

MATTHEW'S ACCOUNT

The Family Line of Jesus the Messiah

1 This is a record of the family line of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. ²Abraham fathered Isaac, Isaac fathered Jacob, and Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers. ³Judah had^a Perez and Zerah—their mother was Tamar.^b Zerah had Hezron, and Hezron had Aram. ⁴Aram had Aminadab, Aminadab had Nashon, and Nashon had Salmon.^c ⁵Salmon had Boaz, whose mother was Rahab.^d Boaz had Obed,^e whose mother was Ruth, Obed had Jesse, and ⁶Jesse had David (that is, *King David*).

David had Solomon, whose mother had been the wife of Uriah.^f ⁷Solomon had Rehoboam, Rehoboam had Abijah, Abijah had Asaph.^g ⁸Asaph had Joram, and Joram had Uzziah.^h ⁹Uzziah had Jotham, Jotham had Ahaz, and Ahaz had Hezekiah.ⁱ ¹⁰Hezekiah had Manasseh,^j Manasseh had Amon, Amon had Josiah, and ¹¹Josiah had Jeconiah^k and his brothers at the time of the forced move to Babylon.^l

¹²After the forced move to Babylon, Jeconiah had Salathiel, Salathiel had Zerubbabel,^m ¹³Zerubbabel had Abiud, and Abiud had Eliakim.ⁿ Eliakim had Azor, ¹⁴Azor had Zadok, Zadok had Achim, and Achim had Eliud.^o ¹⁵Eliud had Eliezar,^p

^a Lit. “fathered,” here and through v. 16.

^b Prn. **per-ezz, zee-ra, tay-mar**.

^c Prn. **am-minn-a-clab, nash-an, sall-man**.

^d Prn. **boe-azz, ray-hab**.

^e Prn. **oe-bed**.

^f Prn. **yoo-rye-a**.

^g Prn. **ree-oe-boe-am, ab-bye-ja, ay-suff** (rhymes with “hay stuff”).

^h Prn. **uz-zye-a**.

ⁱ Prn. **joe-tham, ay-hazz, hezz-a-kye-a**.

^j Prn. **man-nass-a**.

^k Prn. **jek-ka-nye-a**.

^l This is known as the Babylonian Exile. The Babylonians invaded Judah and forced the main bulk of the population to move to Babylon.

^m Prn. **sal-lay-theey-el, zer-roo-ba-bel**.

ⁿ Prn. **ab-bye-ad, a-lye-a-kim**.

^o Prn. **zay-dok, ay-kim, el-lye-udd**.

^p Prn. **ell-ee-ay-zer**.

Eliezar had Matthan, Matthan had Jacob, and ¹⁶Jacob had Joseph, the husband of Mary. It was from her that Jesus was born, who is called “Messiah.”^a

¹⁷So in the total generations from Abraham to David there were fourteen generations, from David to the forced move to Babylon there were fourteen generations, and from the forced move to the Messiah there were fourteen generations.

The Birth of Jesus the Messiah (Lk. 2:1-7)

¹⁸This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. After his mother Mary had become formally engaged^b to Joseph, but before their union, it was discovered that she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Joseph, her husband, was a man of integrity.^c Not wanting her to be disgraced, he intended to divorce her secretly. ²⁰But while he was thinking about these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. The angel said, “Joseph, David’s son, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife. The child in her has been conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹She’s going to give birth to a son, and you’re going to name him Jesus,^d because he will save his people^e from their sins.^f

²²All of this happened so that what had been said by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled:

²³Look! The virgin will conceive, and will give birth to a son. And they will call him by the name Emmanuel (which is translated, “God with us”).^g

²⁴Joseph woke up and did as the angel of the Lord had instructed him. He took Mary as his wife, ²⁵and he did not become intimate with her until she had given birth to her baby. And Joseph named him Jesus.

Mystics Travel from the East to See the Newborn King of the Jews

2 Jesus was born in Bethlehem, which is in Judea,^h during the reign of Herod.ⁱ At that time, some mystics^j arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked, ²“Where can we find the newborn King of the Jews? We saw his star in the East, and we have come to worship him.” ³This news caused a stir with King Herod and the whole city of Jerusalem. ⁴Herod gathered all the chief priests and scripture

^a See Bible Words.

^b Lit. “betrothed.” “Betrothal” is a stronger concept in ancient Israel than engagement as we know it. It is more like an escrow period on the marriage contract than a period after the couple publicly announces plans to marry.

^c Traditionally: “Joseph was a righteous man.” The word here connotes high ethical integrity more than religiosity.

^d Jesus comes from the Hebrew name Yeshua, which means “The Living One Saves.”

^e People is singular, meaning the nation of Israel or the Jewish people as an ethnic group.

^f The word here connotes failures, or shortcomings.

^g Isa. 7:14.

^h Pm. joo-dee-a.

ⁱ Pm. *herr-udd*. This is Herod the Great, the father of Herod Antipas, whom we will meet in Mt. 14.

^j Lit. “mages,” meaning a person expert in the interpretation of dreams, astrology, and the esoteric sciences.

experts in the country,^a and questioned them about where the Messiah was supposed to be born. ⁵They told him, “In Bethlehem, Judea, just as the prophet wrote:

6Bethlehem in the land of Judah,
 You are in no way the least of the leaders of Judah.
 Because a leader is going to go out from you who’ll be a shepherd to
 Israel, my people.”^b

⁷Then Herod secretly sent for the mystics again, and determined exactly when the star had appeared.^c ⁸He then sent them to Bethlehem, with these instructions: “Go and find out everything you can^d about the child. And when you find him, send word to me, so that I can come and worship him too.” ⁹After their hearing with the King, they went on their way. Sure enough,^e the star that they had seen in the East led them, continuing to move^f until it finally stood still over the place where the child was.

¹⁰As they looked at the star, they were completely filled with joy.^g ¹¹They came into the house, and there the child was, with Mary, his mother.^h They fell on their facesⁱ and worshiped him. Then they unlocked strongboxes that they had brought with them,^j and presented gifts to him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²Afterwards^k they were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, and they traveled back to their home country by another road.

Joseph and Mary Escape to Egypt with Jesus

¹³After they left the country, suddenly an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, and said, “Wake up! Take the child and his mother, and get^l to Egypt as fast as you can! Stay there until I tell you! Herod is about to set up a search for the child, so that he can assassinate him!”^m ¹⁴When Joseph woke up, he took the child and his mother and left the country for Egypt that very night. ¹⁵He stayed there until Herod died. (That was so that the message of the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled, which says, “I called my son out of Egypt.”ⁿ)

^a Lit. “scribes of the people” (sg.). See “Bible Words” under Scripture Experts.

^b Mic. 5:2.

^c More literally: “carefully determined from them the time period of the star’s visibility.”

^d Or “make careful inquiry.”

^e Lit. “behold.”

^f Lit. “going.”

^g Lit. “they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.”

^h Lit. “And they came into the house and saw the child with Mary his mother.”

ⁱ This was an intentional falling to the floor, not a faint.

^j Lit. “their strongboxes.”

^k Lit. “And.”

^l Lit. “flee.”

^m Lit. “in order to destroy him.”

ⁿ Hos. 11:1.

Herod Kills All the Male Children

¹⁶Soon afterwards, Herod realized that he had been outsmarted by the mystics, and he was furious. He sent men to Bethlehem and its surrounding regions, to kill all the male children two and under, based on the point in time that he had determined by questioning the mystics.

¹⁷Through these events the prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled, which says,

¹⁸A sound was heard in Ramah:
The sound of lots of crying and wailing.
It was Rachel, crying for her children.
She wouldn't let anyone comfort her,
Because they are no more.^a

Joseph and Mary Return from Egypt with Jesus

¹⁹When Herod eventually died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. The angel said, ²⁰“Wake up! Take the child and his mother and go back to the land of Israel. Those who were trying to take the child's life are dead.” ²¹When Joseph awoke, he took the child and his mother and went back to the land of Israel. ²²But he heard that Archelaus was reigning as king in Judea in place of his father Herod, and he was afraid to go back there. Having been cautioned in a dream, he came back not to Judea, but to the area around Galilee. ²³Eventually he settled in a town called Nazareth. That's how the prophets' saying came to be fulfilled: “He will be called a Nazarene.”^b

John the Baptizer Preaches in the Wilderness (Mk 1:2-8; Lk. 3:1-20)

3 Back in those days, John the Baptizer^c was beginning to preach in the Judean^d wilderness. He would say, ²“Change your hearts!^e Heaven's Reign^f is nearly here!”^g ³John is the one Isaiah the prophet was talking about when he said,

There is a sound of someone shouting in the wilderness:
“Get the Lord's path ready! Straighten up his pathways!”^h

⁴As for John,ⁱ he had a garment made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. His diet consisted of locusts and wild honey. ⁵At that time, people of Jerusalem began to go out to him, and so did the whole area around the Jordan

^a Jer. 31:15.

^b Judg. 13:5; Isa. 11:1; 53:2.

^c In ordinary English: “John the Dunker.”

^d Pm. joo-dee-an.

^e Traditionally: “repent.” This word is not about feeling bad about what you've done, but about changing your attitude in a way that results in different behavior.

^f Lit. “the kingdom of the heavens.”

^g Lit. “has come near.”

^h Lit. “Straighten out his paths.” Isa. 40:3.

ⁱ Lit. “John himself.”

river. ⁶And they got baptized by him in the Jordan river, as they confessed their sins.

⁷When John saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You offspring of poisonous snakes!^a Who warned you to run from the wrath that’s about to come? ⁸Bear fruit worthy of a change of heart.^b ⁹And don’t think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ Because I’m telling you: God can raise up children for Abraham out of these stones! ¹⁰The ax is already laid to the root of the trees, and every tree that doesn’t bear good fruit is going to be chopped down and thrown in the fire. ¹¹I’m baptizing you with water for a change of heart.^c But the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I am. I’m not even worthy to carry his sandals! He is the one who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹²His winnowing fan is in his hand, and he’ll clean his threshing floor well, and he’ll collect his wheat for storage.^d But the chaff he’ll burn with fire that can’t be put out.”

Jesus is Baptized by John (Mk 1:9-11; Lk. 3:21-22; Jn 1:29-34)

¹³Then Jesus arrived at the Jordan from Galilee. He came to John to be baptized by him. ¹⁴But John tried to stop him. He said, “I need to be baptized by you, and you’re coming to me??” ¹⁵But Jesus said back to him, “Allow it this time. We have to do it this way,^e in order to fulfill^f everything right.”^g So John let him receive baptism. ¹⁶After he was baptized, Jesus came right up out of the water. And suddenly the heavens opened up, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down, as though a dove were coming to land on him. ¹⁷Then there was a voice out of the heavens, saying, “This is my Son! I love him, and I’m pleased with him!”^h

Jesus is Tempted by the Devil (Mk 1:12-13; Lk. 4:1-13)

4 At that time Jesus was led up into the high wildernessⁱ by the Spirit. There he would be tempted by the devil. After fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ²And the tempter came up and said to him, “If you’re the Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves of bread.” ³But Jesus answered, “Scripture says:^j

^a Lit. “vipers,” or “adders.”

^b Traditionally: “worthy of repentance.” See nt. on Mt. 3:2 above.

^c Traditionally: “for repentance.”

^d The ancient mss have slight variations here. It could also be “the wheat for his stores,” or “the wheat into storage.”

^e Or “It is fitting”; this rendering fails, however. The implication is that no alternative will suffice.

^f The word “fulfill” hints at prophetic fulfillment.

^g Lit. “all righteousness.” This statement is cryptic and laden with many layers of meaning.

^h Lit. “This is my Son, the beloved, with whom I’m pleased.”

ⁱ The fact that Jesus was led “up” into the wilderness assumes the geography around the Jordan river. Dry, uninhabited mountains lie beyond both banks—particularly to the east—of the Jordan.

^j Lit. “It is written.” Jesus is appealing to the undisputed authority of the scriptures.

A human being shouldn't^a just live on bread,^b but on every word that comes out of God's mouth."^c

5 Then the devil took him away, into the holy city. And he stood him on the pinnacle of the Temple building. 6 He said to him, "If you're the Son of God, jump down!^d After all, scripture says:^e

He'll give his angels instructions about you, and they'll lift you with their hands so that you never hit your foot against a stone."^f

7 Jesus said to him, "Once again, scripture says:^g

Don't tempt the Lord your God.^h

8 Again the devil took him away, to a very high mountain. And he showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 He said to him, "I'll give all of these to you if you bow downⁱ to the ground and worship me.

10 Then Jesus said to him, "Go away, Satan! Because scripture says:^j

You are to worship the Lord your God,
And you are to serve him alone.^k

11 Then the devil finally left him. And suddenly angels came and served^l him.

Jesus Begins His Ministry in Galilee (Mk 1:14-15; Lk. 4:14-15)

12 Later,^m when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he came back home to Galilee. 13 And he moved away from Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum.ⁿ Capernaum is on the shore of the lake, in the territories of Zebulun^o and Naphtali.^p 14 That was so that the saying of Isaiah could be fulfilled, which goes:^q

15 Lands of Zebulun and Naphtali,
On the way to the lake, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles!

^a Lit. "won't."

^b Or "food." The same word means both in Greek.

^c Deut. 8:3.

^d Lit. "throw yourself down." But it means jump, not do a dive.

^e Lit. "it is written."

^f Ps. 91:11-12.

^g Lit. "it is written."

^h Deut. 6:16.

ⁱ Lit. "if you fall."

^j Lit. "it is written."

^k Deut. 6:13-14.

^l Lit. "were serving."

^m Lit. "And."

ⁿ Prn. cup-per-nee-am.

^o Prn. zeb-a-lan.

^p Prn. naf-ta-lee.

^q Lit. "saying".

¹⁶The people sitting in darkness saw a great light!
To those who sat in a region of death and in death's shadow,
Light came like the dawn!^a

¹⁷From then on, Jesus began to preach this message:^b “Change your hearts, because Heaven’s Reign^c is nearly here!”^d

Jesus Calls His First Followers (Mk 1:16-20; Lk. 5:1-11)

¹⁸As Jesus was walking along the shore of Lake Galilee, he saw two brothers: Simon, who is known as Peter, and his brother Andrew. They were throwing their casting nets in the lake, since they were fishermen. ¹⁹Jesus said to them, “Come with^e me, and I’ll train you to fish for people.^f ²⁰And they left their nets right away, and went with him. ²¹Going a little ways further, he saw two other brothers: James, Zebedee’s son, and his brother John. They were in the boat with their father Zebedee, working on their nets. Jesus called out to them, ²²and right away they left the boat with^g their father and followed him.

