 11-12. Saul of Tarsus got his training in Judaism at the feet of Gamaliel, but his understanding of Christianity came from no such human teacher. §‡ Do you suppose he went to Mt. Horeb? §†† The Text does not say that he spent three years in Arabia; part of the time he was in Damascus. §† 98% of the Greek manuscripts have "Peter", not 'Cephas'. In 2:1 below it is 93%. §‡ Note that this James, though not one of the Twelve, is declared to be an apostle.

mained unknown by face to the congregations of Judea (those in Christ) ^{†23}—they just kept hearing that “He who once persecuted us now proclaims the faith he formerly tried to destroy.” ²⁴ And they glorified God about me.

How he was recognized by the apostolate

2 Fourteen years later I went up to Jerusalem again, with Barnabas, taking Titus along as well. ² I went on the basis of a revelation and set before them [the main apostles] the Gospel that I proclaim among the nations/Gentiles. ^{††}—Now I did this privately to those with influence, lest somehow I might run, or had run, in vain. ³ However, not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, for being a Greek. ⁴ This came up because of the false brothers who were smuggled in [‡] (who stole in to spy out our freedom, that we have in Christ Jesus, so as to reduce us to slavery), ⁵ to whom we did not yield, even for a moment, so that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you.— ⁶ Now from those who seemed to be important (whatever they were makes no difference to me; God shows favoritism to no man)—those with influence contributed nothing to me, ⁷ but on the contrary, upon seeing that I had been entrusted with the Gospel for the uncircumcised, just as was Peter for the circumcised ⁸ (for He who was at work with Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised was also at work with me for that to the uncircumcised), ⁹ and upon perceiving the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles, while they to the Jews. ^{††10} They did ask us to keep remembering the poor, the very thing I also was eager to do. ^{‡‡}

Paul has to rebuke Peter

¹¹ But, when Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was blameworthy. ¹² Before certain men came from James, ^{‡‡†} he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came he began to draw back and separate himself, fearing those of the circumcision party. ¹³ And the rest of the Jews played the hyp-

† Every town with a synagogue would have a local congregation, but usually not “in Christ”. †† This event is described in more detail in Acts chapter 15, where verse 3 says they were “sent on their way by the church”. Here Paul says he went “on the basis of a revelation”—I suppose he is referring mainly to the content of what he set before the apostles and elders. I gather that Paul and Barnabas had a closed session with James, Peter and John before going to the whole assembly. ‡ Who was responsible for the smuggling? And in whose service were they, really, even though they were evidently part of the Christian community? ‡† Literally, ‘circumcised’. ‡‡ The early Church did not ignore the physical needs of the poor. ‡‡† Note that in verse 9 James is listed before Peter and John, and in Acts 15:13 it is James who gives the verdict. James became the boss in Jerusalem, and I gather from what is recorded in Acts 21:18-25 that he was sliding back toward Judaism.

ocrite with him as well, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. ^{‡‡‡14} So when I saw that they were not walking straight according to the truth of the Gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all: “If you, being a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, why do you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews? ¹⁵ We natural Jews (and not ‘Gentile sinners’), ^{§†16} knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, we ourselves have believed in-to Christ Jesus, so as to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law; because no one will be justified by works of law. ^{§†17} But if ^{§††} while seeking to be justified in Christ we ourselves were discovered to be sinners, then is Christ a minister of sin? Of course not!

¹⁸ “Now if I rebuild the things that I destroyed, I acknowledge that I am a transgressor. ^{§†19} For through the law I died to the law in order to live to God. ^{§†20} I have been crucified with Christ, so it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me; what I now live in this body I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself in my place. ^{§†21} I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nothing!” ^{§†}

Law or faith

3 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you not be persuaded by the Truth ^{§§†}—Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as having been crucified, before your very eyes! ^{§§†2} Just tell me one thing: Did you receive the Spirit by works of law, or by hearing of faith? ³ Can you be so foolish? Having begun in spirit, do you finish in flesh? ⁴ Have you suffered so

‡‡‡ That even Barnabas went along shook Paul up; the situation had gotten out of hand. Someone had to take a stand. § My impression is that Paul is being a little sarcastic here, since the Jews liked to think that they were better than the Gentiles. §† This point is so important that Paul says it three times! §†† We have here what in Greek grammar is called a ‘condition of fact’—the protasis is presented as being true—so that often ‘if’ should be ‘since’. By using ‘we’, Paul is associating himself with Peter and the others as a sinner (a nice touch), but they are already Christians, so he goes on to reject the notion that Christ could be viewed as an accomplice to their sin. §‡ Whereas he had once tried to destroy the Church, he is now building it, which amounts to recognizing that he had been wrong before, a transgressor. §‡† He thought he was serving God before, persecuting the Church in his zeal for the law. But ‘the law’ crucified Christ, and in declaring allegiance to the crucified Christ he died to the law, so that he could really live for God. Galatians 4:4 says that the Son was “born under law”. §† A tremendous statement, and when we allow it to function in our lives it is an equally tremendous truth! Those who try to live the Christian life in their own strength generally make a poor job of it; when I allow Christ to live His life through me He makes a good job of it (to the extent that I stay out of the way). §‡ This is a very serious statement! Anyone who can save himself does not need Christ’s sacrifice. §§† Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts omit “that you not be persuaded by the Truth” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.), which weakens the statement considerably. §§‡ It almost sounds like there was a dramatic demonstration.

much for nothing—if it really was for nothing? ⁵ Furthermore, He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, *is He activated* by works of law, or by hearing of faith? [†]— ⁶ just as Abraham ‘believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.’ ^{††}

⁷ Now you must know that only those who are of faith are ‘sons’ of Abraham. ⁸ Further, the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, [‡] proclaimed the Gospel in advance to Abraham: “All the nations will be blessed through you.” ^{†††} So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the faithful.

The curse of the law

¹⁰ Now as many as are ‘by works of law’ are under a curse; because it stands written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all the things written in the Book of the Law, to do them.” ^{†††} Further, it is evident that no one is justified by law before God, because “the righteous one will live by faith.” ^{††††} While the law is not of faith but, “the man who does them will live by them.” ^{†††}

¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse in our place—because it stands written, “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree” [§]— ¹⁴ so that the blessing of Abraham might come to the nations/Gentiles through Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through the faith.

The covenant with Abraham

¹⁵ Brothers: as a man I speak a covenant; though only of a man, once it has been ratified no one annuls or adds to it. ¹⁶ But to Abraham were spoken the promises, ^{§†} and to his Seed. He does not say “and to seeds,” as about many, but “and to your seed,” as about one, who is Christ. ¹⁷ Further, I say this: a covenant confirmed beforehand by God in Christ ^{§††} cannot be annulled by the law that came four hundred and thirty

† Although I have capitalized the pronoun, there must have been a human being involved as well. †† This is a quote from Genesis 15:6, but is not presented as such. ‡ The form of the verb is ambiguous as to mood; it could be either Indicative or Subjunctive. The Indicative would give a direct quote, “God justifies the nations by faith”, but we don’t find this quote in the OT, so I chose the Subjunctive. Notice that ‘the Scripture’ is personified! It/He sees/knows in advance what God is going to do. ††† This is a direct quote from Genesis 12:3, which, of course, had not been written yet in Abraham’s day (in his day the only written Scripture available was the book of Job). Notice that the personification of ‘Scripture’ continues; It/He is the One who said this to Abraham, so all we need to do is go back to Genesis to find out who it is—Jehovah Himself, presumably the Son! ††† This is a direct quote from Deuteronomy 27:26. †††† This is a quote from Habakkuk 2:4. ††††† This is a quote from Leviticus 18:5. § This is a direct quote from Deuteronomy 21:23. §† Paul draws a contrast between a hypothetical covenant he might speak as a man, and the promises actually spoken to Abraham and his Seed. §†† Less than 3% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit “in Christ” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). Without Christ, the Seed, there would have been no promise. The incar-

years later, ^{§†} so as to make the promise of no effect. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance were of law, it would no longer be of promise, but God granted it to Abraham by promise.

The law was a guardian

¹⁹ Why then the law? It was added on account of the transgressions, until the Seed should come to whom the inheritance had been promised; and it was ordered through angels by the hand of a mediator. ^{§††20} (Now that mediator is not for just one, but God is one.) ^{§††21} Is the law then against the promises of God? Of course not! Rather, if a law had been given that was capable of imparting life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. ²² But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, ^{§†} so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

²³ Now before this faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, in confinement until the coming faith was revealed. ²⁴ So then, the law became our guardian until Christ, so that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ Now that the faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

²⁶ So all of you are sons of God through the faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ As many of you as were baptized into Christ ^{§§†} have clothed yourselves with Christ ²⁸—there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no ‘male and female’; ^{§§†} all of you are one in Christ Jesus ^{§§§}— ²⁹ so if you are Christ’s, then you

nation of Jehovah the Son was in the Plan before the creation of this world (1 Peter 1:19-20). §† Abraham left Haran in 1921 BC, when he was 75. The Exodus occurred in 1491 BC. 1921 - 1491 = 430. For an explanation of these dates see the excellent discussion by Floyd Nolen Jones in his *Chronology of the Old Testament: A Return to the Basics*, Kings Word Press, 1999 (14th edition). §†† “By the hand of a mediator” would presumably refer to Moses, since he passed the Law on to the people, but the reference to “angels” puzzles me. The OT account has God dealing directly with Moses, or so it seems to me. Perhaps God used angels to communicate some of the lesser details, or to refresh Moses’ memory. §† I take this verse to be parenthetical because it does not seem to contribute to the argument. The word ‘mediator’ that ends verse 19 gives rise to the parenthetical comment, because Paul then used the definite article with the same word at the beginning of verse 20, which is why I render “that mediator”. Paul then states the obvious—for someone to be a mediator there must be at least two parties at odds—which he contrasts with something even more obvious—God is one. Perhaps the point is that which lies behind the question in verse 21: since God is the source of both Law and Promise, and He being one cannot be at odds with Himself, then Law and Promise cannot be at odds. Moses functioned as mediator between God and the people. §† “Everything”, not ‘everyone’—that is what the Text says. Romans 8:19-22 spells it out—the consequences of Adam’s fall extended to and included the creation. How could a perfect world be administered by a fallen man? §§† See 1 Corinthians 12:13. §§† The Text does not have ‘neither male nor female’; the formula changes, as I have indicated. I suppose the reference is to Genesis 1:27, and the reason for the female in Genesis 2:18. All are saved on the same basis. §§§ The reference is to the spiritual realm, not the physical—a Jew who believes into Jesus does not stop being a physical Jew, a slave who believes into Jesus does not automatically change social status, a male who believes into Jesus does not stop being a physical

are Abraham's seed † and heirs according to the promise.