Jesus Preaches and Heals All around Galilee (Mk 1:35-39; Lk. 4:44; 6:17-19)

²³Jesus went around all of Galilee. He taught in their synagogues,^h preached the good news of God’s Reign,ⁱ and healed all sorts of illnesses and disabilities among the people.^j ²⁴And the news about him spread through all of Syria. People brought him all the sick, whatever kind of illness they had. Whether they were suffering with terrible chronic pain, afflicted with demons,^k mentally unstable,^l or paralyzed, he healed them. ²⁵And large crowds of people followed him—from Galilee, Decapolis,^m Jerusalem, Judea, and Transjordan.

^a Lit. “Light dawned for them.” Isa. 9:1-2.

^b Lit. “and say.”

^c Lit. “the kingdom of the heavens.”

^d Lit. “has come near.”

^e Lit. “after.” This is going to turn out to have been a double meaning of “come with me” and “be my followers” (see the following statement).

^f Lit. “make you fishers of people.” Just as in English, to say in Greek, “I will make a fisherman of you,” is to offer training.

^g Lit. “and.”

^h Prn. *šimn-α-gaggz*. See “Bible Words.”

ⁱ Lit. “the kingdom.”

^j “People” is singular.

^k Lit. “demonized.”

^l Lit. “moonstruck,” “lunatic.” This word could mean “epileptic,” but I suspect that what we call epilepsy will have been only one variety within a loose cluster of maladies named by this word.

^m Prn. *deh-capp-o-liss*.

Jesus Teaches on the Mountainside (Lk. 6:17-49)

5 When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on the mountainside. When he sat down there, his followers^a came up to him, and he taught them. He said:^b

Who is Really Blessed? (Lk. 6:20-23)

1 Those who are poor right down to their spirit are blessed:^c Heaven’s Reign is for them.^d

2 Those who grieve are blessed: they’re the ones who will be comforted.

3 Those who are gentle are blessed: they’re the ones who will inherit the earth.

4 Those who are hungry and thirsty for justice are blessed: they’re the ones who will be satisfied.

5 Those who are merciful to others are blessed: they’re the ones who will have mercy shown to them.

6 Those who have clean hearts are blessed: they’re the ones who will see God.

7 Those who work for peace are blessed: they’re the ones who will be called God’s children.

8 Those who have been persecuted^e because they stood up for justice are blessed: Heaven’s Reign is for them.

9 You are blessed, whenever people insult you, and persecute you, and say all sorts of horrible things about you^f because of me. 10 Be happy and celebrate, because there is a big reward for you in heaven.^g After all, that’s how they persecuted the prophets who came before you.

You are Salt and Light (Mk 9:50; Lk. 14:34-35)

11 You’re the salt of the earth. But if the salt itself has lost its flavor,^h what’s it going to be salted with? It isn’t useful for anything anymore, except to be thrown out for people to walk on.ⁱ 12 You’re the light of the world. It’s not possible for a city to be hidden if it sits on a hill. 13 For that matter, people don’t light a lamp and put it

^a Lit. “students,” “pupils,” or “disciples.” In current English we wouldn’t describe a large crowd that followed a traveling religious teacher as the person’s “students.”

^b Lit. “He opened his mouth and taught them, saying.”

^c When reading aloud, the accent in these sentences should be on the word “blessed,” to emphasize that God’s reality overturns the common conception—that most of these conditions are negative or imply weakness.

^d Lit. “because theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

^e The word here can mean “persecuted,” “hunted,” “hounded,” “harassed,” or “prosecuted” (legally by the government).

^f Lit. “every evil thing about you.”

^g Lit. “for your reward is great in the heavens.”

^h Lit. “becomes insipid.” The Greek word here, like “insipid,” can convey both boringness and mental dullness.

ⁱ Lit. “except to be thrown out and walked on by people”—that is, to keep a path clear by discouraging the growth of weeds.

^j “For that matter, people don’t”: lit. “Neither do they.”

under a container. No, they put it on its stand. That way,^a it provides light for everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine in front of people, so that they see the good things that you do and give glory to your Father in heaven.

The Law and the Prophets

¹⁷Don't think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets.^b I didn't come to destroy them, but to fulfill them. ¹⁸I'm telling you seriously: until heaven and earth have passed away, not so much as one small letter or pen stroke will pass away from the Law—not until everything in them has come about! ¹⁹So whoever repeals even one of the least of the Law's commands,^c and teaches the same to other people, they will be known as a totally insignificant^d person in Heaven's Reign. But whoever does them, and teaches them, will be known as a great person in Heaven's Reign. ²⁰I'm saying that unless your integrity^e surpasses that of the scripture experts and Pharisees, you have no chance of entering^f Heaven's Reign.

Anger and Judgment (Lk. 12:57-59)

²¹You've heard that it was said to people in olden times, "Don't murder,"^g and that whoever murders will face^h judgment. ²²But I say to you that anyone who's furious at a fellow human being will face judgment. Also, anyone that says "Fool!" will face the High Court.ⁱ And anyone who says, "Stupid!" will face the fire of Gehenna.^j ²³So suppose you are just bringing your offering^k to the altar, and right there you remember that your fellow human being has something against you. ²⁴Leave your gift there in front of the altar! Go, get reconciled with the person! Then, come back and offer your gift. ²⁵Be quick, make amends with the person who has a complaint against you,^l while you are both on the way to court. Otherwise the person will turn you over to the judge. The judge will then turn you over to the guard,^m and you'll be thrown in prison. ²⁶I'm telling you seriously: you *will not*ⁿ get out of there until you've paid back the last cent!

^a Lit. "on the lamp stand, and..."

^b In other words, the parts of the Old Testament containing divine commands.

^c Lit. "these commands."

^d Lit. "will be called least."

^e Traditionally: "your righteousness."

^f Lit. "you will not—will not—enter."

^g Exod. 20:13; Deut. 5:17.

^h Lit. "will be liable to," and similarly below.

ⁱ Lit. "Sanhedrin." This was the native law-making body and high court of the land under the Roman occupation.

^j Prn. *ge-hemm-a*. Gehenna is thought to be one of the main garbage dumps outside the walls of Jerusalem. Trash was burned there. It is metaphorical for a final state of destruction.

^k Or "gift."

^l Lit. "your opponent at law."

^m Or "bailiff"; lit. "attendant."

ⁿ Lit. "you will not—will not—." In reading, this word should be emphasized.

Breaking Your Marriage Vows with Your Eyes

²⁷You've heard it said, "Don't break your marriage vows."^a ²⁸But I say to you, every man that looks at a woman with a lustful attitude towards her^b has already broken his marriage vows with her in his heart. ²⁹If your right eye trips you up, take it out and throw it away from yourself. After all, you are better off losing one body part—rather than your whole body being thrown into Gehenna. ³⁰And if your right hand trips you up, cut it off and throw it away from yourself. Again,^c you are better off losing one body part, rather than your whole body going into Gehenna.

Divorce (Mt. 19:9; Mk 10:11-12; Lk. 16:18)

³¹It was also said, "Whoever wants to divorce his wife must give her a written certificate of divorce."^d ³²But I say to you, every man who divorces his wife—unless it's a matter of sexual immorality—forces her to break her marriage vows. And the person who marries a divorced person breaks marriage vows too.

Swearing Oaths

³³Once again, you've heard that it was said to people in the olden days,^e "Don't break your vows—give the Lord the things that you've vowed to give."^f ³⁴But I say to you, don't swear oaths at all. Not by heaven, because it's God's throne.^g ³⁵Not by earth, because it's his footrest.^h And not by Jerusalem, because it's the city of the Great King.ⁱ ³⁶You shouldn't even swear an oath by your own head. After all, you can't even make one hair white or black. ³⁷So^j let the word yes be yes with you, and let the word no be no. Anything more than that comes from the Evil One.

Fighting Back (Lk. 6:29-31)

³⁸You've heard that it was said, "eye for eye," and "tooth for tooth."^k ³⁹But I say to you, don't stand up against the malicious person. Instead, if the person smacks you on the right cheek, turn and offer the other one to them too. ⁴⁰And if someone is trying to sue you and take your shirt, let them have your coat^l too. ⁴¹And if somebody forces you to carry something one mile, go with them another mile.

^a Traditionally: "Don't commit adultery." Exod. 20:14; Deut. 5:18.

^b Lit. "in order to lust towards her."

^c Lit. "For."

^d Deut. 24:1.

^e Lit. "it was said to the ancients."

^f Lev. 19:12; Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21.

^g Isa. 66:1.

^h Isa. 66:1.

ⁱ Ps. 48:2.

^j Lit. "But."

^k Exod. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21. If someone injures someone else maliciously, the penalty is that the person gets done to them exactly what they did to the other. If you maliciously knocked out my right front tooth, the sentence is, your right front tooth is extracted.

^l Or "robe."

42If a person asks you for something, give. And if a person wants to borrow from you, don't turn away.

Loving Your Enemy (Lk. 6:27-28; 32-26)

43You've heard that it was said, "Love your neighbor,"^a and hate your enemy. 44But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for your persecutors. 45That way you'll be children of your Father in heaven. After all, he makes his sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on people of integrity^b and people who lack integrity.^c 46After all, if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Don't even the tax collectors do that? 47And if you're only friendly towards your family members,^d are you doing any more than anyone else? Don't the Gentiles do that? 48So be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect.^e

Giving Secretly

6 When you do a good deed,^f make sure not to do it in front of people to be seen by them. Otherwise you won't have a reward with your Father in heaven. 2So when you give to the poor,^g don't blow the trumpet ahead of you. That's what the play-actors do, in the synagogues and along the streets. They're trying to get people to admire them. I'm telling you seriously: they're getting all the reward they're going to get.^h 3But when you give to the poor, don't even let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. 4That way, your giving will be secret. And your Father, who sees what is secret, will reward you.

Jesus Teaches His Followers How to Pray (Lk. 11:2-4)

5Also, when you pray, don't be like the play-actors. They love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that they can be visible to people. But I'm telling you seriously: they're getting all the reward they're going to get! 6But when you pray, go in your private room and lockⁱ the door. Pray to your Father secretly. And your Father, who sees what is secret, will reward you. 7And in your prayers, don't go on and on like the Gentiles do. They're thinking that to be really heard you have to use a lot of words. 8It shouldn't be that way with you. After all, your Father knows the things you need before you even ask him. So pray like this:

^a Lev. 19:18.

^b Traditionally: "the righteous."

^c Traditionally: "the unrighteous."

^d Lit. "if you only greet your brothers."

^e Lev. 19:2.

^f Lit. "your righteousness," or "your just act."

^g Lit. "whenever you do mercy."

^h Literally, here and below, "They're getting their full reward."

ⁱ Lit. "fasten," or "latch," or "close."

9Our Father in heaven,
 Let your name be kept holy!
 10Let your Reign come!
 Let your will be done—on earth just as it is in heaven!^a
 11Give us the food we need for today,
 12And forgive us the debts of our sins,
 Just as we ourselves have forgiven the debts of those who've sinned
 against us.^b
 13And please don't make us face temptation,^c
 But rescue us from the Evil One.^d

14Because if you forgive people their offenses, your Father in heaven will also forgive you. 15But if you don't forgive people,^e your Father won't forgive your offenses either.

How to Fast

16When you fast,^f don't be all mournful-looking like the play-actors. They make ugly faces so that it will be obvious to other people that they're fasting. I'm telling you seriously, they're getting all the reward they're going to get! 17But you, when you are fasting, fix^g your hair and wash your face. 18Don't let it be obvious to people that you are fasting. Instead, let it be for your Father, in secret. And your Father, who sees what is secret, will reward you.

Heavenly Wealth Versus Greed and the Worship of Money (Lk. 12:33-34; 11:34-36)

19Don't store up your wealth on earth. Down here, moths and rust eat things away, and burglars break in and steal things. 20Instead, store up wealth for yourselves in heaven. Up there, moths and rust don't eat things away, and burglars don't break in and steal things. 21After all, wherever your wealth is, that's where your heart will be. 22The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light inside. 23But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be dark inside. So if the light in you is darkness, that is some real darkness. 24No one can serve two masters. They'll either hate the one and love the other, or be loyal to the one and despise the other. You can't serve both God and worldly wealth.^h

^a Or "As in heaven, so on earth."

^b Or, more literally, "Free us from our debts, as we too have forgiven those who've owed us." In Aramaic, Jesus' mother tongue, the word "debt" is a familiar term for sin (see Luke's version of this prayer, which uses the Greek word for "sin": Lk. 10:4). As it stands in Greek, Matthew's version of the prayer can be taken as talking about the literal forgiveness of debts.

^c Lit. "And don't bring us into temptation/into a test."

^d Or, possibly, "from evil."

^e Or "forgive people their sins." The ancient texts are split evenly, but the longer reading is slightly more likely to have arisen from the shorter one.

^f See "Bible Words."

^g Lit. "anoint," i.e. apply hair oil.

^h Lit. "mammon," possibly "the god of getting rich."

Stop Worrying and Trust God to Provide for You (Lk. 12:22-31)

²⁵So I'm telling you, don't worry about what you're going to eat, and what you're going to clothe your bodies with. Isn't your life more than food, and your body more than clothes? ²⁶Take a close look at the birds up in the sky.^a They don't plant or harvest, and they don't store away grain in bins—and your Father in heaven feeds them. Aren't you more important than they are? ²⁷And can any one of you add a single hour to your lifespan^b by worrying? ²⁸And why do you worry about clothes? Study these^c wildflowers. See how they grow? They don't work hard, and they don't make cloth.^d ²⁹But I'm telling you, even Solomon, with all of his glory, wasn't adorned like one of these. ³⁰And if God gives clothes like that to^e the grass out in the field—which is there today, and tomorrow is thrown in your oven—how much more will he clothe you? You have so little faith! ³¹So stop worrying and saying, “How are we going to eat? How are we going to drink? What are we going to use for clothes?” ³²Because these are all the things the Gentiles chase after. And^f your Father in heaven knows that you need them all. ³³Before all else seek out his Reign and his justice,^g and all these things will be given to you as well. So stop worrying about tomorrow. ³⁴Tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough headaches^h of its own.

Don't Judge Other People... (Lk. 6:37-42)

7 Don't judge, so that you don't get judged yourselves. ¹Because you are going to be judged by the same standard you use to judge others. You will be measured by the same yardstick you use to measure others. ²And how is it that you see the speck of sawdust that's in your friend'sⁱ eye, but you don't notice the board in your own eye? ³Or how do you say to your friend, “Let me get that speck out of your eye”—yet there is this board in yours! ⁴You play-actor!^j First get the board out of your own eye, and then you'll see well enough to get the speck of sawdust out of your friend's eye.