Sons or slaves

4 To proceed, as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, though he is owner of all, ² but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. ³ Similarly, when we were children we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. †⁴ But at just the right time God sent out His Son, born of a woman, born under law, ⁵ so that He might redeem those under law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, ‡ God sent out the Spirit of His Son into your †† hearts, calling, "Abba, Father". ††⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, ††† and if a son, also an heir of God through Christ. †††

Paul's concern

⁸ But at one time indeed, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those that by nature are not gods. ⁹ But now that you know God—better, are known by God—how can you turn back to those weak, yes decidedly inferior, basic principles, to which you wish to be enslaved all over again? ¹⁰ You are observing days and months and seasons and years. ¹¹ I fear for you, lest somehow I have labored over you in vain.

¹² Brothers, I plead with you, become as I am, for I became like you. You did me no wrong. ¹³ Rather, you know that I preached the Gospel to you the first time in spite of a physical infirmity. †¹⁴ Also, you did not de-

male, etc. But if we are all "clothed with Christ", verse 27, we will all look alike, at least from a distance. People looking at us should think they are looking at Him. † Abraham's seed, not Jacob's.

†† *The only true freedom available in this life is to be a slave of Jesus Christ. In John 8:34 the Lord Jesus said, "whoever commits sin is a slave of sin", and in verse 36, "if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed". Sin gives Satan an entrance, and he has various instruments for binding people (see verse 8 below). ‡ If you have the Holy Spirit in your heart, it is because you have been adopted into God's family; you are a 'son'. †† Perhaps 6% of the Greek manuscripts read 'our' instead of "your", setting up a conflict with the verb "you are" at the beginning of the verse (as in NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.). ††† "Father" is a translation of "Abba". ††† Here Paul switches from plural to singular. ††† Evidently 1½% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, read "through God" instead of "of God through Christ" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). Romans 8:17 says we are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ". § The reference is presumably to demons. Since the 'world' (verse 3) is controlled by Satan, his agents impose the 'principles'. §† It will be observed that I have rendered "in spite of" a physical infirmity, whereas most versions have "because of", in accordance with the normal meaning of the grammatical construction here (δὲ with the accusative is the usual way to express cause). What troubles me is that the normal meaning does not make much sense here; how could an infirmity be the CAUSE of his preaching the Gospel to them? A counter-cause would make better sense, but I am not aware of any way to express it in Greek; the closest thing appears to be καὶ ἔπειτα 'although', that occurs all of five times in the NT. In spoken English 'raise' and 'raze' are pronounced the same, but have opposite meanings, and this sort of thing is not rare in language. An ironic inflection reverses the*

spise or recoil at my physical trial, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ So what about your blessedness? Because I can testify that if it were possible you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶ Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth? †††

¹⁷ They zealously court you ††—not for good but intending to isolate you, so that you may seek them.

¹⁸ Now it is good to be zealous in a good thing at any time, and not only when I am present with you.

¹⁹ My little children, for whom I am again in travail until Christ is formed in you ²⁰ —I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone; because I am perplexed about you!

'Hagar' VS 'Sarah'

²¹ Tell me, you who desire to be under law, do you not heed that law? ²² For it is written that Abraham had two sons: one by the slave woman and one by the free woman. ²³ However, the one by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, while the one by the free woman was through the promise. ††²⁴ I will now allegorize them—these are two covenants: one is from Mount Sinai, bearing children into slavery, which is 'Hagar' ²⁵ (for this 'Hagar' is Mount Sinai in Arabia †† and corresponds to the present day Jerusalem, †† and is in slavery with her children); ²⁶ while the 'Jerusalem' that is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

††²⁷ For it is written:

"Rejoice, barren one, who does not give birth; break forth and shout, you who have no labor pains; because the abandoned woman has many more children than she who has the husband." †††

²⁸ Now we, ††† brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. ²⁹ But, it is the same now as it was then: the

meaning of what is said. I assume that something of the sort has occurred in this verse, and I have given the assumed intent. ††† In this fallen world, telling the truth does have a habit of making enemies. §† Paul contrasts himself with the proselytizers: he tells them the truth, even if unpleasant; they start by 'battering up' their intended victims, but then move to create a dependency so they can control them. §†† For Sarah to conceive required a miracle. §† I do not know Paul's definition of 'Arabia', but what the maps call 'Mt. Sinai' probably is not the real one; consider: When Moses fled from Pharaoh he stopped in Midian (Exodus 2:15). Midian lies on the east side of the eastern 'rabbit-ear' of the Red Sea (the Gulf of Aqaba), in present day Saudi Arabia. It has never been part of the so-called 'Sinai Peninsula'. It was at "Horeb, the mountain of God" that Moses saw the 'burning bush' (Exodus 3:1), and in verse 12 God tells Moses: "when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain". Mt. Horeb has always been in Midian. For a complete discussion please see the Appendix: "Where is Mt. Sinai?". §† The Jerusalem of Paul's day was in slavery to Rome. §†† Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts omit "all" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §†† The quote is from Isaiah 54:1—in that chapter Jehovah is telling Israel, His abandoned 'wife', that He is going to take her back, restore her, and her future felicity will make her forget the pain of rejection. However, that restoration will presumably be based on the new covenant (Jeremiah 31), as is Christ's Gospel.

one born according to flesh persecutes the one born according to Spirit. ³⁰ However, what does the Scripture say? “Expel the slave woman and her son, because the son of the slave woman absolutely must not inherit with the son of the free woman!” ^{†31} So then, brothers, we are not children of a slave woman, but of the free woman.

Freedom in Christ

5 Stand firm therefore in the freedom with which Christ has made us free, ^{††} and do not be burdened again with a yoke of slavery. ² Listen! I, Paul, say to you that if you get circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. ³ Further, I testify again to every man who gets circumcised that he is obligated to keep the whole law. ^{‡4} You who are ‘being justified’ by law have been alienated from the Christ; you have fallen away from the grace. ^{‡5} For we through the Spirit eagerly wait ^{‡‡} for the hope of righteousness by faith. ⁶ Because in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

⁷ You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? ⁸ This persuasion is not from Him who calls you. ⁹ A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough. ¹⁰ I have confidence toward you in the Lord that you will not think differently; but he who troubles you will bear the penalty, whoever he may be.

¹¹ But I, brothers, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that event the offense of the cross would have been removed. ¹² I do wish that those who are upsetting you would just remove themselves! ^{‡‡‡}

¹³ Now you, brothers, have been called to freedom; only do not use that freedom as an opening for the flesh, but slave for one another through love. ¹⁴ For

§§§ Perhaps 8% of the Greek manuscripts read ‘you’ for “we” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). † The quote is from Genesis 21:10, where Sarah is demanding this of Abraham, but God backs her up (verse 12). †† 6-7% of the Greek manuscripts replace this first half of the verse with, “for freedom Christ has made us free; stand firm therefore” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡ In the context it is clear that Paul is not decrying physical circumcision, that has an important side benefit—women with circumcised husbands don’t get cervical cancer. He is combating the idea of spiritual benefit from the practice, as claimed by the Judaizers, and in particular the ‘necessity’ that they claimed. The procedure is for eight-day-old babies, not adult men. †† They have regressed from the covenant of grace to the covenant of law. ‡‡ “Eagerly wait for”—I love it! Those who are trying to be justified by works don’t ‘eagerly wait’ for anything; the future accounting is a source of apprehension. On the other hand, we who understand that we are justified by faith in the Christ do indeed have a hope we can ‘eagerly wait’ for. ‡‡† It will be observed that my rendering of this verse differs significantly from that of the better known versions: they have Paul wishing that they would castrate themselves, or commit suicide! The verb is in the middle voice, hence reflexive; it means to ‘sever’ or ‘amputate’, but can also mean to ‘exclude’. I take it Paul is wishing that they would ‘amputate’ or exclude themselves from the situation—he wants them to go away and leave the Galatian believers in peace!

the whole law is fulfilled in one word, namely: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ^{‡‡‡15} But if you bite and tear at each other, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

Spirit VS flesh

¹⁶ I say then: walk in the Spirit, and you will NOT fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ Because the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh; they oppose each other; it follows that you may not do the things that you wish. ¹⁸ However, if you are led by the Spirit you are not under law. [§]

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are obvious, namely: adultery, ^{§†} fornication, uncleanness, ^{§††} licentiousness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousies, fits of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envyings, murders, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like; about which I am warning you beforehand, as, in fact, I did before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God. ^{§‡}

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control—against such things there is no law.