...But Don't be Foolish Either

• You shouldn't^k give something that is holy^l to the dogs,
And you shouldn't throw your pearls to the pigs.

^a Lit. “the birds of the sky.”

^b Or “a single cubit to his height.”

^c Lit. “the,” but since he's sitting on a hillside, it seems clear that he is pointing to the flowers all around his hearers.

^d “Make cloth”; lit. “spin.” Spinning is twisting fibers together to make thread or yarn to weave into cloth.

^e Lit. “And if God thus clothes.”

^f Lit. “For.”

^g Lit. “But seek first the [i.e. God's] kingdom and his [God's] justice.”

^h Or “bad experiences,” or “nastiness.”

ⁱ Lit. “your brother's,” here and below. It means your compatriot, your fellow human being that you have an ongoing relationship and sense of kinship with.

^j Or, depending on cultural context, this sentence can be rendered: “Poser!”

^k Literally, here and below, “Don't.”

^l That is, a piece of meat that is dedicated as an offering.

Otherwise the pigs^a will just trample them underfoot,
And the dogs^b will turn on you and tear you up.

Ask, Search, Knock—And Live by the Golden Rule (Lk. 11:9-13; 6:31)

⁷Ask, and it will be given to you.

Search, and you will find.

Knock, and the door will be opened for you.

⁸Because everyone who asks receives,

Everyone who seeks finds,

And everyone who knocks will be invited in.^c

⁹Suppose there is one of you whose child will ask for some bread. Will the person give the child a rock?^d ¹⁰Or suppose the child asks for some fish. Will the person give the child a snake? ¹¹So if you, bad as you are, know to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him? ¹²So however you want other people to treat you, that's how you should treat them. That's the Law and the Prophets, right there.^e

The Parable of the Narrow Gate (Lk. 13:24)

¹³Go^f through the narrow gate! Because there is a wide gate, and a broad path, that leads to ruin, and lots of people go^g through that one. ¹⁴The gate that leads to life is very narrow, and the path that leads to life is very tight, and only a few people find it.

The Parable of the Tree and Its Fruit (Mt. 12:33; Lk. 6:43-45)

¹⁵Watch out for the false prophets! They come to you dressed up as sheep, but under their costumes they're wolves on the hunt. ¹⁶You will recognize them by the fruit of their actions.^h You don't get grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles, do you? ¹⁷In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit. ¹⁸But a rotten tree bears bad fruit. It's impossible for a good tree to bear bad fruit, and a rotten tree doesn't bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that doesn't bear good fruit is chopped down and thrown in the fire. ²⁰So remember, it's by their fruit that you will recognize them.

^a Lit. "they." This is a familiar ancient poetic form called "chiasm," or the X form, in which the two outside members form a couplet, and the two inside members also form a couplet. Clearly the pigs trample and the dogs tear.

^b Lit. "they."

^c Lit. "And to the one who knocks it will be opened."

^d Lit. "Or is there among you a person whose son will ask him for bread/food—he won't give him a rock, will he?" I've made the formulation gender-inclusive.

^e Lit. "For this is the Law and the Prophets."

^f Lit. "Enter."

^g Lit. "enter."

^h Lit. "by their fruits." It is not what they say that most decisively reveals their character, but how they act.

Not Everyone Who Calls Jesus “Lord” Obeys Him (Lk. 6:46; 13:26-27)

²¹Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord!” will get into Heaven’s Reign. No, it will only be the person who actually does the will my Father in heaven. ²²Lots of people are going to say to me on that day, “Lord, Lord! Didn’t we prophesy in your name? Didn’t we kick out demons in your name too? And didn’t we even do lots of displays of power in your name?” ²³Then I will say right out loud to them, “I have never known you! Stay away from me, all of you who practice lawlessness!”

Hearing and Doing—The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders (Lk. 6:47-49)

²⁴So everyone who hears these sayings of mine, and puts them into practice, can be described like this. They’re like a smart person who builds their house on rock. ²⁵The rain comes down, and the rivers rise, and the winds blow. And they bash against that house, and it doesn’t fall down, because its foundation is on rock! ²⁶But^a everyone who hears these sayings of mine, and doesn’t put them into practice, is like a stupid person who builds their house on sand. ²⁷The rain comes down, and the rivers rise, and the winds blow. And they smash against that house, and it falls down with one big flop.

²⁸When Jesus had finished saying all these things, the crowd was just astounded at his teaching. ²⁹Unlike their scripture experts, he was teaching them as a person who had authority.

Jesus Makes a Leper Clean (Mk 1:40-45; Lk. 5:12-16)

8 When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds of people followed him. ²Suddenly a leper came up and bowed down in front of him. He said, “Sir, if you want to, you have the power to make me clean.” ³And Jesus reached out his hand and touched him. He said, “I do want to. Be clean.” Right away his leprosy was cleansed. ⁴And Jesus said to him, “Be sure not to tell anyone. Just go and present yourself to the priest. Then offer the gift that Moses prescribed.^b It’ll be a testimony to them.”

Jesus Heals a Roman Officer’s Servant (Lk. 7:1-10)

³As Jesus was going into Capernaum,^c a Roman officer^d came up to him asking for help. He said, “Sir, my son has gotten sick over at my house! He is paralyzed and in terrible pain!” ⁷Jesus said to him, “I’ll go and heal him.” ⁸And the Roman officer replied,^e “Sir, I’m not worthy for you to come under my roof. But just say the word, and my son will be healed. ⁹After all, I’m a person under authority, and I have soldiers under me. I say to this one, ‘Go!,’ and he goes. I say to that one, ‘Come!,’ and he comes. And I say to my slave, ‘Do this!,’ and he does it.” ¹⁰When

^a Lit. “And.”

^b See Lev. 14:2-32.

^c Prrn. cup-per-nee-um.

^d Lit. “centurion,” a captain in the Roman occupation force.

^e Lit. “the centurion answered and said.”

Jesus heard that, he was amazed. He said to the people with him, “I’m telling you very seriously, I haven’t seen faith like this with anyone in Israel! I’m telling you, lots of people are going to come from the East and from the West and eat the banquet dinner^a with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in Heaven’s Reign. ¹²But some of those who belong to God’s Reign^b are going to be thrown outside in the darkness. Out there, there’s going to be people crying and grinding their teeth.” ¹³Jesus said to the Roman officer,^c “Go on home. May it turn out for you just as you believed.” And the man’s son was healed at that moment.^d

Jesus Heals Peter’s Mother-in-Law and Many Others (Mk 1:29-34; Lk. 4:38-41)

¹⁴When Jesus came into Peter’s house, he saw Peter’s mother-in-law lying there sick and feverish. ¹⁵Jesus touched her hand, and her fever went away, and she got up and served him.

¹⁶When it got to be evening, they brought him lots of people who were afflicted with demons. Jesus kicked^e out the spirits with a single command,^f and healed everyone who had an illness.

¹⁷In that way, what was said by Isaiah the prophet was fulfilled:

He himself took our weaknesses,
And he took away our illnesses.^g

“I’m Going to Follow You!” (Lk. 9:57-62)

¹⁸When Jesus saw the size of the crowd around him, he gave the word to go over to the other side of the lake. ¹⁹And one of the scripture experts came up to him and said, “Teacher, I’m going to follow you wherever you go from here.” ²⁰Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and the birds up in the sky^h have nests. But the Human One doesn’t have anyplace to rest his head.” ²¹Another of his followers said to him, “Teacher, let me go off first and bury my father.” ²²But Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”

Jesus Calms the Storm (Mk 4:35-41; Lk. 8:22-25)

²³Jesus got into a boat, and his followers went with him. ²⁴Suddenly there was a big squallⁱ on the lake, so that the boat started getting swamped under the waves.

^a Lit. “come and lie down with Abraham...” Moderns sit to eat at a banquet; people of Jesus’ day reclined. “The banquet” is supplied to help bring forward the reference to Isa. 25:6.

^b Lit. “the children of the kingdom,” but it means “some of those who are children of the kingdom,” not “all the children of the kingdom.” See “Bible Words” under “Children of.”

^c Lit. “centurion.”

^d Lit. “in that hour.”

^e Lit. “threw.”

^f Lit. “with a word.” I don’t think it means one literal word, but that he only had to tell them once. Exorcisms in those days typically involved a lot of ritual words, so his being able to do it with one command was seen as remarkable.

^g Isa. 53:4.

^h Lit. “the birds of the sky.”

ⁱ Or “storm”; lit. “shaking.”

But Jesus was sleeping. ²⁵They came over to him and woke him up, and said, “Teacher, save us! We’re drowning!”^a ²⁶Jesus said to them, “Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!” Then he got up and told off the wind and the waves,^b and it became really calm. ²⁷The people were amazed. They said, “What kind of person is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

Jesus Heals Two Men from Demons (Mk 5:1-20; Lk. 8:26-39)

²⁸And Jesus got to the other side, to the Gadarenes area. There he was met by two demon-afflicted men, who came out of a cemetery.^c They were very hard to deal with—so much so that no one was strong enough to go by that road. ²⁹They suddenly screamed: “What do you want with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torture us?” ³⁰Now, a long ways from them there was a large herd of pigs grazing. ³¹And the demons asked Jesus, “Please, if you kick us out, send us into the herd of pigs.” ³²He said, “Go on.” And they came out and went over into the pigs. Suddenly the entire herd rushed off the cliff into the lake, and drowned.^d ³³And those who had been herding them ran away to the town. They reported everything, including the part about the demon-afflicted men. ³⁴Suddenly the whole town came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they asked him to please leave their area.

Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man (Mk 2:1-2; Lk. 5:17-26)

9 Jesus got into a boat and crossed the lake, and came to his own town. ²And they brought him a man who was paralyzed, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, “Have courage, son—your sins are forgiven.” ³But right then^e some of the scripture experts said to one another, “This man is blaspheming!”^f But^g Jesus saw how they were thinking. ⁴He said, “Why are you thinking such nasty things in your hearts? ⁵After all, which is easier? To say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? ⁶But just so you know that the Human One has authority on earth to forgive sins”—then he said to the paralyzed man, “Get up. Take your mat and go home.” ⁷And he got up and went home. ⁸When the crowds saw that, they were in awe. And they gave glory to God, that he would give such authority to human beings.

Jesus Calls Matthew to be a Follower (Mk 2:13-17; Lk. 5:27-32)

⁹Jesus went on from there, and saw a man sitting at a tax collection desk. His name was Matthew. Jesus said to him, “Come with me.”^h And he got up and went with

^a Lit. “perishing.”

^b “Waves”: lit. “lake,” here and in the next instance. But you wouldn’t say it that way in English.

^c Lit. “from among the tombs.”

^d Lit. “died in the waters.”

^e Lit. “And behold.”

^f Blaspheme: see “Bible Words.”

^g Lit. “And.”

^h Or “Follow me.” It’s a double meaning. He’s inviting Matthew not only to come along with him, but also to become his follower and student.

him. ¹⁰And it turned out that Jesus had dinner^a with him at his house. Now, ^bquite a number of tax collectors and sinners also came, and they had dinner^c with Jesus and his followers. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw that, they started saying to Jesus' followers, "Why is it that your teacher eats with tax collectors and sinners?" ¹²But he heard them, and said, "It's not healthy people that need a doctor, but people who are sick! ¹³Go learn what this means:

It's mercy that I want, not sacrifice.^d

Because I haven't come to reach out to^e people of integrity,^f but to sinners."

An Argument about Fasting (Mk 2:18-22; Lk. 5:33-39)

¹⁴Then some of John's followers came up to him. They said, "Why is it that we and the Pharisees fast a lot, but your followers don't fast?" ¹⁵Jesus said to them, "Can the members of the wedding party^g mourn while the groom is still with them? But the time will come when the groom will be taken away from them. Then they'll fast."

¹⁶"No one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old piece of clothing. Otherwise the full-size piece shrinks away from the garment,^h and you get a worse tear. ¹⁷You also don't put up new wine in old wineskins. Becauseⁱ if you do, the skins burst, and out spills the wine. The skins are ruined too. But put up new wine in new skins, and both will be kept safe."

Jesus Brings a Dead Girl to Life and Heals a Woman (Mk 5:21-43; Lk. 8:40-56)

¹⁸As he was saying these things to them, suddenly a Jewish official came up and bowed down in front of him. He said, "My daughter has just died! But just come and lay your hand on her, and she'll live!" ¹⁹And Jesus got up and went with him, and his followers went too. ²⁰And suddenly^j a woman, who had been hemorrhaging for twelve years,^k came up behind him and touched the edge of his robe. ²¹She was saying to herself, "If I only just touch his robe I'll be healed." ²²Jesus turned and saw her. He said, "Have courage, my daughter. Your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed from that moment on.^l ²³And Jesus came into the official's house, and he saw the flute players and the crowd making a

^a Lit. "he was lying down." In those days, people lay on couches at the table to eat, rather than sitting.

^b Lit. "behold."

^c Lit. "lay down together." In those days, people lay on couches at the table to eat.

^d Hos. 6:6.

^e Lit. "call."

^f Traditionally: "the righteous."

^g Or "the wedding guests." Lit. "the children of the bridal chamber." See "Bible Words" under "Children of."

^h Lit. "its fullness pulls away from the garment."

ⁱ Lit. "But."

^j Lit. "And behold."

^k That is, she lived with constant bleeding.

^l Lit. "from that hour."

commotion. ²⁴He was saying, “Go away! The little girl hasn’t died—she’s only sleeping.” But^a they started making fun of him. ²⁵And when the crowd had been kicked out of the house, Jesus went in and held her hand. And the little girl woke up! ²⁶And this story became known throughout^b that entire area.

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

²⁷When Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him. They were shouting, “Please have mercy on us, Son of David!” ²⁸And as Jesus went into the house, the blind men came up to him. Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I can do this?” And they said to him, “Yes, sir!” ²⁹Then he touched their eyes and said, “May what you’ve believed come true.”^c ³⁰And their eyes received sight.^d Jesus was very stern with them, and said, “Be sure not to let anyone know!” ³¹But they went out and talked about him all around that whole area.

Jesus Heals a Person Who Can’t Talk

³²Right as they were leaving,^e some people brought him a person who was afflicted with a demon and couldn’t talk. ³³When Jesus had kicked the demon out, the person talked. And the crowds were amazed. They were saying, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel before!” ³⁴But the Pharisees were saying, “He kicks out demons by the power of the ruler of the demons.”^f

Teaching, Preaching, and Healing from Town to Town (Lk. 10:2-3)

³⁵Jesus was going around all the towns and villages. He was teaching in their synagogues and preaching the good news of God’s Reign.^g He was also healing all their illnesses and disabilities. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he felt compassion for them, because they were harassed and anxious, just like sheep that didn’t have a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his followers, “It’s a large harvest, but there are only a few workers. ³⁸So really plead with the Owner of the harvest, to send workers out to^h his harvest.

Jesus Sends His Closest Twelve Followers on a Mission (Mk 3:13-19a; Lk. 6:12-16)

10 Jesus called his closest twelve followersⁱ over to him. He gave them authority over unclean spirits, so that they could kick them out of people and heal every illness and disability. ²These are the names of these twelve that he

^a Lit. “And.”

^b Lit. “went out to.”

^c Lit. “According to your belief let it be.”

^d Lit. “And their eyes were opened.”

^e Lit. “As they left, behold.”

^f Lit. “By the ruler of the demons he kicks out the demons.”

^g Lit. “the kingdom.”

^h “Out to”; lit. “into.”

ⁱ Lit. “his twelve followers,” not “twelve of his followers.” The crowds that follow Jesus are sometimes also described with the same Greek word, which is traditionally rendered “disciples,” i.e. students, yet the crowds are followers, not formally students. The twelve, however, are his particular students and full-time followers.

sent out:^a first Simon, known as Peter, and Andrew, his brother; and James, Zebedee’s son, and John his brother; ³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James, Alphaeus’s son,^b and Thaddeus;^c ⁴Simon the Cananaean^d and Judas Iscariot,^e the one who turned him in.

⁵Jesus sent these twelve out after giving them these instructions:

Don’t go off on any Gentile roads, and don’t go into any Samaritan^f town. ⁶Instead, go to the lost sheep of the family of Israel.^g ⁷Go and preach that Heaven’s Reign is nearly here.^h ⁸Heal people with disabilities, raise the dead, make lepers clean, kick out demons. You received for free—give for free. ⁹Don’t accept gold, silver, or copper for your money belts, ¹⁰or a bag of money for the road, or two shirts,ⁱ or sandals, or a walking stick. ‘A laborer deserves to be fed.’^j

¹¹Whatever town or village you go into, look for someone in that town who is deserving, and stay there until you leave. ¹²And as you go into someone’s house, greet it with a blessing of peace.^k ¹³If that house is deserving, may your blessing of peace rest^l on it. But if it’s not deserving, may your blessing of peace come back to you. ¹⁴And if anyone doesn’t accept you or listen to your message, leave that house or town behind, and shake the dust off your feet. ¹⁵I’m telling you seriously: it will be more bearable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town!

The Risks of Representing Jesus (Mk 13:9-13; Lk. 21:12-17; 12:2-7)

¹⁶Understand that^m I’m sending you out like sheep in the middle of wolves. So be as crafty as snakes and as simple as doves. ¹⁷And beware of people. They’re going to turn you in to the courts, and they’ll have you whipped in their synagogues.ⁿ ¹⁸They’ll also bring you up on charges in front of governors and rulers because of me. It’ll be^o a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

^a Traditionally: “the twelve apostles” (see “Bible Words”).

^b Prn. al-**fee**-us or al-**fee**-us.

^c Prn. **thadd**-ee-us or thad-**day**-us.

^d Prn. cann-a-**nay**-an.

^e Prn. is-**kerr**-ee-ut.

^f Prn. sum-**merr**-it-ten.

^g Lit. “the house of Israel.”

^h Lit. “has come near.”

ⁱ 2 Kgs 5:22-27. He’s essentially saying, don’t you dare think of personally profiting from this.

^j He’s quoting a proverb. In other words, don’t expect, or accept, anything more than a common laborer would get for a day’s work.

^k Lit. “greet it.” The standard Jewish greeting is “Shalom,” a blessing of peace. The following words clarify this.

^l Lit. “come.”

^m Lit. “See.”

ⁿ Lit. “they will beat you in their synagogues.” Jesus is talking about beating as an official form of punishment, not a fight.

^o Lit. “because of me, for.”

¹⁹But when they hand you over to the authorities, don't worry about what you're going to say. Because what you'll say will be given to you at that moment:^a ²⁰it won't be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father that speaks through you.

²¹But brothers and sisters will turn each other in to be killed, parents will turn in their children, and children will turn^b against their parents and get them killed. ²²And you'll be hated by everyone because of my name. But it's the person who stays with me^c to the end that will be saved. ²³So^d when they go after you^e in one town, run away to the next one. I'm telling you seriously, you won't have gone through all the towns in Israel by the time the Human One comes.

²⁴The student isn't above the teacher, and the slave isn't above the master. ²⁵It's enough for the student to become like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they call the head of a household the devil,^f won't the people in the household get called that all the more? ²⁶So don't be afraid of them. Because there isn't anything covered over that won't be uncovered, and there's nothing hidden that won't be known. ²⁷What I've said to all of you in the darkness, say in the daylight. And what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim from the rooftops. ²⁸Don't be afraid of people who kill the body, but can't kill the soul. Be more afraid of the One who can destroy both body and soul in Gehenna. ²⁹Aren't two sparrows sold for a few cents? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father knowing about it. ³⁰Every single hair on your head is accounted for. ³¹So don't be afraid. You count for more than a lot of sparrows.

Ultimate Cost and Ultimate Reward (Lk. 12:51-53; 14:26-27)

³²Every person who stands up for^g me in front of people, I myself will stand up for, in front of my Father who is in heaven. ³³But the person who denies^h me in front of people, I will deny them too, in front of my Father in heaven. ³⁴Don't be thinking that I came to bring about peace on the earth. I didn't come to bring about peace, but a sword. ³⁵Because I came to set

^a Lit. "in that hour."

^b Lit. "rise up."

^c Or "who holds on to the end," or "who endures these things to the end." The Greek word here can be transitive, i.e. take an object, in which case it can mean to persevere with something, such as your commitment to Jesus, or to endure something, such as persecution. It can also be intransitive, and just mean "hold on." Because this statement comes right on the heels of Jesus' words about "because of my name," I have chosen to bring out the first nuance.

^d Lit. "But."

^e Or "persecute you."

^f Lit. "Beelzebul," prn. *beh-el-zub-bul*, which appears to be an insulting name for the devil, meaning "The Lord of Dung."

^g Lit. "will acknowledge," and so in the following clause.

^h Lit. "will deny," and so in the following clause.

A man against his father,
 A daughter against her mother,
 A bride against her mother-in-law.
³⁶People's own housemates will be their enemies.^a

³⁷The person who loves father or mother more than me isn't worthy of me, and the person who loves a son or daughter more than me isn't worthy of me. ³⁸And the person who doesn't take up their cross and follow in my footsteps^b isn't worthy of me. ³⁹The person who finds their life will lose it, and the person who loses their life because of me will find it.

Whoever Accepts You Accepts Me (Mk 9:41)

⁴⁰Whoever accepts you, accepts me, and whoever accepts me, accepts the One who sent me. ⁴¹Whoever accepts a prophet because they're a prophet^c will receive a prophet's reward. ⁴²And whoever accepts a person of integrity because they're a person of integrity^d will receive the reward of a person of integrity. The same goes for whoever offers a single cup of cold water to one lowly person here because they're a follower of mine.^e I'm telling you seriously, they will never lose their reward!

Jesus and John the Baptizer (Lk. 7:18-35)

11 When Jesus finished giving instructions to his twelve followers, he went ^{off}^f to preach and teach in their towns. ²And John heard, from prison, about the things Jesus was doing. He sent this question through his followers:^g ³"Are you the One^h who is coming, or are we supposed to be looking for someone else?" ⁴Jesus gave them this answer:ⁱ ⁵Go tell John the things that you're hearing and seeing: blind people are seeing again, and people who are unable to walk are walking. Lepers are getting cleansed, the dead are being raised, and poor folks are getting good news.^j ⁶And it's a blessed person who doesn't get offended by me."⁷When John's followers had left, Jesus began to talk to the crowd about John:

What did you go out in the wilderness to look at? A cattail blowing in the wind? Come on!^k ⁸What did you go out there to see? A person dressed in fine^l clothing?

^a Mic. 7:6.

^b Lit. "behind me."

^c Lit. "in the name of a prophet."

^d Traditionally: "accepts a righteous man in the name of a righteous man."

^e Lit. "to one of these little ones in the name of their being a follower." It's the opposite of someone "big and famous," or "big and powerful."

^f Lit. "it came about that he went along."

^g Lit. "Sending through his followers, he said to him:"

^h That is, the Messiah.

ⁱ Lit. "answering, Jesus said to them."

^j Isa. 35:5-6; 42:18; 61:1.

^k Lit. "On the contrary."

^l Lit. "soft." He's joking about John's camel hair outfit. Cloth doesn't get much scratchier than that.

Look, the people dressed in fancy clothing are found in rulers' houses. «Come on, what did you go out there to see? A prophet? Yes! I'm telling you, even more than a prophet. It's about him that scripture says:^a

¹⁰Look! I'm sending my messenger ahead of you. He'll repair the road^b in front of you.

¹¹I'm telling you seriously: of all the people ever born,^c there has never been anyone greater than John. Yet even a minor person in Heaven's Reign is greater than he is. ¹²From John the Baptizer's time until now Heaven's Reign has been getting hijacked, and violent people are grabbing it. ¹³All the Prophets and the Law prophesied up until John. ¹⁴And if you're willing to accept it, he is none other than Elijah,^d who is to come. ¹⁵If anyone has ears, let 'em hear!

¹⁶But what can I compare this generation^f to? It's like children sitting around in the marketplace. They shout over to each other, ¹⁷“We played the flute for you, but you didn't dance! We wailed for you, but you didn't mourn!” ¹⁸After all, John comes^g along, and isn't eating or drinking, and they say, “He has a demon!” ¹⁹The Human One comes along, and is eating and drinking, and they say, “Look! This man eats too much, drinks, and likes tax collectors and sinners!” Well,^h wisdom is proven right by its actions.

Jesus Tells Off the Towns That Haven't Changed Their Hearts (Lk. 10:13-15)

²⁰Then Jesus began telling off the towns where he had done his greatest displays of power, because they hadn't changed their hearts:ⁱ

²¹It's going to be horrible for you,^j Chorazin!^k It's going to be horrible for you, Bethsaida!^l Because if the displays of power had happened in them that happened in you, they would have changed their hearts,^m sitting in sacking and ashesⁿ a long time ago! ²²But I'm telling you, it will be easier to bear for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. ²³And you too, Capernaum!^o

^a Lit. “it is written.”

^b Lit. “your road.” Mal. 3:1; see Exod. 23:20.

^c Lit. “born of women.”

^d Lit. “he himself is Elijah.”

^e Or “who is about to come.”

^f See “Bible Words.”

^g Or “came,” in this, and the next, instance.

^h Lit. “And.” I think this is Jesus' response to his (and John's) critics, in the form of a well-known proverb.

ⁱ Traditionally: “repented.”

^j Lit. “Woe to you.”

^k Prn. kor-**ray**-zin.

^l Prn. beth-**say**-da.

^m Traditionally: “repented.”

ⁿ It was a custom to put on burlap sacking and sprinkle ashes on oneself to grieve—in this case, to grieve sins.

^o Prn. cup-**per**-nee-um.

Are you going to be lifted up to heaven?
No, you're going to fall down^a to Hades!^b

Because if the displays of power had happened in Sodom that happened in you, it would still be here today.^c ²⁴But I'm telling you, it will be easier to bear for the land of Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.

Jesus Praises His Father (Lk. 10:21-22)

²⁵On that occasion Jesus spoke out^d and said, "I want to honor you,^e Father, Lord of heaven and earth. Because you've hidden these things from wise and understanding people, and have revealed them to little children. ²⁶Yes, Father! That is just how you wanted it to be.^f ²⁷Everything has been given 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 person the Son wants to reveal him to. ²⁸Come to me, all of you who are struggling^g under a heavy load,^h and I will relieve you! ²⁹Put on my yoke and learn from me, because I have a gentle and humble heart. You're going to find relief for your spirits!ⁱ ³⁰Because my yoke is a good one, and my load is light."

Picking Heads of Grain on the Sabbath Day (Mk 2:23-28; Lk. 6:1-5)

12 On that occasion, which was a Sabbath, Jesus was walking through the grain fields with his followers. His followers were hungry, and began to pick heads of grain and eat them. ²But the Pharisees saw it and said, "Look! Your followers are doing something that is not allowed on the Sabbath!" ³But he said to them, "Haven't you read what David did, when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴Didn't he go into the house of God and eat^k the sacred bread of the presence? Weren't he and his companions forbidden, and only the priests allowed to eat that bread? ⁵And haven't you read in the Law, that on Sabbath days the priests in the Temple break the Sabbath—and they're not guilty of anything! ⁶I'm telling you, something bigger than the Temple is going on here. ⁷But if you'd known what this means: 'I want mercy and not sacrifice,'^l then you wouldn't have

^a Some good mss have "be brought down."

^b Prn. *hay-deez*. Isa. 14:13, 15.

^c Lit. "it would still remain until today."

^d Lit. "answered."

^e Lit. "I acknowledge you." But that expression doesn't carry a strong enough connotation of praise in English.

^f Lit. "Yes, Father, because it became pleasing before you."

^g Or "sweating"—literally, "toiling."

^h Lit. "toiling and heavy laden."

ⁱ Lit. "You're [pl.] going to find relief for your souls."

^j According to their tradition, even the slightest amount of work is forbidden on the Sabbath. According to their definitions, Jesus' followers are harvesting grain, which is work.

^k Lit. "hungry—how he went into the Temple and ate..."

^l Hos. 6:6.

condemned people who were not guilty of anything. «The Human One is lord of the Sabbath.»

Jesus Heals a Man with a Shriveled-Up Arm (Mk 3:1-6; Lk. 6:6-11)

9 Jesus went along from there and came into the local synagogue.^a 10 And right there was a person whose arm was shriveled up. They asked Jesus, “Is it allowed to heal on the Sabbath?” That was so they could accuse him. 11 But he said to them, “Is there any one of you who owns a sheep,^b who wouldn’t grab that sheep and pull it out of a hole, if it fell in on the Sabbath? 12 So, how much more important is a human being than a sheep! So it’s allowed to do an act of kindness^c on the Sabbath.” 13 Then he said to the person, “Hold out your arm.” He held it out, and it became restored to normal just like the other one. 14 And the Pharisees went out and began to plot against Jesus, to figure out how they could ruin him.^d

Jesus is God’s Chosen Servant (Isa. 42:1-4)

15 But Jesus knew about it, and went away from that place. Lots of people followed him, and he healed them all. 16 And he warned them strictly not to tell people about him.^e 17 This was so that what was said through Isaiah could be fulfilled:

18 Look! My servant, my chosen one, my loved one!
 My heart^f is so pleased with him!
 I’m going to put my Spirit on him,
 And he’ll proclaim justice for the nations.
 19 He won’t argue or shout,
 And no one will hear him making noise in the streets.
 20 He won’t break a bent straw,
 And he won’t put out a wick that’s smoking,
 Until he deals out justice victoriously.^g
 21 And his name will be the hope of the nations.^h

Jesus Heals a Man and is Accused of Being with the Devil (Mk 3:19b-30; Lk. 11:14-23)

22 Then a demon-afflicted man was brought to Jesus. He was blind and couldn’t speak. And he healed him so that he could talk and see. 23 All the crowds were totally amazed. They began to say, “He couldn’t be the Son of David, could he?”ⁱ
 24 But when the Pharisees heard that, they began saying, “He only kicks out

^a Lit. “their synagogue.”