^{§††24} Further, those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ^{§†}

²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us also conform to the Spirit. ^{§‡26} Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Practical instructions

6 Brothers, if a man is actually caught in some wrongdoing, ^{§§†} you, the spiritual ones, should restore him in a spirit of gentleness, watching out for yourself lest you also be tempted. ² Bear one another’s heavy burdens, and so fulfill the law of the Christ. ³ For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is

‡‡‡ In the context Paul is referring to that part of the law that deals with interacting with other human beings (not the part that deals with interacting with God). § What the flesh wants is bad for you; what the Spirit wants is good for you. To be led by the Spirit is not to be under a set of rules; it is a relationship. §† Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit “adultery” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). This statement holds also for “murders” in verse 21. This is one of several lists containing both ‘adultery’ and ‘fornication’, side by side, which indicates that they are distinct concepts. §†† This appears to be a cover term for other misuses of sex; for instance, so-called ‘oral sex’ does not receive specific mention in Scripture, but would be included in ‘uncleanness’. §‡ Here is a plain statement (see also 1 Cor. 6:9-10 and Rev. 21:8). Religious communities that condone or permit such practices are deceiving their constituents; at the judgment they will get a very nasty surprise. The list refers to what we might call rather obvious forms of sin; there are also the more subtle forms. §‡† Paul was not referring to certain satanically inspired regimes, that may actually preach hate and violence. §† Another strong statement: a dead desire does not ask to be gratified. §‡ I believe the idea here is similar to that in 5:18 above. Conforming to, or perhaps seeing eye to eye with, the Spirit represents a higher level of spiritual experience. §§† He is ruling out hearsay.

nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ Let each one test his own work, and then do his 'boasting' only within himself, never to someone else. ^{†5} For each one must carry his own normal load. ^{††}

⁶ Let him who is taught the Word share all good things with him who teaches. ^{‡7} Do not be deceived, God does not allow Himself to be treated with contempt; because whatever a man sows, that he will also reap ⁸ —he who sows to his own flesh will reap deterioration ^{‡†} from that flesh; he who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from that Spirit.

⁹ Let us not lose heart while doing good, for we will reap in due season, if we do not give up. ^{‡†10} So then, as we have opportunity, let us do what is good toward everyone, but especially toward those who are of the household of the faith.

Boast in the cross

¹¹ See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand. ^{‡†12} Those who want to make a good showing in the flesh are pressuring you to be circumcised, but only so as not to be persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³ For not even those who are circum-

[†] Again, my rendering is unusual. My difficulty with the usual 'in himself' and 'in another' is that in both cases the preposition is 'into' (εἰς), not 'in' (ἐν). If someone forms an exaggerated notion about his work (verse 3) and then starts boasting out loud, he will look stupid.

^{††} There is a contrast between "heavy burden" (verse 2) and "normal load" (verse 5). We should help each other with the really 'heavy' stuff. [‡] Teachers are people; they too need food, clothes, shelter...

^{‡†} If the deterioration is never checked, guess what happens.

^{‡‡} So what happens if you give up? ^{‡††} This verse, coupled with 4:15 above, gives credence to the idea that Paul's physical infirmity had to do with his eyes.

cised keep the law themselves, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.

^{‡††14} But as for me, may I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

¹⁵ Because in Christ Jesus [§] neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

^{§†16} Now as for those who conform to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. ^{§††}

¹⁷ Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the brand marks of the Lord ^{§†} Jesus. ^{§††}

Sign-off

¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

^{‡‡‡} Again Paul makes clear that he is referring to the religious exercise when practiced on adults, not the physical fact (that is properly practiced on eight-day-old babies). [§] Some 3% of the Greek manuscripts omit "because in Christ Jesus" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{§†} If you are not a new creation, you are not saved. ^{§††} According to Greek grammar, the repetition of the preposition 'upon' in two phrases joined by 'and' makes clear that the objects of the prepositions refer to distinct entities. Hence, "the Israel of God" cannot be a reference to the Church, assuming that "those who conform to this rule" refers to those who are "in Christ Jesus". I take "the Israel of God" to refer to sincere, devout Israelites. ^{§‡} Perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit "Lord" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). I would say that the eclectic Greek text that these modern versions generally follow is mistaken at over eighty (80) points in Galatians, of which I mentioned only twelve (mainly the more serious ones). ^{§††} This is an interesting claim. I suppose him to be saying that he deserves respectful treatment because of what he has suffered for Christ's cause.

Ephesians

Salutation

1 Paul, apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, † that is, the faithful in Christ Jesus: ††2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and Sovereign Jesus Christ. ‡

Some concentrated theology

A paean of doctrinal praise

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, † who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms †† in Christ; †††4 just as He[F] ††† chose us in Him[S] before the foundation of the world, § that we should be holy and blameless before Him[F], in love, §†5 having predestined us into an adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, into Him[S], according to the good pleasure of His[F] will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved; ⁷ in whom we have the redemption through His[S] blood, §†† the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His[F] grace, ⁸ that He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligent design, §†9 having made known to us the ‘secret’

† I take it that Paul is claiming to be Christ's apostle to them, so he is writing with specific apostolic authority. Less than 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality (demonstrably so), omit ‘at Ephesus’ [such is the basis for the nasty footnotes in NIV, NASB, LB, etc.]. †† Paul defines what he means by “saints”. ‡ The alternation between “Jesus Christ” and “Christ Jesus” appears to be stylistic, without doctrinal implication. †† The full name of Jehovah the Son is now ‘The Lord Jesus Christ’. Where ‘Lord’ occurs without the definite article or a possessive pronoun I often render ‘Sovereign’. †† “In the heavenly realms” appears to be a synonym for Heaven; the blessings are there, ready to be distributed. ††† The blessings are only for those who are in Christ. Unbelievers may receive some spinoff benefits. ††† Here the pronoun refers to the Father, not ‘Christ’. Below, whenever the referent changes I will indicate this by [F] or [S], which will be good until the next change. § This one is difficult for our poor little finite minds to handle. If I was chosen before Creation, then I am part of a PLAN that antedates that Creation, just like the slain Lamb (1 Peter 1:19-20). So He knows who I am and calls me by name (John 10:3). When faced with a ‘God-thing’ that exceeds our understanding, we can either accept or reject—I choose to accept [there are consequences]. And let's not forget to give thanks. §† The syntax is ambiguous: does “in love” go with the preceding clause, or the following one? If the preceding, then it would be our love for Him; if the following, His love for us. When the Text is ambiguous I like to allow for both possibilities, which is why I place a comma before and after. Since both are true, why not teach both? §†† Without the shed blood of God's Lamb there is no redemption.

of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him[S], ¹⁰ with a view to administering the fullness of the times, §†† so as to bring all things together under one head in Christ—those on the heavens §† and those on the earth—in Him[S], ¹¹ in whom we were also assigned an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him[F] who works all things according to the decision of His will, ¹² so that we should be to the praise of His glory, §† who first trusted in the Christ; ¹³ about whom, to be sure, we had heard the true Word §††—the Gospel of your salvation; by whom, since you also believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the down payment on our inheritance until the release of the possession, §†† to the praise of His glory. §§§

Some doctrinal praying

¹⁵ Because of this, having heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶ I really do not stop giving thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, ¹⁸ may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation ¹⁹ in the real knowledge ²⁰ of Himself, ¹⁸ the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know ²¹ 1) what is the

§† I take it that many people, as they contemplate the mess the world is in, doubt that the Creator [if He exists] knew what He was doing. One day we will agree that the design is marvelous. §†† The reference is not so much to chronological time as to occasions or epochs. Believe it or not, human history is being “administered”. §† “On the heavens”—that is what the Text says. I take the reference to be to beings and things that are not an integral part of Heaven, temporary appendages—of course any beings and things on the earth are not an integral part of Heaven either. They all will jointly be subordinated to the Christ. §† This is the main point of the whole exercise—the praise of His glory! (Isaiah 43:7.) §§† A majority of the Greek manuscripts, including the best line of transmission, have “we”, rather than the familiar ‘you’. Being unexpected, many scribes may have made the change (of one letter) almost without thinking. The Gospel of Christ is ‘the true Word’. §§† We receive “the release of the possession” in Glory. From the beginning of the epistle both the Father and the Son have been referred to repeatedly—here the Holy Spirit is introduced. §§§ Verses 3-14 form a single sentence in the Greek Text, which is why I translate the same way. ¹⁸ To be the ‘Father’ of glory is to be the Source of all true glory. ¹⁹ Revelation provides us with true information, and wisdom shows us what to do with it. ²⁰ I finally settled on ‘real knowledge’ as the best way to render επιγνωσις, the heightened form of γνωσις, ‘knowledge’. Real knowledge is more than mere intellectual knowledge, or even true theoretical knowledge—it involves experience. The Text goes on to say, “the eyes of your HEART having been enlightened”. Real knowledge changes your ‘heart’, who you are.

hope of His[F] calling, † and 2) what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ††¹⁹ and 3) what the exceeding greatness of His power into ‡ us who are believing, according to the demonstration of the extent of His might ²⁰ which He exercised in the Christ when He raised Him[S] from among the dead and seated Him at His[F] right, in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above every ruler and authority and power and dominion ††—even every name that can be named, not only in this age but also in the next. ²² In short, He[F] placed everything under His[S] feet, and appointed Him to be Head over everything in the Church, ††²³ which is His body, the complement ††† of Him who fills everything in every way.