^b Or “one sheep.”

^c Lit. “to act kindly.”

^d Lit. “began plotting against him, as to how to destroy him.”

^e Lit. “not to make him known.”

^f Lit. “soul.”

^g Lit. “Until he throws out justice to victory.”

^h Lit. “in his name the nations will hope.” This long quotation is from Isa. 42:1-4.

ⁱ The question is skeptical in form, yet hopeful in tone. The expression “Son of David” seems to be a term for the Messiah.

demons by the power of Beelzebul,^a the ruler of the demons.”²⁵ But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said to them,

Every kingdom that is split into opposing factions will end up deserted, and no city or household that is split into opposing factions can stand.^b ²⁶And if Satan kicks out Satan, he’s split against himself. So how is his kingdom going to stand? ²⁷And if it’s by the power of Beelzebul^c that I kick out demons, by whose power do your sons kick them out? So they’re the ones who’ll be your judges. ²⁸But if I kick demons out by the power of God’s Spirit, then God’s Reign has just come to you.

²⁹And how can anyone come into a strong man’s house and steal his things unless he ties up the strong man first? Then he can clean out^d the whole house. ³⁰Whoever isn’t with me is against me, and whoever doesn’t gather with me scatters. ³¹So I’m telling you, people will be forgiven for every sort of sin and blasphemy.^e But blasphemy of the Spirit will not be forgiven. ³²If someone says something against the Human One, they’ll be forgiven. But if someone says something against the Holy Spirit, they will not be forgiven—not in this age, nor in the next one.

God Will Judge People on the Basis of What They Say (Mt. 7:15-20)

³³Either make the tree good, and its fruit good, or make the tree rotten and its fruit rotten. It’s from the fruit that the tree is known. ³⁴You offspring of snakes, how can you say what is good,^f when you are evil? ³⁵A good person puts out goodness from their inner well^g of goodness. And the evil person puts out evil from their inner well of evil. ³⁶I’m telling you, people will give an explanation for every unthinking^h word they’ve said, on the day of judgment. ³⁷You’ll be justified by your words, and you’ll be condemned by your words.

The Sign of Jonah the Prophet (Lk. 11:29-32; Lk. 11:24-26)

³⁸Then some scripture experts and Pharisees responded to him. They said, “Teacher, we want to see a miracleⁱ from you.”^j ³⁹But he said back to them:

^a Prn. *beh-el-zub-bul*. This is another name for the devil, which appears to mean “The Lord of Dung.”

^b Lit. “Every kingdom that is divided against itself will be deserted, and every city or house that is divided against itself will not stand.”

^c Prn. *beh-el-zub-bul*. This is another name for the devil, which appears to mean “The Lord of Dung.”

^d Lit. “carry off.”

^e That is, insult against God. See “Bible Words.”

^f Or “speak the truth”; lit. “say good things.”

^g Lit. “their good stores,” and in the next sentence, “their evil stores.” The metaphor of storage contains the idea that the well of goodness or evil is inside the person.

^h Lit. “idle,” “useless.”

ⁱ Traditionally: “a sign” (see “Bible Words”).

^j That is, they want him to prove he’s from God by doing an undeniable miracle.

It's an evil and unfaithful generation that is obsessed with getting a sign.^a And it won't be given one. The only sign it will get is the sign of Jonah the prophet. ⁴⁰Because just as Jonah was "in the belly of the sea monster for three days and three nights,"^b in the same way the Human One will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. ⁴¹The men of Nineveh^c are going to stand up and testify against this generation in the judgment, and will condemn it. Because they changed their hearts^d on the basis of Jonah's preaching. And look, there's something bigger than Jonah here. ⁴²The Queen of Sheba^e will be called to testify^f against this generation in the judgment, and she'll condemn it. Because she came from the far corners of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And look, there's something bigger than Solomon here. ⁴³When an unclean spirit goes out of a person, it wanders around dry desert places looking for someplace to rest. But it doesn't find anyplace. ⁴⁴Then it says, "I'm going to go back to my house, that I left. When it comes back, it finds that it's still empty, and that it's nicely swept and all neat. ⁴⁵Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there. And it turns out that the person's final condition is worse than when they started.^g It'll be the same way with this evil generation.

Jesus' Real Family (Mk 3:31-35; Lk. 8:19-21, 27-28)

⁴⁶While Jesus was talking with the crowds, suddenly his mother and his brothers and sisters showed up^h outside, wanting to talk to him. ⁴⁷And someone said to him, "Look, your mother and your brothers and sisters are standing outside hoping to talk with you."ⁱ ⁴⁸But Jesus said back to the person who said that to him: "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers and sisters?" ⁴⁹And he held out his hand towards his followers and said, "Look—my mother and my brothers and sisters! ⁵⁰Because if anybody does the will of my Father in heaven, they are my brother, my sister, and my mother."

13 That day Jesus left the house and sat by the lake. ²Big crowds of people gathered around him. Finally he got in a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd stayed standing on the shore.

^a See "Bible Words."

^b Jon. 1:17.

^c Ptn. **ninn**-a-va.

^d Traditionally: "repented."

^e Lit. "the South."

^f Lit. "will be raised up in judgment." Interestingly, the words used here for "to stand up" and "be raised up" can also mean "will be resurrected."

^g Lit. "the person's last things are worse than the first."

^h Lit. "stood."

ⁱ Many ancient mss lack v. 47, which could either have been (1) overlooked and omitted in error, because it is nearly identical in wording to v. 46: "his/your mother and brothers were/are standing outside wanting to talk to him/you," or (2) added, because its inclusion makes better sense of what follows. The wording of v. 47 has been varied slightly in order to avoid repeating the exact same phraseology.

Jesus talked to them a lot in parables.^a He would say:

The Parable of the Farmer Who Scatters Seed (Mk 4:1-9; Lk. 8:4-8, 11-15)

Listen^b—a farmer went out to scatter seed in his field.^c 4As he was scattering the seed, some fell on the path, and the birds came and gobbled it up. 5Other seeds fell on the rocky ground, where they didn't have much soil. Those sprang up right away, because the soil they were in was so shallow.^d 6When the sun came up, they got scorched. They shriveled up, because they didn't have good roots. 7Still other seeds fell in amongst the prickly weeds. The prickly weeds came up and choked them out. 8Other seeds fell on the good soil and bore fruit: some a hundred grains per plant, some sixty, and some thirty. 9If anyone has ears, let 'em hear!

Jesus Explains Why He Teaches in Parables (Mk 4:10-12; Lk. 8:9-10)

10Jesus' followers came up and said to him, "Why do you talk to them in parables?"
11He answered:

It's been given to you to know the secrets of Heaven's Reign. But it hasn't been given to the others. 12The person who has^e will have more given to them. But the person who doesn't have will even have what they've got taken away.

13Here's why I talk to them in parables: because they look but don't see, and they listen but don't hear or understand. 14Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled by them—the one that says,

They'll listen and listen but never understand, and they'll look and look but never see. 15Because the heart of this people has gotten dull, and they can hardly hear with their ears, and they've closed their eyes. Otherwise they'd see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts, and they'd turn, and I'd heal them.^f

16But your eyes are blessed that they can see, and your ears are blessed that they can hear. 17I'm telling you seriously: lots of prophets and people of integrity^g really wanted to see the things that you are seeing, and didn't see them. They really wanted to hear the things you are hearing, but didn't hear them.

Jesus Explains the Parable of the Farmer Scattering Seed (Mk 4:13-20; Lk. 8:11-15)

18So hear the parable of the farmer seeding his field. 19As for every person who hears the message of God's Reign^h but doesn't understand it, the Evil One comes

^a Parables are short, metaphorical stories or comparisons based on observations of nature or ordinary life.

^b Lit. "Look," or "Behold."

^c There are different ways to plant a field—in this method, the person scatters the seed evenly on the unplowed ground, then plows it in.

^d Lit. "because of not having depth of soil."

^e I.e. has understanding.

^f Isa. 6:9-10.

^g Traditionally: "righteous men."

^h Lit. "the kingdom."

and snatches away what's been planted in their heart. That's the seed scattered on the path. ²⁰As for the seed scattered on the rocky part, that's the person who hears the message and happily accepts it right away. ²¹But the person doesn't have any roots in themselves. They're just temporary. When trouble or persecution come because of the message, they get tripped up right away. ²²As for the seed scattered amongst the prickly weeds, that's the person who is listening to the message, but the worry of this world, and the false lure of wealth, choke out the message. It ends up not bearing fruit. ²³But the seed scattered on the good soil, that's the person who hears the message and understands it. Now, that kind of person will bear fruit! One will produce a hundred grains per plant,^a another one sixty, and another one thirty.

The Parable of the Darnel Weeds among the Wheat

²⁴Jesus gave them^b another parable and said, "Heaven's Reign is like a man who planted good-quality seed in his field. ²⁵But while people were sleeping, his enemy came, scattered darnel weeds^c in amongst the wheat, and went away. ²⁶When the plants grew up and bore fruit, then the darnel weeds showed up. ²⁷And the servants of the head of the house came up and said to him, 'Sir, didn't you plant good-quality seed in your field? So how come it has darnel weeds?' ²⁸He said to them, 'Some enemy of mine^d did this.' And the servants said to him, 'So, do you want us to go out and gather up the darnel weeds?' ²⁹But he said, 'No, otherwise in gathering up the darnel weeds, you'll uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰Leave both to grow together until the harvest. At harvest time I'll say to the harvesters, "First gather up the darnel weeds and tie them in bundles to be burnt. Then^e gather up the wheat into my bins.'"

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast (Mk 4:30-32; Lk. 13:18-21)

³¹Jesus gave them^f another parable and said, "Heaven's Reign is like a mustard seed that a person took and planted in their field. ³²It may be the smallest of all the seeds, but when it grows up it's the biggest of the garden plants. It gets to be a tree, so that birds^g come and build nests in its branches."

³³He gave them^h another parable: "Heaven's Reign is like yeast that a woman took and kneadedⁱ into three measures of flour, until the yeast was all through it."^j

^a In other words, some wheat seeds will grow to a plant with heads of wheat with 100 grains—more or less double the average yield.

^b Lit. "set before them."

^c Darnel looks like wheat until it is full grown.

^d Lit. "An enemy person."

^e Lit. "But."

^f Lit. "set before them."

^g Lit. "the birds of the sky."

^h Lit. "set before them."

ⁱ Lit. "hid," but I suspect it's just a standard expression for kneading.

^j Lit. "until the whole thing was leavened."

³⁴Jesus said all these things to the crowds in parables. And he didn't say anything to them without using a parable. ³⁵In that way what God had said through the prophet was fulfilled. He said:

I'm going to open my mouth and tell parables—I'm going to come out with things that have been hidden since the creation^a of the world!^b

Jesus Explains the Parable of the Darnel Weeds among the Wheat

³⁶Then Jesus left the crowds and went back to the house. His followers came up to him and said, "Explain the parable of the darnel weeds in the field to us." ³⁷He answered:

The one who plants the good-quality seed is the Human One, ³⁸and the field is the world. The good-quality seed is those who belong to God's Reign.^c The darnel weeds are those who belong to the Evil One.^d ³⁹The enemy that scattered them is the devil. The harvest is the wrapping up of the age, and the harvesters are angels. ⁴⁰So, just as darnel weeds are gathered up and burned, the same will happen at the wrapping up of the age. ⁴¹The Human One will send out his angels, and they'll separate out of his Realm all the people who trip people up, and those who go around acting lawless. ⁴²They'll throw them in a burning furnace. In there there's going to be people crying and grinding their teeth. ⁴³Then the people of integrity^e are going to shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. If anyone has ears, let 'em hear!

The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl of Great Value

⁴⁴Heaven's Reign is like a treasure hidden in a field. When a person found it, they hid it again, and in their excitement^f they went off and sold everything they had, and bought that field.

⁴⁵Again, Heaven's Reign is like a trader on the lookout for fine pearls. ⁴⁶When the person found one of great value, they went off and sold everything they had, and bought it.

The Parable of the Fishing Net

⁴⁷Again, Heaven's Reign is like a fishing net that's thrown in the lake. It scoops up all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸When it's ready, it's dragged up on the beach, and they sit down and collect the good ones and put them in baskets. And they throw out the bad ones. ⁴⁹That's what it will be like at the wrapping up of the age. The angels will go out and separate out the evil people from among the people of integrity.^g ⁵⁰They'll

^a Lit. "foundation."

^b Ps. 78:2.

^c Lit. "the children of the kingdom." See "Bible Words" under "Children of."

^d Lit. "the children of the Evil One." See "Bible Words" under "Children of."

^e Traditionally: "the righteous."

^f Lit. "joy," or "happiness."

^g Traditionally: "the righteous."

throw them in a burning furnace. In there there's going to be people crying and grinding their teeth.

⁵¹Have you understood all of this?^a They said to him, “Yes.” ⁵²Jesus said to them, “So, every scripture expert that has become a student of Heaven’s Reign is like the head of a household, who brings things new and old out of storage.

Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth (Mk 6:1-6; Lk. 4:16-30)

⁵³When^b Jesus had finished all these parables, he went away from that place, ⁵⁴and came to his hometown. He taught them in their synagogue, and^c they were astounded. They said, “Where did this person get this wisdom, and these displays of power? ⁵⁵Isn’t he the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother named Mary, and his brothers named James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶Aren’t all his sisters right here with us?” ⁵⁷And they started getting offended at him.^d But Jesus said to them, “A prophet isn’t dishonored except in his own hometown and in his own home.” ⁵⁸And he didn’t do many displays of power there, because of their lack of faith.

Herod Executes John the Baptizer (Mk 6:14-29; Lk. 9:7-9)

14 At that time Herod the Tetrarch^e heard the news about Jesus. ²And he said to his servants, “This is John the Baptizer himself, raised from among the dead. That’s why those displays of power are being done by him.” ³The reason he said that is, Herod had arrested John and shackled him and put him in prison. It started because of Herodias,^f his brother Philip’s wife. ⁴Because John had been saying to him, “It’s against the law for you to have her as your wife.” ⁵And although Herod wanted to kill him, he was afraid of the public,^g because they believed John was a prophet.^h ⁶When Herod’s birthday celebration came, Herodias’s daughter danced in front of everyone. And Herod was pleased—⁷so much so that he promised her, and swore to it, that he’d give her whatever she asked. ⁸But she had been primed beforehand by her mother. She said, “Give me the head of John the Baptizer here on a platter!” ⁹The king was unhappy because he had sworn those things and everybody around the table had heard it. So he was bound to give it to her. ¹⁰He sent and had John beheaded in the prison. ¹¹And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. ¹²John’s followers went up and took the body and buried it. Then they came to Jesus and told him about it.

^a Lit. “all these things.”

^b Lit. “And it came about that when.”

^c Lit. “as a result.” But the implication in English, even with “and,” is unmistakable.

^d Lit. “and they were tripped up by him.”

^e Prn. **herr**-udd the **tet**-rark.

^f Prn. hur-**road**-ee-us.

^g Lit. “crowd.”

^h Lit. “they held him to be a prophet.”

Jesus Feeds More Than 5,000 People (Mk 6:30-44; Lk. 9:10-17; Jn 6:1-13)

¹³When Jesus heard about John, he went away from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. When the crowds found out,^a they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When Jesus went out and saw the big crowd, he felt compassion for them, and he healed those who were sick.

¹⁵Around sunset, his followers came up to him and said, “This place is deserted, and it’s already past dinnertime. Send the crowd away so that they can go off to the villages and buy themselves some things to eat.” ¹⁶But Jesus said to them, “They don’t need to go away—you give them something to eat.” ¹⁷They said to him, “We don’t have anything here, except for five loaves of bread and two fish.” ¹⁸But he said, “Bring them here to me.” ¹⁹Then he told the crowd to lie on the grass. He took the five loaves of bread and the two fish and looked up to heaven. Then he blessed them and divided^b them up, and gave them to his followers, and his followers gave them to the crowd. ²⁰They all ate and got a good meal.^c And they picked up twelve baskets full of leftover food.^d ²¹And the number of people eating, just counting the men, not the women and children, was about five thousand.

Jesus Walks on the Water (Mk 6:45-52; Jn 6:15-21)

²²Jesus quickly made his followers get in a boat and go ahead of him to the other side. In the meantime, he would send the crowd away. ²³After he sent the crowd away, he went up on the mountain to pray by himself. ²⁴Meanwhile,^e the boat was already a long way out from land, and was getting tossed around by the waves. The wind was against them. ²⁵Sometime after 3:00 in the morning, Jesus came to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶When his followers saw him walking on the lake, they were frightened. They said, “It’s a ghost!” and they cried out in terror. ²⁷But Jesus immediately spoke to them, and said, “Have courage—it’s me. Don’t be afraid.” ²⁸Peter said to him, “Teacher, if it’s you, tell me to come to you out on the water!” ²⁹Jesus said, “Come on!” And Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when Peter saw the wind, he got frightened, and started to sink. He cried out, “Teacher, save me!” ³¹Jesus quickly reached out his hand and caught him. Jesus said to him, “You have so little faith! Why did you let doubts in?”^f ³²When they got in the boat, the wind quieted down. ³³And everyone in the boat bowed down to him and said, “You’re really the Son of God!”

^a Lit. “heard.”

^b Lit. “broke.”

^c Lit. “ate and got completely fed.”

^d Lit. “pieces,” or “fragments.”

^e Lit. “But.”

^f Lit. “Why were you in two minds?”

Jesus Heals the Sick in Gennesaret (Mk 6:53-56)

³⁴When they got all the way across the lake, they landed at Gennesaret.^a ³⁵And the men there recognized him. They sent word out to that whole area, and people brought him everyone who was ill. ³⁶They would ask him if they could just touch the edge of his robe, and whoever touched it was completely healed.

Jesus Criticizes Unjust Religious Traditions (Mk 7:1-13)

15 Then Pharisees and scripture experts came out to Jesus from Jerusalem. ¹They were saying, “How come your followers break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands when they eat their food.” ²Jesus answered them, “And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? ³After all, God said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’^b and ‘The person who insults their father or mother is to be put to death.’^c ⁴Yet you say that if a person says to their father or mother, ‘What belongs to me that could have benefited you, has been given to God,’ ⁵then they won’t have to honor their father or mother at all. So you cancel out^d the word of God for the sake of your tradition! ⁶Play-actors! Isaiah gave a good prophecy about you, when he said,

⁷This people honors me with their lips,
But their heart is far away from me.
⁸Their reverence for me is empty.
They teach rules that are just human teachings.^e

What Really Makes You Holy or Unholy (Mk 7:14-23)

¹⁰Jesus called the crowd over and said to them, “Listen and understand. ¹¹It isn’t what goes into a person’s mouth that makes them unholy.^f No, it’s what comes out of a person’s mouth that makes them unholy.” ¹²Then his followers came up and said to him, “Did you know that the Pharisees were offended^g when they heard that?” ¹³Jesus answered, “Every plant that hasn’t been planted by my heavenly Father will be pulled out by the roots. ¹⁴Let them be offended. They’re blind guides. And if a blind person guides another blind person, they’ll both fall in a ditch.” ¹⁵Peter said to him, “Explain that parable to us.” ¹⁶Jesus said, Don’t you understand yet either? ¹⁷Don’t you know that everything that goes into your mouth goes into your insides and finally gets expelled into the toilet? ¹⁸But things that come out of a person’s mouth come out of their *heart*, and *they* make the person unholy. ¹⁹That’s because the heart is where evil thoughts, murders, unfaithfulness to spouses, sexual immorality, thefts, false accusations, and

^a Pm. gen-ness-a-ret.

^b Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16.

^c Exod. 21:17.

^d Lit. “render ineffective.”

^e Lit. “Teaching teachings of human rules.” Isa. 29:13 LXX.

^f Lit. “common,” which is the opposite of “pure,” for religious purposes.

^g Lit. “were tripped up.”

blasphemies come from. ²⁰Those are the things that make a person unholy. But eating with unwashed hands doesn't make a person unholy."

Jesus Heals a Non-Jewish Woman's Daughter (Mk 7:24-30)

²¹Then Jesus left that place and went off to the area of Tyre and Sidon.^a ²²Suddenly a Canaanite^b woman from around there came out and shouted, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is horribly^c afflicted by demon!" ²³But he didn't respond to her at all.^d And his followers came up to him and asked him, "Won't you tell her to go away? She keeps shouting back there!"^e ²⁴Jesus said, "I wasn't sent to anyone except the lost sheep of the family of Israel."^f ²⁵And she came and bowed down on the ground in front of him, and said, "Lord, help me!" ²⁶Jesus said, "It isn't good to take the children's food and throw it to the pet dogs." ²⁷And she said, "Yes, Lord. But then again, the pet dogs do get to eat from the scraps that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸Then Jesus answered her, "Ma'am,^g your faith is huge! Let it come out for you just as you want it to." And her daughter was healed from that moment.^h

Jesus Heals People with All Kinds of Diseases, Disabilities, and Sicknesses (Mk 7:31-37)

²⁹Jesus went across from there, and came to the shore of Lake Galilee. And he went up on the mountainside and sat down there. ³⁰Big crowds began to gatherⁱ in front of him. They brought with them people who couldn't walk, blind people, people with disabilities, deaf people, and lots of others. They put them down right in front of him,^j and he healed them. ³¹As a result the crowd was amazed. They were seeing deaf people speaking again, people with disabilities back to normal, people who couldn't walk walking around, and blind people seeing. And they gave glory to the God of Israel.

Jesus Feeds More Than 4,000 People (Mk 8:1-10)

³²Jesus called his followers over and said to them, "I feel for this crowd. They've already stayed three days with me, and they don't have anything to eat. Still, I don't want to send them away hungry—otherwise they'll get exhausted out on the road." ³³And his followers said, "In this deserted place, how are we going to come by enough food to feed such a large crowd?" ³⁴Jesus said to them, "How many loaves of bread do you have?" They said, "Seven, and a few small fish." ³⁵And he was telling the crowd to sit down on the ground. ³⁶Then he took the

^a Prn. *syē-din*.

^b Prn. *kay-na-nyte*.

^c Lit. "badly."

^d Lit. "But he didn't answer her a word."

^e Lit. "Send her off, because she shouts behind us."

^f Lit. "the house of Israel."

^g Lit. "woman." It's not a slur, as it would sound to modern English-speaking people.

^h Lit. "in that hour."

ⁱ Lit. "come."

^j Lit. "They flung them down at his feet." The strong word "flung" is an exaggeration.

seven loaves and the fish, and gave thanks. He then broke them up and gave them to his followers, and they gave them out to the crowd. ³⁷And everybody ate and got a good meal.^a When they picked up the leftovers of what had been distributed,^b it came to seven full baskets. ³⁸Those who had eaten numbered four thousand men—not counting women and children. ³⁹When Jesus had sent the crowd off home, he got into a boat and went to the area around Magadan.

People Demand That Jesus Show Them a Miracle (Mk 8:11-13; Lk. 12:54-56)

16 The Pharisees and Sadducees came up and were testing Jesus out.^c They asked him to show them a miracle^d from heaven. ²He said back to them, “At sunset, you say, ‘It’ll be nice weather tomorrow—the sky is red.’ ³And at sunup, ‘It’ll be stormy today—the sky’s red and gloomy.’ You may know how to read^e the appearance of the sky, but you aren’t able to read the signs of the times. ⁴An evil and unfaithful^f generation asks for a sign.^g A sign won’t be given to it—except for the sign of Jonah.” And he left them and went away.

Jesus Warns about the “Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (Mk 8:14-21)

⁵When his followers crossed over to the other side of the lake, they forgot to take bread with them. ⁶Jesus said to them, “Watch out—beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” ⁷And they were discussing what that meant with each other. They were saying, “We didn’t take any bread.” ⁸But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said, “Why are you discussing the fact that you don’t have any bread? You have so little faith! ⁹Don’t you get it yet? Don’t you remember the five loaves of bread and the five thousand people, and how many baskets you collected? ¹⁰Or the seven loaves of bread and the four thousand, and how many baskets you collected? ¹¹How could you not understand that I wasn’t talking to you about bread? So, beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” ¹²Then they understood that he hadn’t been talking about yeast, but about the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Peter Tells Jesus, “You’re the Messiah!” (Mk 8:27-30; Lk. 9:18-20)

¹³When he arrived at the area around Caesarea Philippi,^h Jesus asked his followers, “Who do people say the Human One is?” ¹⁴They said, “Some say John the Baptizer, others say Elijah. And still others say Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵He said to them, “And you—who do you say I am?” ¹⁶Peter said, “You’re the Messiah,ⁱ the

^a Lit. “ate and got completely fed.”

^b Lit. “the overflow of the broken pieces” (which Jesus had broken up).

^c The word used for “testing” can also mean “tempting.”

^d Traditionally: “sign” (see “Bible Words”).

^e Lit. “distinguish.”

^f Lit. “adulterous.” He’s using a metaphor from marriage.

^g See “Bible Words.”

^h Prn. sezz-a-ree-a fil-lipp-eye.

ⁱ Or “the Christ.”

Son of the Living God!”¹⁷ Jesus answered him, “Simon Barjona,^a you are blessed! Flesh and blood didn’t reveal that to you—it was my Father in heaven. ¹⁸And I’m going to say this to you: You are Peter, the Rock. I’m going to build my community^b on this rock, and the gates of Hades are not going to overpower it. ¹⁹I am going to give you the keys of Heaven’s Reign. If you bind something here on earth, it will stay bound in heaven. And if you release something here on earth, it will stay released in heaven.”^c ²⁰Then he laid it out to his followers that they were not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Jesus Tells His Followers That He is Going to be Killed (Mk 8:31-33; Lk. 9:21-22)

²¹From then on Jesus began to show his followers that he had to go away to Jerusalem, where he would be treated very badly by^d the elders, chief priests, and scripture experts. And he had to be killed, and be raised on the third day. ²²But Peter took him aside and began to tell him off. He said, “God have mercy on you for saying that, Teacher! That will never happen to you!” ²³But Jesus turned around and said to Peter, “Get on behind me, Satan! You’re a tripping stone to me, because you’re not thinking God’s thoughts—you’re thinking human thoughts!”^e ²⁴Then Jesus said to his followers,

Pick Up Your Cross and Follow Me! (Mk 8:34–9:1; Lk. 9:23-27)

If anyone wants to follow me, let them deny themselves, and pick up their cross and follow me. ²⁵Because whoever wants to save their life will lose it. But whoever loses their life because of me will find it. ²⁶After all, what good is it for a person if they gain the whole world, but their life is a loss?^f In other words, what can a person give in exchange for their life? ²⁷Because the Human One is going to come with the glory of his Father, along with his angels. And then he will reward each person in line with their actions. ²⁸I’m telling you seriously, there are some people standing right here that won’t die^g until they see the Human One coming with his Reign!

Jesus is Transformed in Front of Peter, James, and John (Mk 9:2-13; Lk. 9:28-36; 2 Pet. 1:16-18)

17 Six days later, Jesus took Peter and James and James’s brother John, and led them up a high mountain all by themselves. ²And he was transformed in front of them: his face began to shine like the sun, and his clothes became as

^a Barjona is Simon Peter’s surname—Bar means “son of,” and his father’s name is Jona.

^b Or “assembly”; traditionally: “church.”

^c Lit. “If you bind something on the earth, it will have been bound in heaven. And if you release something on the earth, it will have been released in heaven.” The Greek perfect tense carries stronger force than it does in English, generally being used when the effect of the verbal action is ongoing and permanent. Hence “it will stay bound...it will stay released.”

^d Lit. “suffer many things from.”

^e Lit. “You’re not thinking the things of God, but rather the things of human beings.”

^f Lit. “their life is lost,” but this is a business metaphor, in terms of profit and loss. On the profit side of the ledger, you’ve acquired the entire planet, but your life itself is on the loss side. What have you gained?

^g Lit. “taste death.”

white as light itself. ³Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared, and were talking with him. ⁴Peter said to Jesus, “Teacher, it’s a good thing we’re here! If you like, I’ll make three shelters right here—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁵Right while he was saying that, suddenly a bright cloud surrounded^a them. Then a voice came from the cloud, which said: “This is my Son! I love him, and I am very happy with^b him! Listen to him!” ⁶When his followers heard that, they fell down on their faces in terror.^c ⁷Jesus went over and gently touched them. He said, “Stand up, don’t be afraid.” ⁸And when they looked up, they didn’t see anyone else except for Jesus himself, all alone.