Our position in Christ

2 He[F] raised you up as well, when you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you once walked, according to the Aeon of this world, the ruler of the domain of the air, the spirit who is now at work in the sons of the disobedience; †††³ among whom all of us also used to conduct ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and of the senses, ⁵ and were by nature children of wrath, ^{5†} just like the rest. ⁴ But God—being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions—made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)

21 Paul wants us to know three things, that I have indicated with a number before 'what'. † His calling gives us true hope. †† We normally concentrate on 'our' inheritance, what we are going to get. More important is God's inheritance, what He is going to get. ‡ "In-to us"—that is what the Text says. Note that 'believing' is in the present tense. Please see the note at 3:20 below. †† It is generally understood that the reference is to the angelic hierarchy. The two thirds that remained faithful to God were never a problem, so presumably the special point is that Christ defeated Satan, with his one third, and is now (as the God/man, the second Adam) seated 'far above' that enemy. Please see the note at 2:6 below. †† Would it not be wonderful if the Church recognized that Headship in practice! Where ἐκκλησία refers to the whole body of Christ, as here, I render 'Church'; where it refers to a local assembly I render 'congregation'. ††† Just as a wife complements her husband (when things are like they are supposed to be), God's purpose is that the Bride complements the Groom (even if we don't understand why Someone who "fills everything in every way" needs complementing). ††† Strictly speaking the Text has "according to the Aeon of this world, according to the ruler of the domain of the air"—the phrases are parallel, so 'Aeon' and 'ruler' have the same referent, a specific person or being. This spirit is presently at work (present tense) in 'the sons of the disobedience'. 'Sons' of something are characterized by that something, and the something in this case is 'the' disobedience (the Text has the definite article)—a continuation of the original rebellion against the Sovereign of the universe. Anyone in rebellion against the Creator is under satanic influence, direct or indirect (in most cases a demon acts as Satan's agent, when something more than the influence of the surrounding culture is required). Anyone in rebellion against the Creator will also have strongholds of Satan in his mind. § This is the way people who do not belong to Christ may be expected to act. Far from being surprised, we should count on it, and our strategies (for living and evangelizing) should count on it. §† To be in rebellion against the Creator is to be under His wrath.

⁶ and raised us up together and seated us together in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ^{5††7} in order that in the coming ages He might display the surpassing riches of His grace, through His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved, through the Faith ^{5†}—and this not of yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ You see, we are His 'poem', ^{5††} created in Christ Jesus for good works, ^{5†} which God prepared in advance in order that we should walk in them. ^{5†}

Once far, now near in Christ

¹¹ So then, remember that once you physical Gentiles—called 'uncircumcision' by the so-called 'circumcision' (that made in flesh with hands)—¹² that at that time you were apart from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and strangers to the covenants of the promise, ^{5††} having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have come to be near through the blood of the Christ.

Two into one

¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one and broken down the barrier of separation—the law with its commandments and ordinances—¹⁵ having abolished the enmity through His 'flesh', ^{5††} so as to mold the two [Jew and Gentile] into one new man in Himself (thus making peace), ¹⁶ and to reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross (by which He killed the enmity). ^{5††17} He came and proclaimed peace to us, ¹⁸ being both far and near, ¹⁸ because

§†† This is tremendous! Here we have our authority. Christ is now seated at the Father's right, "far above" (1:21) the enemy and his hosts. This verse affirms that we are there too! So in Christ we also are far above the enemy and his hosts. We should be consciously operating on that basis, but since few churches teach this, most Christians live in spiritual defeat. §† The Text has 'the' faith; the reference is to a specific faith, presumably the body of truth that revolves around the person of Jesus. §†† The English word 'poem' comes from the Greek word here, ποιημα, and is one of its meanings. Just as each poem is an individual creation of the poet, so we are individual creations, not produced by a production line in a factory. §† We are not saved by good works, but for good works. We do good works because we are saved, and if you don't... §† "Prepared in advance"—I imagine that this refers to God's moral code, the rules of conduct that everyone should follow (if everyone did we would not need jails, rescue missions, etc.). §†† "The promise"—that is what the Text says. The various covenants recorded in the Old Testament differ considerably from each other, but one might say that there is one promise common to all: God promises to bless obedience, those who obey Him. To obey God one needs to have some contact with Him. Without such contact one has no hope. §§† "His 'flesh'" presumably refers to Jesus' physical body that went to the cross. Without the incarnation none of what Paul is discussing would have been possible. §§§ In this paragraph Paul is dealing with the enmity between Jew and Gentile; within the Jewish 'religion' Gentiles were definitely second class citizens—to be saved a Gentile had to become a spiritual Jew. Within the Church of Jesus Christ that distinction is done away with; all are on the same footing, regardless of ethnic origin. 18 The Greek manuscripts are bad-

through Him we both have access to the Father, by one Spirit. †

¹⁹ So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household, ²⁰ built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, ^{††} Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone; ²¹ in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²² in whom you also are being built together to become a habitation of God in spirit. ‡

The 'secret' revealed to Paul

3 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— ² surely you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God that was given to me for you, ³ how that by revelation He made known to me the 'secret' † (as I have written briefly already, ⁴ with reference to which, when you read, †† you can understand my insight into Christ's secret), ⁵ which in different generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by Spirit ††† to His holy apostles and prophets: †††† that the Gentiles are joint-heirs, of the same body, and fellow partakers of His promise in the Christ [§] through the Gospel, ⁷ of which I became a servant according to the gift of God's grace, the gift given to me according to the out-working of His power.

ly divided between "us" and 'you', so I follow the best line of transmission. Verses 17 and 18 form a single sentence, wherein Paul now handles Jew and Gentile as a unit, "we both". † Up to this point in the letter the Father and the Son have been repeatedly presented as distinct persons; now the Holy Spirit is added, although introduced in 1:13 above. All three persons are in this 18th verse. †† The truth that Paul is expounding is that in Christ Gentiles join Jews as "fellow citizens" and "members of God's household", part of "the whole building". In what sense can that "building" be built upon "the foundation of the apostles and prophets"? Presumably "prophets" is short for the writings that make up the Old Testament Scriptures, or Canon. The Faith is based on revealed Truth, not individual people. Analogously, presumably "apostles" is short for the writings that make up the New Testament Scriptures, or Canon. Again, the Faith is based on revealed Truth, not individual people. Our "growing into a holy temple" (verse 21) depends upon the Holy Spirit and His Sword (not individuals whom God used). ‡ There is no article with 'spirit'; one 'habitation' made up of many individuals refers to the spiritual realm, not the physical. (Recall that in John 4:23-24 Jesus explained that the Father wants worship 'in spirit'.) †† I consider that 'secret' is a better rendering than 'mystery'. The truth about the Church is not all that mysterious; it just had not been explained before. †† Whatever writing Paul is referring to, evidently the Ephesians had not seen it yet, but he figures they have heard about it. Paul probably wrote a variety of things that were not preserved in the New Testament canon. ††† There being no article with 'spirit', it could be either 'by Spirit' (used as a proper name) or 'in spirit' (referring to the manner). Both are true and legitimate, but I have chosen the first option in the translation. ††† An apostle, upon receiving a revelation, would also function as a prophet, but people like Mark and Luke were prophets without being apostles. § Instead of "the Christ", perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts have 'Christ Jesus' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

⁸ To me, the very least of all saints, ^{§†} was this grace given, to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to enlighten all ^{§††} as to the program ^{§‡} of the secret that from the beginning of the ages has been hidden by the God who created all things through Jesus Christ; ^{§††10} to the intent that now, through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly realms, ^{§††11} according to the eternal purpose that He accomplished by Christ Jesus our Lord, ^{§††12} in whom we have the boldness and the access with confidence through faith in Him. ¹³ Therefore I ask that you not lose heart at my afflictions on your behalf, which is your glory.

Prayer

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ^{§§†15} from whom every family in heaven and on earth receives its name, ^{§§†16} that He[F] may grant you, according to the riches of His glory: 1) to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man; ¹⁷ 2) Christ to dwell in your hearts through the Faith, having been rooted and established in love ¹⁸ so that you may be fully able to grasp (with all saints) what is the breadth and length and depth and height; ¹⁹ and 3) to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge—so that you may be fulfilled into all the fullness of God. ^{§§§}

²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to the power that is working in us, ¹⁸²¹ to Him be the glory in the

§† Paul does not always describe himself at this level of humility! §†† His explanation of the secret is for everyone, Gentile and Jew alike. §‡ Instead of "program", perhaps 10% of the Greek manuscripts have 'fellowship' (as in AV and NKJV). §†† This text joins Hebrews 1:10, John 1: 3, 10 and Colossians 1:16 in affirming that Jehovah the Son was the primary agent in the creation of our world and race. Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit "through Jesus Christ" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §† Don't you know that the cherubim and seraphim and other high ranking angels really wondered what the Sovereign was up to when He created the human being. §‡ "The eternal purpose"—this included the Lamb with His blood shed (1 Peter 1:19-20)! Note that "accomplished" is in the past tense. §§† Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts omit "of our Lord Jesus Christ" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §§‡ Here is another reference to the Son as the primary agent in the creation. §§§ If it were not for verse 20 below (see note), I would be inclined to think that Paul's prayer was overly ambitious! Does he really expect us to arrive at "all the fullness of God"? Well, we have the Trinity going for us—the Father is granting, the Spirit is strengthening our inner man and the Son is dwelling in our hearts—an unbeatable combination (if it were not for our lack of commitment). That said, however, I must confess that I do not understand verse 18—what is Paul describing? Whatever it is, all saints are supposed to be able to grasp it, which seems rather improbable. Verse 19 offers another paradox: if the love of Christ surpasses knowledge, how can we know it? Spiritual growth is clearly a process. 2 Peter 1:3 affirms that "His divine power has granted to us all things pertaining to life and godliness." So whether we get there or not is up to us—those who overcome will get there in Glory, if not before. 18 Ephesians 1:19 spoke of "the exceeding greatness of His power into us who are believ-

Church in Christ Jesus, to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. †

Putting the theology into practice

Unity

4 So then, as the prisoner in the Lord I urge you to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called, ² with all humility and courtesy, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ taking pains to keep the unity of the Spirit ^{††} in the bond of the peace. ^{‡‡} There is one body and one Spirit (just as you also were called in one hope of your calling), ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, ^{‡‡} who is over all and through all and in us ^{‡‡} all.

Building up the body

⁷ Now to each one of us the grace according to the measure of Christ's gift was given. ⁸ That is why He says, "When He ascended into the heights He captured the concentration camp, and distributed gifts to men." ^{‡‡‡} (What does 'He ascended' imply if not that He also first descended into the interior regions of the

ing—note that the verb is in the present tense; having believed yesterday won't hack it, we must believe today. This tremendous power that God pours into us, as we believe, exceeds our powers of imagination. Well now, my personal horizon is limited and defined by my ability to imagine. Anything that I can't imagine lies outside my horizon, and so obviously I won't ask for it. I sadly confess that I have not yet arrived at a spiritual level where I can unleash this power—I have yet to make the truth in this verse work for me. But I understand that the truth affirmed here is literal, and I only hope that others will get there before I do (so I can learn from them), if I keep on delaying. The whole point of the exercise (verse 21) is for God to get glory [not for me to have a good time, although if I ever get there I will certainly have a great good time!], and to the extent that we do not put His power in us to work we are depriving Him of glory that He could and should have. † The glory that God gets from the Church will go on forever. †† "The unity of the Spirit" presumably refers only to things that come from the Holy Spirit; it cannot include anything with which He does not agree. Note that we are not to 'create' the unity, we are to "keep" it. ‡ In verses 1-3 Paul is talking about how we relate to other believers. ‡† Here is the Trinity again—the Spirit in verse 4, the Son in verse 5 and the Father in verse 6. ‡‡ Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit "us" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.), while another 4% read 'you' (as in AV and NKJV). ‡‡† "He captured the concentration camp" does not sound very much like "He led captivity captive", now does it. The point is that 'captivity' refers to people held in captivity, and they are freed. When an invading army takes a concentration camp, the prisoners are set free (usually). We have here a quote from Psalm 68:18, where the second half says, "You have RECEIVED gifts from men", just the opposite of "distributed". What to do? The Targum (a Hebrew commentary) interprets as, "You have given gifts to the children of men". Upon reflection this would appear to be obvious. When you put tithes and offerings in the offering plate at church, you are giving to God, but does that money literally go to Heaven? No, it is redistributed down here—some goes to the preacher's salary, some to a missionary, some to pay the light bill, etc. God does indeed receive gifts from men, but He does not stash them in Heaven somewhere; they are redistributed down here. When done properly He gets the credit: "He distributed gifts to men."

earth? ^{‡‡‡}10 He who descended is the very one who also ascended far above all the heavens, [§] that He might fill all things.) ¹¹ Yes, He Himself gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ^{§††12} for the equipping of the saints into the work of the ministry, so as to build up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain into the unity of the faith and of the real knowledge of the Son of God, into a complete man, into the resulting full stature of Christ; ^{§††14} so that we no longer be 'infants', tossed about as by waves and carried off by

^{‡‡‡} This is one of several texts that lead me to understand that Sheol/Hades is beneath the crust of the earth somewhere. For one of the things He did down there, see 1 Peter 3:19. § "All the heavens"—sounds like quite a few, more than three; and He is above all of them. §† One might imagine that this list follows the chronological sequence of the several ministries. An apostle introduces the Gospel into an area or context; a prophet gets the people's attention and an evangelist urges them to believe; but once people are regenerated then pastors and teachers come to the fore—they are the ones who equip the saints. However, in practice, especially in a pioneer missionary situation, there are seldom that many people around. The missionary preaches the Gospel and it is up to him to teach the first converts; he is alone. A pioneer missionary, the first one to introduce the Gospel to an ethnic group or area, has an apostolic function (whether or not he himself is an apostle). But he must also function as an evangelist and as a teacher (whether or not he has those gifts). However, most of us live and work where there are established, functioning congregations. So what would be the function of an apostle within an established, functioning congregation? If he lives and worships in that community, probably none at all, in that specific capacity—he might function as a teacher or a prophet. In a country, or area, where there is no more pioneer missionary work to be done, the exercise of the apostolic function would be itinerant, acting as God's special emissary, an official intervener, for disciplinary and correctional purposes. I will take up evangelist next; what would his function be within an established congregation? Well, can you evangelize someone who is already regenerated? Evidently the function of an evangelist is directed to unbelievers, who should not be members of the congregation (although some often are). Of course an evangelist might also function as a pastor or teacher. A truly gifted evangelist will function beyond the limits of a local congregation. As for the prophetic function, I will address the question of supernatural revelation of information not available through existing channels. (1 Corinthians 14:3 speaks of 'edification', 'exhortation' and 'comfort' as coming from a prophet, but I will not take up such activity here.) We understand that the Canon of Scripture is closed; God is no longer giving written revelation that is of general or universal application. But that does not mean that God no longer speaks into specific situations. Divine guidance is a type of prophecy; He is giving information not otherwise available. I myself have been contemplated with a prophecy delivered by someone who had no idea who I was, and not in the context of a local congregation. The function of a true prophet cannot be limited to one congregation. Indeed, God may use a prophet at city, state or country level. Our world desperately needs prophetic voices. A teacher will normally reside in a specific community, but his ministry may range beyond it. A pastor's function is local, just as he is chosen and ordained locally. It is simply a fact of life that someone with a shepherd's heart is not necessarily a good teacher, and an honest to goodness teacher often lacks a shepherd's heart. The functions are supposed to be complementary, and the object is to get all true believers involved in the work of the ministry. Life in Christ is not a spectator sport! §†† Verse 13 emphasizes the truth in verse 12—EVERY believer is supposed to grow into full stature. Just because we do not reach a goal does not invalidate that goal.

every doctrinal fad, through the underhanded dealings of the people who collect the fee for the error; ^{†15} rather, speaking the truth in love, let us in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, the Christ; ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and knit together by what every joint supplies, as each individual part does its work, promotes its own growth, ^{††} its own edification, in love.

Put away the old, put on the new

¹⁷ So then, I affirm and insist on this in the Lord: you must no longer carry on as the rest of the Gentiles do, [‡] in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸ having been darkened in their understanding, being alienated [as a continuing condition] from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts, ^{††19} who, having become dead to hope, have abandoned themselves to depravity, greedily indulging in every kind of vileness. ^{‡‡20} Now that is *NOT*

† Before Paul wrote Ephesians, *κυβεια* always meant dice-throwing (but commentators usually don't like that, and so take evasive action). Why do people do that? Usually for material advantage. If the dice-throwing is 'crafty' then it is crooked—the dice are loaded. But this has to do with doctrinal fads ('winds'). Why do people start and push fads? To get or to keep attention, which usually involves material advantage. But who throws dice by himself? To cheat you have to have a victim. But why is the other guy playing? He hopes to make a fast buck, too. So why do people buy into doctrinal fads? Often for material advantage—the purveyor makes promises (e.g. the 'prosperity gospel'); sometimes for 'spiritual' or social prestige (which can translate into material advantage). You have to make the victim think that there is something in it for him. One of the basic meanings for *μεθοδεια* is 'a method of collecting taxes' or 'debts'. If you want to shear the sheep, you need a method. But who would be vulnerable to any such 'method'? Only a spiritual 'infant', who still thinks he can make a fast spiritual buck, who thinks there can be shortcuts. A "perfect MAN" (*ανηρ*, not *ανθρωπος*) is like Jesus—when Satan comes with his shortcuts he is not taken in. Let us try to pull it together. The fad (*ανεμος*) is an error (*πλανεη*), which carries a fee—the error is not free. The purveyor needs a method for collecting the fee (*μεθοδεια*) for the error he is selling. But it cannot be obvious, he needs to finesse it (*κυβεια εν πανουργια*) (he wants happy, unsuspecting sheep). Someone who is mature (verse 13) knows there are no shortcuts, so is not taken in by any cheap promise. Telling the truth in love (verse 15) contrasts with selling an error for gain (verse 14). ^{††} Any local congregation can promote its own growth by encouraging each member to exercise his gift(s); by making room for all the gifts and promoting their use. [‡] It sounds like some of them were not being altogether successful in breaking with their former way of life. Breaking free from the culture that surrounds you, so as to embrace biblical values, is not easy. ^{††} This works like a downward spiral: the ignorance feeds the hardening, that in turn increases the ignorance. The consequence is that they can never get out by themselves. Someone must take Christ's power to them to help them out, before they become 'dead to hope'. "Having been darkened" is passive voice; they are darkened by Satan, directly or indirectly. ^{‡‡} What kind of person or being might be "dead to hope"? If someone is dead to hope, is he beyond hope, unrecoverable? And how should society defend itself against those who have "abandoned themselves to depravity"? The consequences of depravity always spill over into the surrounding society, and according to Psalm 5:5-6 the Lord hates such people, and so presumably will not 'draw' them (John 6:44). 1 John 5:16-17 teaches that certain sinners are beyond the reach of prayer, they have passed the point

how you 'learned Christ'— ²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and been taught by Him (as the truth is in Jesus): ²² that you put away, concerning your former way of life, the old man ^{‡‡†} (that keeps on being corrupted by the deceitful desires), ²³ and that you be renewed ^{‡‡} in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and put on the new man, created in the likeness of God, [§] in true righteousness and holiness.