The Coming of Elijah (Mk 9:9-13)

⁹As they were going back down the mountain, Jesus instructed them not to tell anybody about the vision until the Human One was raised from among the dead. ¹⁰His followers asked him this question: “So why do the scripture experts say that Elijah has to come first?” ¹¹Jesus answered, “Well, Elijah does come, and puts everything right. ¹²But I’m telling you, Elijah has already come, and they didn’t recognize him. Instead, they did to him whatever they liked. And that’s just how the Human One is about to be treated by them too.” ¹³Then they^d understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptizer.

Jesus Heals a Boy Who Has a Demon (Mk 9:14-29; Lk. 9:37-43a)

¹⁴As they came up to the crowd, a man came up to him and knelt down in front of him. ¹⁵He said, “Teacher, please have mercy on my son! He’s mentally unstable, and has bad fits. For example, lots of times he falls into fire or into water. ¹⁶I brought him to your followers, and they weren’t able to cure him.” ¹⁷But Jesus said, “What a faithless and perverse generation you are! How long am I going to be with you? How long am I going to have to put up with you? Bring him here to me.” ¹⁸Jesus spoke sternly to him, and the demon came out of him. And the child was healed from that moment on.^e

¹⁹Then Jesus’ followers came up to him privately and were saying, “How come we couldn’t kick that demon out?” ²⁰Jesus said to them, “Because of your small amount of faith. Because I’m telling you seriously: if you even have a mustard seed worth of faith,^f you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move! Nothing will be impossible for you.”^g

^a Lit. “overshadowed.”

^b The expression used here could also be rendered as “proud of” or “pleased with” in this context.

^c Lit. “and were really frightened.”

^d Lit. “his followers.”

^e Lit. “from that hour.”

^f Lit. “faith like a mustard seed.”

^g The most reliable ancient mss omit v. 21: “But this kind doesn’t leave except by prayer and fasting” (see Mk 9:29).

Jesus Tells His Followers Again That He is Going to be Killed (Mk 9:30-32; Lk. 9:43b-45)

²²As they were returning to Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Human One is about to get handed over to people ²³who will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised.” And they were heartbroken.^a

Jesus and the Temple Tax

²⁴As they came into Capernaum,^b the people who collect the two-drachma tax came up to Peter. They said, “Doesn’t your teacher pay the two-drachma tax?” ²⁵He said, “Yes.” When they had gone in the house, Jesus was already ahead of Peter, and said, “What do you think, Simon? Kings here on earth—who do they collect tolls and taxes from? Their own children, or other people’s?” ²⁶And when he said, “From other people’s,” Jesus said to him, “So their own children are free from taxes! ²⁷Still, let’s not offend them. Go to the lake and cast a hook in the water. Then take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you’ll find a stater coin.^c Take that, and give it to them for you and me.”

You Have to Become Like Children to Get into Heaven’s Reign (Mk 9:33-37; Lk. 9:46-48)

18 At that moment,^d Jesus’ followers came up to him and said, “So, who is the greatest person in Heaven’s Reign?” ²And Jesus called a child forward and stood the child in the middle of them all. ³He said:

I’m telling you seriously, if you don’t turn around, and become like children, you will never^e get into Heaven’s Reign! ⁴So if anyone learns to be unassuming^f like this child, that person is the greatest in Heaven’s Reign. ⁵And whoever takes in one child like this, in my name, takes me in.

The Grave Seriousness of Tripping People Up—Including Yourself (Mk 9:42-48; Lk. 17:1-2)

⁶But whoever trips up one of these little ones who have faith in me—it’s better for that person to have an upper millstone hung around their neck and be drowned way out in the ocean. ⁷It’s going to be horrible for this world^g because of the things that trip people up. But it’s going to be really horrible for the person responsible for tripping others.^h ⁸Soⁱ if your hand or your foot trips you up, cut it off and throw it away from you. It’s better for you to come into life maimed or with a disability, rather than having two hands or two feet to be thrown into the age-long fire. ⁹And if your eye trips you up, take it out, and throw it away from you. It’s better

^a Lit. “greatly sorrowful.”

^b Prn. cup-**pur**-nee-um.

^c A stater was worth four drachmas.

^d Lit. “in that hour.”

^e Lit. “absolutely not.”

^f Lit. “makes themselves humble.”

^g Lit. “Woe to the world.”

^h Lit. “the person through whom the stumbling block comes.”

ⁱ Lit. “But.”

for you to come into life one-eyed, rather than to get thrown with two eyes into the fire of Gehenna.

The Parable of the Lost Sheep (Lk. 15:1-7)

¹⁰Watch out that you don't look down on these little ones! After all, I can tell you that their angels are in heaven, constantly looking at the face of my Father in heaven. ¹²What do you think? Let's say a person has a hundred sheep, and one of them runs away and gets lost.^a Won't the person leave the ninety-nine there on the hillside and go looking for the one that ran away? ¹³Also, if the person finds it, I'm telling you seriously: the person will be happier about that one than about the ninety-nine that haven't run away. ¹⁴It's the same way with your Father in heaven, who doesn't want any of these little ones to be lost.^b

What to Do If Someone Sins Against You

¹⁵So if your friend^c sins against you, go and make your complaint^d to them, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, then you've won them over. ¹⁶If they don't listen, take one or two others with you. That way, "everything will be established on the word^e of two or three witnesses."^f ¹⁷If they don't listen to them, take it to^g the community. And if they don't listen to the community, then regard them as you would a foreigner or a tax collector.^h ¹⁸I'm telling you seriously: whatever you bind here on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you unbind here on earth will be unbound in heaven!ⁱ ¹⁹I'll say it again to you: If two of you here on earth will agree about anything that they want to ask, my Father in heaven will make it happen for them. ²⁰That's because where two or three people get together in my name, there I am, right with them.^j

The Parable of the Merciless Servant

²¹Then Peter came up and said to Jesus, "Teacher, how many times can my friend^k sin against me and I forgive them? Up to seven times?" ²²Jesus said to him:

I'm not going to tell you up to seven times—no, up to seventy-times-seven.

²³As a result, Heaven's Reign is like a king who wanted to sort out the accounts with his servants. ²⁴But at the beginning of the accounting one man was brought

^a Lit. "and one of them goes astray."

^b Lit. "Similarly, it isn't desired before your Father in heaven for any of these little ones to be lost."

^c Lit. "And if your brother."

^d Lit. "case," or "argument."

^e Lit. "mouth." Deut. 19:15.

^f Deut. 19:15.

^g Lit. "tell."

^h Lit. "let them be to you a foreigner or a tax collector."

ⁱ Lattimore has "whatever you close on earth shall be closed in heaven, and whatever you open on earth shall be open in heaven." He is taking binding and unbinding as indicating the latching and unlatching of a door, which is a possible reading.

^j Lit. "there I am in the middle of them."

^k Lit. "brother."

to him who owed ten thousand talents.^a ²⁵And since the man couldn't pay, the king commanded for him to be sold—along with his wife and children and everything he owned—to pay back the debt. ²⁶So the servant falls down in front of him and says, “Be patient with me, and I'll pay it all back to you!” ²⁷The king felt sorry for that servant, and let him off and forgave the loan.

²⁸But when that servant left, and he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii,^b he grabbed him and started to choke him. “Pay back all of what you owe me!” he said. ²⁹So the fellow servant fell down and begged him: “Be patient with me, and I'll pay you back!” ³⁰But he wouldn't. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into jail until he paid back the debt.

³¹So when his fellow servants saw the things that had happened, they felt terrible. They went to their king and laid out^c all the facts. ³²Then the king called him in and said to him, “You evil servant! I forgave you that entire debt when you begged me to. ³³Shouldn't you have been merciful to your fellow servant, just as I was merciful to you?” ³⁴His king was furious. He turned him over to the torturers until he paid back everything he owed.

³⁵That's just how my heavenly Father will treat you, if each of you doesn't forgive your fellow human beings^d from the heart.

Jesus Teaches about Divorce (Mk 10:1-12)

19 When Jesus finished all these teachings, he left Galilee, and he came into the area of Judea east^e of the Jordan River. ¹Large crowds of people followed him, and he healed them there.

³Some Pharisees came up to Jesus, and began testing him. They said, “Is it allowed for a man to divorce his wife for any reason he chooses?”^f ⁴But he answered, “Haven't you read that the Creator, from the beginning,

made them male and female,^g

⁵and said,

Because of this, a man will leave his father and mother behind and be joined to his wife. And the two will be one flesh.^h

^a This is in the realm of tens of millions of dollars.

^b Pm. *dir-nahr-ee*. A denarius was a standard day's wage. So we're talking about the equivalent of a few hundred dollars.

^c Lit. “clarified.”

^d Lit. “your brother.”

^e Lit. “across.”

^f Lit. “for every cause.”

^g Gen. 1:27; 5:2.

^h Gen. 2:24.

“As a result, they aren’t two, but ‘one flesh.’ So, what God has joined together, human beings^a shouldn’t separate.”⁷ They said to him, “How is it, then, that Moses gave the instruction, “Give her a note of divorce and send her away”?^b He said to them, “Moses allowed you to divorce your wives because of the stubbornness^c of your hearts. But it wasn’t like that from the beginning. “And I’m telling you, whoever divorces his wife for any other cause than sexual immorality, and marries another person, breaks his marriage vows.”¹⁰ His followers said to him, “If that’s the way it is between a man and a woman, it isn’t worth it to get married.”¹¹ But he said to them, “Not everybody accepts this—just those who have been given the gift.^d “After all, there are some who can’t have sex with women^e who were born that way from their mother’s womb; and there are some who can’t have sex with women because people made them that way; and there are some who made themselves not be able to have sex with women for the sake of Heaven’s Reign. If you can accept it, accept it.”^f

Jesus Blesses Some Little Children (Mk 10:13-16; Lk. 18:15-17)

¹³ Then some children were brought to Jesus, so that he could lay hands on them and pray. And his followers were giving them a hard time.¹⁴ But Jesus said, “Leave the children alone! Don’t be stopping them from coming to me. After all, Heaven’s Reign belongs to ones like these.”¹⁵ And when he had laid his hands on them, he went on from there.

A Rich Young Man Comes to Jesus (Mk 10:17-31; Lk. 18:18-30)

¹⁶ Right then^h a man came up to him and said, “Teacher, what good work do I have to do to have eternal life?”¹⁷ Jesus said to him, “How is it you’re asking me about what’s good? Only One is the Good One.ⁱ But if you want to make it^j into life, keep the commandments.” He said to him, ¹⁸ “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “Don’t murder, don’t break your marriage vows, don’t steal, don’t give false testimony against anyone, ¹⁹ honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as you love yourself.”^k ²⁰ The young man said, “I’ve kept all of these. What am I still missing?”²¹ Jesus said to him, “If you want to be complete, go sell your possessions and give to the poor. Then^l you’ll have wealth stored^m in heaven. And come follow

^a Or “a man,” as when he divorces his wife.

^b Deut. 24:1.

^c Lit. “stiffness,” or “hardness.”

^d Lit. “not all accept this teaching, but those to whom it is given.”

^e Lit. “there are eunuchs,” here and in the two following instances.

^f Lit. “Let the one who is able to accept it accept it.”

^g Lit. “But the followers scolded them,” or “told them off.”

^h Lit. “behold.”

ⁱ Lit. “The Good One is One” (referring to God, who is one).

^j Lit. “enter.”

^k Exod. 20:12-16; Deut. 5:16-20; Exod. 21:10; Lev. 19:13, 18; Deut. 24:14.

^l Lit. “...poor, and.”

^m “Wealth stored”: traditionally: “treasure.”

me.”²² But when the young man heard that, he went away deeply depressed, because he had lots of possessions.

Rich People are Going to Find it Painful to Enter Heaven’s Reign (Mk 10:23-31; Lk. 18:24-30)

²³ And Jesus said to his followers, “I’m telling you seriously: a rich person is going to find it painful^a to enter Heaven’s Reign! ²⁴ Once again, I’m telling you, it’s easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter God’s Reign.” ²⁵ When his followers heard that, they were totally astounded. They said, “Then who can be saved?” ²⁶ Jesus looked hard at them and said, “With human beings it’s impossible, but with God everything is possible.” ²⁷ Then Peter responded, and said to him, “Look, we’ve left everything and followed you. So how will it be for us?” ²⁸ Jesus said to them:

I’m telling you seriously: there’s going to be a new creation, when the Human One sits on his glorious throne. At that time you who’ve followed me are going to sit on twelve thrones too.^b You’ll be judges for the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And as for everyone who has left a home, or brothers or sisters, or father or mother, or children, or properties, because of my name—they’ll receive back a hundred times what they gave up, and they’ll inherit eternal life. ³⁰ But a lot of those who are first are going to be last, and a lot of those who are last are going to be first.

The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard

20 For example, Heaven’s Reign is like this: a man, who owned property, went out first thing one day to hire laborers for his vineyard. ¹ He agreed with the workers for a denarius^c a day, then he sent them out to work in his vineyard. ² When he went out around nine o’clock that morning,^d he saw some more men standing around downtown^e with nothing to do. ³ He said to those, “You go out to the vineyard too, and I’ll pay you whatever’s right.” ⁴ And they went off. He also went out again around noon, and three o’clock, and did the same thing. ⁵ Around five, when he went out, he still found people standing around.^f He said to them, “How is it you’ve been standing here all day long with nothing to do?” ⁶ They said, “Because no one hired us.” He said to them, “You go out to the vineyard too.” ⁷ When it started to get dark, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, “Call in the workers. Pay them their wages, starting from the last ones hired, and ending with the first. ⁸ When the five o’clock people came, they each

^a Lit. “a rich person will uncomfortably enter the kingdom of heaven.” This particular statement does not carry the idea that a rich person will probably *fail to enter*, as is implied by the usual rendering, “it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven.”

^b Lit. “Amen I say to you that you who’ve followed me, in the renewal [of the world], when the Human One [traditionally: “the Son of Man”] sits on his glorious throne, you too will sit on twelve thrones.”

^c Prn. din-**nahr**-ee-us.

^d Lit. “the third hour.” The first hour starts at sunup.

^e Lit. “in the marketplace.”

^f Lit. “he found others standing.”

got a denarius.^a ¹⁰And when the first ones hired came, they expected they'd get more. But^b they each were getting a denarius too. ¹¹As they got paid, they were grumbling about the property owner. ¹²They said, "The last ones only put in one hour, and he has made them equal to us—we're the ones who bore the weight of the work today, and the scorching heat!" ¹³But he answered one of them: "Friend, I'm not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree with me for a denarius?" ¹⁴Take what's yours and move along. I also want to give this person who came last the same amount as you. ¹⁵Is it not allowed for me to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am being kind?"^c ¹⁶That's how the last will be first and the first will be last.