Practical instruction

²⁵ Therefore, having put away falsehood, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,' ^{§†} for we are members of one another. ²⁶ 'Be angry but do not sin'; ^{§††} do not let the sun set on your angry mood, ²⁷ nor give an opportunity to the devil. ^{§‡28} The one who steals must steal no longer, but rather let him work, doing something good with his hands, that he may have something to share with someone in need. ²⁹ Let no evil word proceed from your mouth, but only what is good for edification, as needed, ^{§††} that it may impart grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, ^{§†} with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and slander be removed from you, with all malice. ^{§‡32} Rather, be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Walk in love

5 Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children, ² and walk in love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a fragrant aroma. ³ *BUT*, you should not even talk about fornication or any form of moral corruption or insatiableness ^{§§†} (as is fitting for saints); ⁴ nor any ob-

of no return. If someone cannot be saved, then he needs to be neutralized (because of the harm he causes to others) —we need to ask God to teach us how to do this. ^{‡‡†} The "old man" cannot be cured; it must be rejected in favor of the new. ^{‡‡‡} The verb here evidently means 'renew' and not 'make new', the implication being that a depraved mind represents a departure from a former condition. When a person is regenerated by the Holy Spirit he receives a new nature, but the old one is not obliterated or expunged. We must constantly choose to use the new one. [§] Wait a minute! Was not the first Adam created in the likeness of God? So when he fell did he lose that likeness? Probably not entirely, but Satan has been working at increasing the damage ever since—he works to remake men in his own image; in those who have "abandoned themselves to depravity" (verse 19) he has been successful. For someone to receive the "new man" requires a new act of creation. ^{§†} This is an exact quotation from Zechariah 8:16, though not presented as such. ^{§††} This is an exact quotation from Psalm 4:4, though not presented as such. ^{§‡} Evil and injustice should make us angry, and legitimate anger should give rise to appropriate action. But if we do nothing except to sit and brood, we do not help the situation and we do give Satan opportunity. ^{§††} "As needed"—part of imparting grace is knowing when to keep quiet! ^{§†} I imagine that any sort of disobedience on our part grieves Him. ^{§‡} The focus in verses 31 and 32 is on how we treat other people. God has been good to us; we should be good to others. ^{§§†} Of course *DOING* such things is

scenity, nor foolish talk or coarse joking (that do not belong), but rather thanksgiving. ⁵ Because you can know this for sure: no fornicator, nor anyone who is morally corrupt or insatiable (actually an idolater), [†] has any inheritance in the Kingdom of the Christ and God. ^{††6} Let no one deceive you with empty words, [‡] for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of the disobedience. ^{††7} Therefore do not be participants with them ⁸—even though you were once darkness, you are now light in Sovereign.

Walk in light

Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the Spirit [‡] is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), ¹⁰ approving what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Do not associate with the unfruitful works of the darkness, but rather expose/reprove them. ^{††12} (It is shameful even to speak of those things being done by them in secret.) ¹³ Now all things, upon being exposed, are revealed by the light, for whatever reveals is light. ¹⁴ Therefore He says:

“Wake up, O sleeper, and arise from the dead,
and the Christ will shine on you.” ^{†††}

Walk in wisdom

¹⁵ See then that you walk carefully, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ redeeming the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ That is why you must not be foolish, [§] but understand what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk on wine, which is harmful and wasteful; ^{§†} rather be filled with the Spirit, ^{§††19} speaking to one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making music in your hearts to the Lord; ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father concerning all things,

out of the question, but why can't we talk about them? If you talk about it you will think about it, which will provide an opening for temptation. † To have an insatiable desire for something (say, money) is to be dominated by that something; it has become a god, an idolatry. †† According to the grammatical construction here, “Christ and God” refer to the same person. ‡ Many ‘churches’ these days are making allowances for sexual immorality of various sorts (getting their values from Freud, not the Bible), but they will find themselves excluded from the Kingdom. Watch out for empty words! ‡† See the note at 2:2 above. ‡‡ Instead of “Spirit”, some 5% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘light’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ‡†† I could not decide between ‘expose’ and ‘reprove’, since the verb here includes both ideas. So let us do both. ‡‡‡ This is not a direct quote of any Old Testament passage. Not all God-given prophecies, though written down and read by subsequent generations, were included in the Canon. § The ultimate foolishness is to not understand the Lord's will. §† Literally, ‘in which is dissipation’, so where did I get ‘harmful and wasteful’? Well, to dissipate is to waste, and a dictionary I have defines it as “to indulge in pleasure to the point of harming oneself”. Drunkenness always harms and wastes. §†† Observe that this is a command, so it depends on us. The Holy Spirit is waiting to fill us, if we will only yield to Him. For light to fill the room all you have to do is flip the switch.

^{§†} in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God. ^{§††}

Relationships within the home

About wives

²² Wives, subordinate yourselves ^{§†} to your own husbands, as to the Lord, ²³ because a man is head of his wife as also Christ is Head of the Church—He also is Preserver of the body. ²⁴ Yes, just as the Church is subject to Christ, so also the wives should be to their own husbands in everything. ^{§†}

About husbands

²⁵ Husbands, love your own wives just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself up on her behalf, ²⁶ in order that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of the water: in a word, ²⁷ that He might present her—the splendid Church—to Himself, not having a blemish or a wrinkle or any such thing, but that she be holy and blameless. ²⁸ Just so the husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated his own flesh; rather he nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the Church ³⁰—for we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ^{§††31} “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ^{§††32} This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.

³³ In any case, each of you individually: let each one love his own wife as himself, ^{§§§} while the wife must respect her husband.

About children

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³ “that it may go well with you and you may live long on the earth.” ¹⁸⁴ And fathers, do not provoke your children to anger,

^{§†} We are to declare God's goodness, faithfulness and wisdom, even when we do not like what is happening. ^{§††} Instead of “God”, perhaps 30% of the Greek manuscripts have ‘Christ’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). ^{§†} Observe that this is something she should do of her own volition, not because she is beaten into submission. ^{§†} This “everything” obviously does not include things that God forbids. ^{§§†} Less than 2.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “of His flesh and of His bones” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.—an easy case of ‘similar ending’). Flesh and bones are definitely physical, not spiritual; so what is Paul saying? Perhaps he is emphasizing that “His body” is just as real as a physical body. ^{§§†} This is not just poetic language, it is a chemical reality. See Genesis 2:24. ^{§§§} Observe that ‘wife’ is singular. Although in the Old Testament men were not condemned for having more than one wife, in the context of the Church monogamy is the norm. The instruction in verse 33 is basic: if a wife does not feel loved and/or a

† but nurture them in the discipline and instruction of Sovereign.

About slaves and masters

⁵ Slaves, obey your human masters with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; ^{††6} not only when being watched, to please men, but as slaves of the Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; ⁷ serving with a good attitude, as to the Lord and not to men, ⁸ knowing that whatever good each one does, he will receive the same again from the Lord, whether he is slave or free. ‡

⁹ And masters, be the same way towards them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Spiritual warfare

¹⁰ Finally, my brothers, ^{‡‡} be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so as to be able to stand firm against the stratagems of the devil. ¹² Because, our wrestling match ^{‡‡} is not against flesh and blood, ^{‡‡‡} but against the principalities,

husband does not feel respected, negative things start to happen.
¹⁸ See Exodus 20:12. † Unreasonable demands, harsh treatment, lack of clear guidelines—there are various ways to frustrate children and cause them to lose heart, and even give up. In today's world they will probably cop out by going to drugs, or the Internet (both of which leave them wide open to demonic influence). †† Observe that slavery is not condemned. The owners are not commanded to free their slaves, just to treat them right. The slaves are not told to run away, but to be even better slaves. ‡ It pays to do good!
^{‡†} Only some 3% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit “my brothers” (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.), but since the whole letter is written to Christians, there really is no doubt. Besides, how could an unbeliever put on the full armor of God? Note that Paul writes “our” wrestling match—apostles are also under attack, not to mention pastors, etc. ‡‡ The word here is a noun, not a verb, and means precisely ‘wrestling match’. A wrestling match is based on violent physical contact, and the Holy Spirit, through Paul, is advising us that we are in such a match, and the opponents are malignant spirits of all ranks. The ‘doctrine’ to be found in some circles that Christians can’t be attacked by demons is totally and dangerously false. ‡‡† Even though people may indeed act as our enemies, we need to keep in mind that they are only being used by the REAL enemy.

against the authorities, against the world-rulers of the darkness of this age, against the malignant spirits in the heavenly realms. ¹³ That is why you must take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, to stand firm, with everything in place.

¹⁴ So stand firm, having belted your waist with truth, ^{‡‡‡} having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the readiness of the Gospel of the peace; ¹⁶ above all, having taken up the shield of the faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows [§] of the malignant one; ¹⁷ also, grasp the helmet of the salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is God’s Word spoken; ^{§†18} praying at all times in the Spirit, using every prayer and petition, yes being watchful to this end with all perseverance and petition for all the saints ¹⁹ —on my behalf too, ^{§††} that when I open my mouth utterance may be given to me with boldness, to make known the mystery of the Gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that I may declare it boldly, ^{§‡} as I ought to do.

Closing greetings

²¹ Now that you also may know my affairs, how I am doing, Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything; ²² whom I have sent to you for this very purpose: that you may know our circumstances and that he may comfort your hearts.

²³ Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and Sovereign Jesus Christ.

²⁴ The grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love. ^{§‡‡} Amen.

^{‡‡‡} Any lack of truth or righteousness in our lives will leave us vulnerable to attack. § If it is faith that quenches these arrows, then they probably come in the form of doubts and fears. §† ρημα (rather than λογος)—the implication appears to be that we must speak the Word. Well, how else can you use the ‘Sword’? §†† We all need prayer, even apostles. §‡ If you are in prison because you spoke out, to keep on doing so does require boldness and courage. §‡† Evidently “the grace” is not for everybody.

Philippians

Salutation

1 Paul and Timothy, † slaves †† of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus ‡ who are at Philippi, together with the overseers †† and deacons: ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and Sovereign Jesus Christ.

How Paul prays for them

³ I thank my God every time I remember you; ⁴ in all my prayers for all of you I always pray with joy, ⁵ because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being certain of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will complete it until the Day of Jesus Christ; ††† just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel you all are partakers with me of the Grace. †††† God is my witness how I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.

⁹ This is what I pray: that your love may abound yet more and more in real knowledge ††† and full discernment, ^{§10} for you to identify the things that really matter; †† that you may be sincere and blameless until the Day of Christ, ††††† having been filled †† with the fruits of righteousness that are through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. †††

† Paul gives recognition to his junior partner. †† That is right, slaves. ‡ Paul goes back and forth between “Jesus Christ” and “Christ Jesus” with apparently no difference in meaning. †† This term is often translated ‘bishop’; along with ‘elder’ and ‘pastor’ it refers to a single office in the church. Note that there is a plurality of both overseers and deacons. †† Amen! ††† That is what the Text says, ‘the’ grace. They identified with Paul and what he was doing. †††† The compound noun, ἐπιγνώσις, is often rendered as ‘full knowledge’, but I consider that ‘real knowledge’ comes closer. § We have all heard that ‘love is blind’, but agape

§† Yes indeed, “the things that really matter”—the point of identifying them is to concentrate our attention and energy on them. ††† In verse 6 the emphasis is on God’s sovereignty, here it is on our responsibility. “The Day of Christ” is of special relevance to Christians, and the particular aspect in view here is the accounting (see Romans 14:12,14). §‡ “Having been filled”—that is what the Text says. Since the righteousness of Christ is imputed (we cannot earn it), God gives us the best possible start; as it says in 2 Peter 1:3, “His divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness”. What we do with it is up to us (see 2:12 below). §†† The glory of God is the ultimate purpose of all creation (Isaiah 43:7).

News and Instructions

By whatever means, Christ is preached

¹² Now I want you to know, brothers, that the events against me have actually turned out for the advancement of the Gospel: ¹³ as a result, it has become evident to the whole imperial guard, and to everyone else, that I am in chains for Christ; †††† also, most of the brothers in Sovereign have been influenced by my chains to be much bolder, to speak the Word fearlessly. ¹⁵ To be sure, some are even preaching Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of good will; ¹⁶ the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, thinking to add to my affliction while in chains, ††††† but the latter out of love, knowing that I am set here for the defense of the Gospel. †††††† No problem: in every way, be it in pretense or in truth, ††††† Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice—yes, and will rejoice.

To live is Christ, to die is gain

¹⁹ You see, I know that this will turn out for my deliverance (through your supplication and the support of the Spirit of Jesus Christ) ††††† according to my earnest expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in anything but be truly bold, so that now as always Christ will be glorified in my person, whether by life or by death ¹⁸²¹ —to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ¹⁹²² Now if I am to live on in the flesh it will mean fruitful labor for me, so I do not know what to choose. ²³ I

§† Paul did not hide his light ‘under a bushel’. §‡ Just a minute: how does insincere preaching (by others) add to his affliction? I suppose we all know ‘Christian workers’ who are motivated by selfish ambition, and any such would want to ‘make hay’ while free from Paul’s ‘shadow’, as it were. Judging Paul by themselves, they would think he would be bothered by seeing them gaining prominence at his expense. §†† Even in prison Paul did not lose sight of the job God had given him. Some 10% of the Greek manuscripts transpose verses 16 and 17 (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). §§‡ The Bible is clear to the effect that the means, not just the end, must be appropriate to God’s character, so this statement seems a bit strange. Within the community of faith deviations can be treated quite severely, but perhaps for what we might term ‘pre-evangelism’, getting people who have never heard of Him before to start thinking about Christ, there may be some leeway. Further, Matthew 20:1-16 makes clear that God is prepared to use a variety of types of worker. §§§ This is presumably a reference to the Holy Spirit (see John 16:13-15). ¹⁸ Although it appears that Paul actually hoped to be freed from prison, he is prepared to die. His main concern is not to

am torn between the two: I have the desire to depart and be with Christ (far better), ^{†24} but to remain in the flesh is more necessary, because of you. ^{††25} So having been persuaded of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that your rejoicing over me may be more abundant in Christ Jesus, through my coming to you again. ‡

²⁷ Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you, or am absent, I may hear about you that you stand firm in one spirit, striving together for the faith of the Gospel with one soul, ²⁸ and not being intimidated in any way by your opponents: to them this is an indicator of ruin, ^{††} but to you of deliverance, ^{††} and that from God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe into Him, ^{†††} but also to suffer for His sake, ^{†††30} having the same struggle that you saw in me and now hear to be in me. §

About having the mind of Christ

2 Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship from the Spirit, if any tenderness and acts of compassion, ² make my joy full by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard one another as being better than yourselves. ^{§†4} Let each of you look out not only for his own concerns, but also for what concerns others. ^{§††}

⁵ In fact, let this mindset be in you that was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, existing in God's form, did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, ^{§†7} but divested Himself, taking a slave's form, coming to be in the likeness of men. ^{§††8} And being found in appear-

*do anything that will shame his Master. 19 How can death be a gain? Only if you live for Christ. † This is one of a few passages that lead us to believe that when a true believer dies his spirit goes directly to be with Christ in Heaven, not to the good side of Hades/Sheol (the 'bosom of Abraham') as with the Old Testament saints. †† His commitment to the Cause is more important than his personal desire. ‡ Evidently Paul had a sincere hope that he would be released from prison. †† How shall we understand this? What is the effect of our boldness in the face of opposition—do the opponents consider that we are sealing our own fate, or do they suspect that they may be on the wrong side? Perhaps both. †† Our confidence in God assures us of deliverance, one way or another: by life or by death. ††† The Text never has "believe 'in' Jesus"; we must believe INTO Him. Being on the outside we must change location. This involves commitment and a change of worldview or value system. ††† If you were taught to expect a 'bed of roses', you had a bad teacher. § They had seen him suffer when he first visited Philippi, and he was presently suffering in prison. §† Personally I have a hard time with this one. But it may have more to do with social level and prestige within the congregation than with personal qualities and abilities. §†† Agape
§‡ Since Jehovah the Son was (and is) equally God, the point appears to be that He did not insist on hanging on to His prerogatives. §†† Note that to be a human being is to be a slave. We are born slaves, live slaves and die slaves. We are born slaves to self, sin and*

ance as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to the point of death ^{§†}—even death on a cross!

⁹ Indeed, that is why God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of **Jesus**^{§†} every knee will bow—of those in heaven, ^{§§†} those on earth ^{§§‡} and those under the earth ^{§§§}— ¹¹ and every tongue will acknowledge ¹⁸ that Jesus Christ is **SOVEREIGN**, to the glory of God the Father.

Act like children of God

¹² So then, my dear ones, just as you have always obeyed (not only in my presence but now much more in my absence), keep working out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ because God Himself is the One at work in you, both to will and to produce, ¹⁹ for *His* good pleasure.

¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or arguing, ²⁰¹⁵ so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and depraved generation, ²¹ among whom you shine as light bearers in the world, ²²¹⁶ holding fast the Word of Life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I did not run in vain nor labor for nothing. ²³¹⁷ Yes, even if I am a

*death (with Satan behind the scenes); Christ offers us the option of being slaves to God, good and life. You can't stop being a slave, but you can choose your owner. §† Hebrews 5:8 says that Jehovah the Son "learned obedience by the things that He suffered". He had never experienced anything like that before. So what happens to us if we have the same mindset? §‡ Note that it is at the name of JESUS, not Christ or even Jehovah, that every knee will bow. 'Jesus' is His human name—recall that in Revelation the slain Lamb (5:6, 12; 7:14; 12:11) receives glory and praise along with the Father. You cannot kill God, so the Lamb is Jesus. Recall further that in John 5:22 Jesus affirmed that the Father had "committed all judgment" to Him, which means that it will be Jesus sitting on the "great white throne" (Revelation 20:11), not to mention a certain "winepress" (Revelation 19:15). Although at the moment I see no way of 'closing the question' (as we say here in Brazil), I verily suspect that the correct transliteration of 'Jesus' into Hebrew will prove to be יֵשׁוּעַ; §§† This presumably includes the angels, whether or not they have literal 'knees'. §§‡ Those actually alive on the earth when this decree is imposed; I suppose it will be during the millennial Messianic Kingdom. §§§ Since Hades is inside the earth (Matthew 12:40, Ephesians 4:9, 1 Samuel 28:13), this will presumably include the wicked dead, as well as the demons in the Abyss (at least). Just suppose that God wanted to confine evil to this planet; the logical place for a 'prison' would be beneath its crust. 18 The verbs 'bow' and 'acknowledge' are in the subjunctive mood in the Text, so many versions render 'should bow' rather than "will bow". However, the mood of the verbs is governed by the conjunction *iva*, that normally takes the subjunctive; in the context the author evidently does not intend to leave any doubt about the extent of the recognition. 19 Paul places our responsibility and God's sovereignty side by side; we must consciously cooperate with Him. 20 When we grumble or argue we are rejecting the Holy Spirit's control, and the result is not purity. 21 Can there be any doubt that our generation is crooked and depraved? And it is not getting any better. 22 As we both live out and actively promote biblical values, the "Word of Life", we will stand out like a bright torch at night. The darker it is, the farther any light can be seen. 23 At the Accounting, one measure of our success will be the extent to which others bought into our commitment.*

libation being poured on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. ¹⁸ For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.

About Timothy

¹⁹ Now I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be encouraged when I know how you are doing. ²⁰ For I have no one else like-minded, who will be genuinely concerned about your welfare ^{†21} (for all seek their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus). ^{††22} But you know the proof of him, that as a son with his father he slaved [‡] with me for the Gospel. ²³ Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how things go with me. ²⁴ Still, I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon. ^{‡‡}

About Epaphroditus

²⁵ However, I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier; also your messenger and minister to my need; ²⁶ since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. ²⁷ Well, he really was sick, nearly to death, but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but also on me, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸ So I sent him the more eagerly, that upon seeing him you might have joy, and I be less anxious. ²⁹ Receive him in Sovereign with great joy, and hold such men in honor, ³⁰ because for the work of the Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, ^{‡‡} to complete what was lacking in your service toward me.

Paul's example

3 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in Sovereign. For me to write the same things to you is not troublesome and for you it is the safe thing. ² Watch out for the 'dogs', watch out for the bad workers, watch out for the mutilation! ^{‡‡‡3} For it is we who are the circumci-

† This statement puzzles me; wouldn't Epaphroditus qualify? Perhaps Paul had in mind a messenger who would return with news, since Epaphroditus would stay there. †† Unfortunately, things have not changed much in 2,000 years. ‡ That is what the Text says. ‡† Recall that Paul was writing from prison. ‡‡ Right. That is the kind the Church and the world need to see. ‡‡† The repetition of the "watch out for" presumably indicates three distinct objects. Paul evidently considered that the three types of people constituted a threat, but how can we identify and distinguish them? "The mutilation" is explained, by contrast, in the next verse—it refers to those who insisted on physical circumcision, but without a change of heart. This was a heresy within the broader Christian community that had originated in Jerusalem. As for the "bad workers", the adjective used is not 'malignant', that refers to aggressive evil. A bad worker produces work that is inferior, careless, or even sabotage, and in consequence can be damaging and dangerous. I suppose Paul is referring to people within the Christian community who are not really committed to Christ and His Kingdom. As for the 'dogs', I am obliged to confess that I do not know who Paul was referring to, though the use of the definite article indicates a specific group that

sion, the ones who worship by God's Spirit and glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in flesh ⁴ (though I myself actually have basis for such confidence).

About Paul

If anyone else thinks he has basis for confidence in flesh, I even more: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; with respect to the Law, a Pharisee; ⁶ with respect to zeal, persecuting the Church; with respect to the righteousness that is in the law, blameless. ^{‡‡‡}

⁷ But such things as were gain to me, these I have considered loss for the sake of the Christ. ⁸ Yes indeed, in fact I actually consider everything to be a loss for the sake of the excelling thing, the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord [§]—for His sake I have already lost everything ^{§†} (and consider it as trash), so that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having as my righteousness that of the Law but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness of God based on that faith; ¹⁰ so that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the sharing in His sufferings, ^{§††} becoming like Him in His death, ^{§†††} and so, somehow, ^{§††} that I may arrive into the resurrection from among the dead ¹²—not that I have already obtained it or have already been perfected; but I press on to actually claim that for which Christ Jesus claimed me.

the Philippians would recognize. In Deuteronomy 23:18 'dog' apparently refers to a male prostitute, a catamite, and is declared to be an abomination. In OT times dogs were scavengers and therefore unclean, and were generally looked down upon. In Jesus' day Jews referred to Gentiles as 'dogs', but since many Gentiles are in the Church (and the church in Philippi doubtless had a large Gentile contingent) that is certainly not the intended meaning here. The 'dogs' in Matthew 7:6 react in an aggressively hostile manner against what is holy; I take it that they are people who are overtly serving evil, and being malignant they are aggressive. I would say that Paul certainly had a copy of Matthew's Gospel, and may well be following the Lord's use. This text may be referring to that sort of person, and in that event they would be outside the congregation. ‡‡‡ Since Paul did not choose to be born to Hebrew parents, Benjaminites, nor to be circumcised the eighth day, these were advantages of birth. The rest was his choice. He is claiming that if Judaism could save, he was saved. § The most important thing in this life is to know Jesus Christ as Lord. (One is reminded of the parables of the treasure and the pearl.) §† Since Paul was born a Roman citizen, his father was wealthy enough to buy that privilege. Had Paul (Saul) remained in Tarsus, he would probably have had an established social position. §†† The power of His resurrection is something I would really like to have, but if the price is to share in His sufferings... §‡ We cannot resurrect if we have not died. §†† "And so, somehow"—this really does not sound like 'once saved, always saved'. The writings of the Apostle Paul contain a variety of clear declarations to the effect that God is Sovereign; they equally contain a variety of clear declarations to the effect that we are responsible. In spite of having given up everything for Christ, in spite of being an Apostle, Paul is not resting on his laurels, is not taking anything for granted. He clearly recognizes his own responsibility to "press on".

¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have already claimed it, but this: forgetting the things behind and straining toward those ahead, ^{†14} I press on toward the goal for the prize, the upward call from God ^{††} because of Christ Jesus.

Our citizenship is in Heaven

¹⁵ So then, those of us who are mature should have this mentality, but if on some point you think differently, God will reveal that to you as well. ^{†16} Only, in what we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. ^{††}

¹⁷ Brothers, join together in imitating me, and having us ^{††} as a pattern take note of those who walk in the same way. ^{†††18} Because many are walking as enemies of the cross of Christ—of whom I told you often, and now tell you even with tears— ¹⁹ whose end is ruin, whose god is their stomach, and whose glory is in their shame; their mind is only on earthly things. ^{†††20} But our citizenship is in Heaven, and it is from there that we eagerly await *our* Deliverer, [§] Sovereign Jesus Christ; ²¹ who will transform the body of our humiliation ^{§†} so that it will be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working by which He is indeed able to subject all things to Himself.

4 So then, my brothers, beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, do stand fast in Sovereign in this way, ^{§††} dear ones.

Concluding considerations

To individuals

² I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to come to agreement in the Lord. ³ Yes, I urge you too, genuine yokefellow, ^{§†} help these women who labored with me

† *When Paul (he was still Saul) met Jesus on the road to Damascus he underwent a complete change of direction. †† "The upward call from God", that is the real prize; and the only reason the Father calls anyone is because of Jesus Christ. ‡ Paul is assuming that they will be listening to the Holy Spirit. †† Less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "let us be of the same mind" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). †† By changing from 'me' to 'us' I suppose Paul is including Timothy. ††† I take this as a personal challenge—to be a pattern that others can use to distinguish between friends and enemies of the cross. Since the cross of Christ represents death to self, most people are not interested. ††† Apparently relativistic, humanistic materialists have been around for quite a while. § He will deliver us from this world scene, with emphasis upon the glorification of our bodies. §† Although, as the Psalmist says, we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14), it is also the case that our physical bodies limit us, and not infrequently that limitation reaches the point of being humiliating. Personally, I am ready and waiting for my glorified body, but in the meantime, I am very happy to be able to contribute to Christ's Kingdom down here. §†† "This way" presumably refers to imitating Paul. §‡ We have here a common word for 'yokefellow', and although the context seems to ask for a proper name we don't know of any examples elsewhere of such use. Referring back to 2:25, the description of Epaphroditus makes him a good candidate. He is car-*

ing in the Gospel, and with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life. ^{§††}

Filling the mind with good things

⁴ Rejoice in Sovereign always; again I say, rejoice!
⁵ Let your forbearing spirit be evident to all; the Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, ^{§†} but in everything, by prayer and petition along with thanksgiving, ^{§‡} let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, that surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ^{§§†}

⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honorable, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are commendable—whatever is of excellent character and whatever is praiseworthy—ponder *SUCH* things. ^{§§†9} Put into practice the things that you learned, received, heard and saw in me, ^{§§§} and the God of peace will be with you.

Thanks for material support

¹⁰ I rejoice in the Lord greatly that you have renewed your concern for me once again; of course you were concerned, just lacked the opportunity. ¹¹ I am not saying this because of lack, since I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be restricted, and I know what it is to have an abundance; everywhere and in every way I have been initiated both into being well fed and into being hungry, both into having plenty and into having need. ¹³ I can handle anything ¹⁸ through Christ who strengthens me. ¹⁴ Nevertheless you have done well in sharing with me in my trial.

¹⁵ Now you Philippians know very well that in the beginning of the Gospel, ¹⁹ when I left Macedonia, no congregation shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you only. ¹⁶ Yes, even in Thessalonica, both once and again, you sent aid for my need. ¹⁷ Not that I want the gift, but I want the fruit that is being added to your account. ²⁰¹⁸ I have received everything and have plenty; I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the things you sent, a fra-

rying this letter, and being from Philippi he would be familiar with the facts in the case. ^{§‡†} The "Book of Life" is *THE* place to have your name. ^{§†} Do not be a worrywart. ^{§‡} We need to be careful not to forget the thanksgiving when we pray. Remember past blessings. ^{§§†} This is the greatest protection on the market. ^{§§‡} Is this list the sort of thing you will find on television or the Internet? We need to remember Psalm 101:3, "I will set nothing wicked before my eyes". ^{§§§} Paul is forthright in offering himself as an example, which is a challenge to us to live in such a way that we can do the same. He even guarantees the blessing of "the God of peace". ¹⁸ In the context Paul is not claiming to be all-powerful ('I can do all things'), but God's grace is sufficient for meeting whatever comes his way. ¹⁹ I suppose he means the beginning for them. ²⁰ When we die we cannot take any money or material goods with us, but we can send it on ahead, investing in Christ's Kingdom.

grant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. ¹⁹ My God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. †

²⁰ Now to our God and Father be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Sign-off

²¹ Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. ²² All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household.

²³ The grace of the Sovereign, Jesus Christ, be with you all. †† Amen.

† 2 Corinthians 9:6-12 explains how God's economy works.

†† Instead of "you all", some 9% of the Greek manuscripts have 'your spirit' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, etc.).