Jesus Says for the Third Time That He is Going to be Killed (Mk 10:32-34; Lk. 18:31-34)

¹⁷As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took his twelve closest followers aside. He talked to them in private on the way. ¹⁸He said to them, "Look, we're going up to Jerusalem, and the Human One is going to be betrayed^d to the chief priests and scripture experts. They're going to condemn him to death. ¹⁹They will hand him over to the Gentiles, to be made fun of, whipped, and hung on a cross. And on the third day he will be raised."

James and John's Mother Asks Jesus for a Favor (Mk 10:35-45)

²⁰Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to Jesus with her sons. She bowed down and asked if she could have a favor from him. ²¹He said, "What do you want to ask?"^e She said to him, "Say that my two sons here will sit on your right and on your left, in your kingdom." ²²Jesus answered her, "You two don't know what you're asking. Can you drink the cup that I'm about to drink?" They said to him, "We can." ²³He said to them, "Well, you will drink my cup. But to sit on my right and my left—that's not for me to grant. No, it's for whoever it has been prepared for by my Father." ²⁴When the ten heard that, they were offended with the two brothers. ²⁵But Jesus called them over and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles wield power over them. ²⁶But it's not going to be like that with you. No, if one of you hopes to become great,^f they'll be a servant to you all; ²⁷and if one of you hopes to be first, they'll be a servant to all of you. ²⁸In the same way, the Human One didn't come to be served. No, he came to serve, and to give his life to buy many people out of captivity."^g

^a Prn. *dinnahr*-ee-us.

^b Lit. "and."

^c Lit. "Or is your eye evil, because I am good?" "The evil eye" refers to envy—bitterness when someone else receives something good—or to greed and stinginess (see Mt. 6:19-23), which can amount to the same thing.

^d Or "turned in," or "handed over."

^e Lit. "What do you want?" He wasn't being rude or short with her, as this formulation would imply in English.

^f Lit. "if someone wants among you to become great."

^g Lit. "to give his life as a redemption price for many." The "redemption price" most often refers to the price paid to buy the freedom of a slave, but it also can refer to kidnap ransom. So: the Messiah didn't come to enslave people (by domineering over people), but free them from captivity (both practically and spiritually).

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men at Jericho (Mk 10:46-52; Lk. 18:35-43)

²⁹As they were coming out of Jericho, a big crowd was following him. ³⁰And two blind people were sitting there by the road, and heard that Jesus was walking by. They started shouting to him. They said, “Lord! Please have mercy on us! Son of David!” ³¹But the crowd gave them a hard time,^a saying to be quiet. But they shouted even louder, “Lord! Have mercy on us! Son of David!” ³²Jesus stopped and called back to them. He said, “What do you want me to do for you?” ³³They told him, “Lord, for our eyes to be opened!” ³⁴Jesus felt compassion for them, and touched their eyes. Right away they could see again! And they followed him.

The Crowds Celebrate as Jesus Enters Jerusalem (Mk 11:1-10; Lk. 19:28-40; Jn 12:12-19)

21 When they got close to Jerusalem, they were going through Bethphage^b to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus sent two followers off, ²telling them: “Go in the village across from you. Right away you’ll find a donkey tied up, and her foal will be with her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³And if anyone says anything to you, say that the Teacher needs them, and he will send them right along.”^c ⁴This happened so that what God said^d through the prophet could be fulfilled:

⁵Say to the daughter of Zion,
Look! Your king is coming to you!
He’s gentle, and he’s riding on a donkey.
He’s even riding on a colt,
The foal of a work animal.^e

⁶The two followers went and did just what Jesus had instructed them to do. ⁷They brought the donkey and the foal, and they laid their robes over them, and Jesus sat on top of the robes. ⁸Most of the crowd spread their robes on the road, and others cut leafy branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹And the crowds that went in front of him and behind him were calling out,

Hosanna to the Son of David!
Bless the one^f who comes in the name of the Lord!^g
Hosanna in the heights of heaven!”

^a Lit. “But the crowd told them off.”

^b Pm. **beth-fa-gee**.

^c This is just as ambiguous in Greek as in English—does it mean that Jesus will send the donkeys back right away when he is done with them, or that the owner will send the animals along when he hears that they’re for the Lord’s use?

^d Lit. “what was said.”

^e Zech. 9:9.

^f Lit. “Blessed is he,” or “Blessed be he.”

^g Ps. 118:26.

¹⁰When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was shaken up. They were saying, “Who is this?” ¹¹The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee!”

¹²Jesus went into the Temple. He kicked out all the people who were buying and selling in the Temple. And he turned over the tables of the money-changers, and the chairs of the people selling doves. ¹³He said to them, “scripture says:^a ‘My house will be called a house of prayer.’^b But you’re making it a hideout for armed robbers!”^c

¹⁴Blind people and people who couldn’t walk were coming up to Jesus in the Temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵But the chief priests and scripture experts saw the amazing things he was doing, and they saw children calling out in the Temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” They were offended, and they said to him, ¹⁶“Do you hear what these children are saying?” But Jesus said, “Yes. Haven’t you ever read that ‘From the mouths of children and nursing infants I will re-establish praise’?”^d ¹⁷Jesus left them and went out of the town to Bethany, and he spent the night there.

Jesus Curses a Fig Tree (Mk 11:12-14, 20-25)

¹⁸Early the next morning, as Jesus was going back into the city, he was hungry. ¹⁹He saw a lone fig tree by the road, and went to it. And he didn’t find anything on it, but just leaves. He said to it, “Fruit won’t come from you anymore forever!” And the fig tree shriveled up right afterwards. ²⁰When the followers saw that, they were amazed, and were saying, “How is it that the fig tree shriveled up right away?” ²¹But Jesus said to them, “I’m telling you seriously: if you just have faith and don’t doubt, you won’t just do the fig tree thing. You’ll even say to this mountain, ‘Get up and jump in the sea,’ and it will happen! ²²Everything that you ask in prayer, with faith,^e you will receive.”

The Religious Leaders Question Jesus’ Authority (Mk 11:27-33; Lk. 20:1-8)

²³When Jesus went into the Temple, the chief priests and elders of the people came up to him while he was teaching. They said, “By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you that authority?” ²⁴Jesus replied, “I’m going to ask you one thing. If you tell me that, I’ll also tell you by what authority I do things. ²⁵Where did John’s baptism come from? Was it from heaven, or did it just come from human beings?” And they started discussing it among themselves. They were saying, “If we say it was from heaven, he’ll say to us, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ ²⁶But if we say it was just from human beings, we’re afraid of

^a Lit. “it is written.”

^b Isa. 56:7.

^c Or “a thieves’ cave.” Jer. 7:11.

^d Ps. 83 LXX.

^e Lit. “believing.”

the crowd, because they all regard John as a prophet.”²⁷ And they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.” Jesus said to them, “Then I’m not going to tell you by what authority I’m doing these things.”

The Parable of the Two Sons

²⁸ “So, what do you think? A man had two sons. He said to the first, ‘Son, go out today and work in the vineyard.’²⁹ And that one said, ‘I don’t want to.’ But later he had second thoughts and went.³⁰ The man went up to the other son and said the same thing. That one said, ‘Right away, sir,’ but didn’t go.³¹ Which one of the two did what the father wanted? They said, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I’m telling you seriously: the tax collectors and prostitutes are going into God’s Reign ahead of you!’³² After all, John came to you on a path of justice, and you didn’t believe him—yet the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him. And when you saw that, you didn’t even change your mind later and believe him.”

The Parable of the Evil Tenant Farmers (Mk 12:1-12; Lk. 20:9-19)

³³ “Listen to another parable. There was a man who was a landowner. He planted a vineyard, and he put fence around it. And he dug a wine press in it and built a watchtower.^a Then he leased it out to farmers, and moved away.³⁴ When the first harvest time was near, he sent his servants to the farmers, to get his portion of the harvest.^b ³⁵ But the farmers took the man’s servants and beat some, murdered some, and stoned others.³⁶ Again he sent other servants—more than the first time.^c But they did the same things to them.³⁷ Later he sent his son to them. He thought,^d ‘They will respect my son.’³⁸ But when the farmers saw the son, they said to one another, ‘Here’s the heir! Come on, let’s kill him, and we’ll have his inheritance.’³⁹ And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.⁴⁰ So, now. When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do with those farmers?”⁴¹ They said to Jesus, “He’ll bring those evil people to an evil end, and he’ll rent out the vineyard to other farmers—ones that will give him its fruits in their seasons.”⁴² Jesus said to them, Haven’t you ever read in the scriptures,

This stone,
Which the builders rejected,
Has become the cornerstone!
The Lord has done this,^e
And it’s amazing to us!^f

^a Isa. 5:1-2.

^b Lit. “his fruits.”

^c Lit. “more than the first ones.”

^d Lit. “he said.”

^e Lit. “This has come about from the Lord.”

^f Lit. “And it’s an amazing thing in our eyes.” Ps. 118:22-23.

43So I'm telling you, God's Reign is going to be taken away from you. It's going to be given to a nation that produces its fruit."^a

45When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they knew he was talking about them. 46And although they were looking for a way to arrest him, they were afraid of the crowds, because the crowds regarded him as a prophet.

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet (Lk. 14:15-24)

22 Again Jesus responded to them in parables. He said,

2Heaven's Reign is like this: a certain king^b held a wedding for his son. 3He sent his slaves out to invite the guests to the wedding celebration. But they didn't want to come. 4Again he sent out other slaves. He told them, "Say to the invited guests, 'Look, I've prepared the dinner! My bulls and calves have been sacrificed, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding celebration!'" 5But they didn't pay any attention. One went off to the field that he owned, and one went off to his business. 6The rest grabbed his slaves and abused them and killed them. 7The king was furious. He sent his armies and killed those murderers and burnt their city. 8Then he said to his slaves, "My wedding is ready, but the ones who were chosen weren't worthy. 9Go over to the city gates, and invite whoever you find to the wedding." 10So those slaves went out on the streets and were gathering everyone they found—whether they were evil or good. And the wedding hall was full of dinner guests.^c 11But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who wasn't dressed in wedding clothes. 12He said to him, "Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?" But he couldn't say a word.^d 13Then the king said to the servers, "Tie his feet and hands, and throw him out there in the darkness. There are going to be people crying and grinding their teeth out there." 14Because lots of people are invited, but few are chosen.

Jesus Answers a Trick Question about Paying Taxes to Caesar (Mk 12:13-17; Lk. 20:20-26)

15Then the Pharisees went and planned^e how they were going to trap Jesus in what he said. 16And they sent their followers to him, along with the Herodians.^f They said, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere,^g and that you teach God's way truthfully. You don't pay attention to who anybody is, because you don't go by

^a Some mss add verse 44: "And the person who falls on that stone will be broken in pieces; and if it falls on someone, it will crush them to powder."

^b Lit. "there was a man who was a king who."

^c Lit. "full of those who were reclining."

^d Or "he had no excuse"; lit. "he was silenced."

^e Lit. "took counsel together."

^f Prn. hur-road-ee-ans.

^g Lit. "true."

outward appearances.^a ¹⁷So tell us your opinion.^b Is it all right^c to pay the tax to Caesar, or not?” ¹⁸But Jesus knew their evil intention, and said, “Why are you testing me, you play-actors? ¹⁹Show me the coin for the tax.” So they brought him a denarius.^d ²⁰Jesus said to them, “Whose image and inscription is this?” ²¹They said to him, “Caesar’s.” Then he said to them, “So give Caesar’s things to Caesar, and God’s things to God.” ²²They were amazed when they heard that, and they gave up and went away.

Jesus Answers a Trick Question about the Resurrection (Mk 12:18-27; Lk. 20:27-40)

²³On that same day, some Sadducees came up to him. (The Sadducees say there is no resurrection.) ²⁴They asked him, “Teacher, Moses said,

If a man dies without children, his brother should marry his widow and raise up offspring for him.^e

²⁵So, there were these seven brothers. The first one married and then died. Since he had no offspring, he left his wife to his brother. ²⁶The same thing happened to the second and the third, and eventually to all seven. ²⁷Last of all the woman herself died. ²⁸So in the resurrection, whose wife will she be?^f After all, they’d all had her as a wife.”

²⁹But Jesus answered them: “You’re way off—you don’t know the scriptures, and you don’t know the power of God. ³⁰Because in the resurrection, people aren’t married, and they don’t get married. No, they’re like angels in heaven. ³¹But as for the resurrection of the dead, haven’t you read what was said to you by God:

³²I’m the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob!^g

God isn’t the God of the dead, but of the living!”

Jesus Answers a Question about the Greatest Commandment (Mk 12:28-34; Lk. 10:25-28)

³³When the crowds heard that, they were astounded at his teaching. ³⁴And when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they got together. ³⁵One of their law experts put a test to him. He asked, ³⁶“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment of the Law?” ³⁷And Jesus said,

^a Lit. “It is no concern to you about anyone, for you don’t look on people’s faces.”

^b Lit. “So, tell us how it seems to you.”

^c Or “Is it legal” (in terms of God’s Law). They’re trying to play a game of “gotcha.” If Jesus says yes, then they can accuse him of being a toady of the Roman Empire, and make him lose credibility with the public. If he says no, they can accuse him to the Romans of preaching sedition (i.e. preaching rebellion against the Empire).

^d Prn. diin-**nahr**-ee-us.

^e Lit. “for his brother.” Deut. 25:5; Gen. 38:8.

^f Lit. “to which of the seven will she be wife?”

^g Exod. 3:6, 15, 16.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your understanding.^a

³⁸That is the greatest and number one commandment. ³⁹The second is like it:

Love your neighbor as you love yourself.^b

⁴⁰All of the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments.”

Jesus Asks a Question of His Own (Mk 12:35-37; Lk. 41-44)

⁴¹When the Pharisees had gathered together, Jesus asked them a question. ⁴²He said, “What’s your opinion about the Messiah?^c Whose son is he?” They said, “David’s.” ⁴³He said to them, “So how does David, when he’s in the Spirit, call him ‘Lord’? He says,

⁴⁴The Lord said to my Lord,
‘Sit at my right side until I put your enemies under your feet.’^d

⁴⁵“So, if David calls him ‘Lord,’ how is he his son?”^e ⁴⁶And no one had a single word to say back to him. And nobody dared to ask him anything else from that day on.

Jesus Preaches Against the Scripture Experts and Pharisees (Mk 12:38-40; Lk. 20:45-47)

23 Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his followers. ²He said,

The Pharisees and the scripture experts sit in Moses’ seat. ³So whatever they say to you, do it and obey it. But don’t follow their practices—because they say things, but they don’t do them. ⁴They tie up heavy loads on people’s shoulders, but they themselves don’t want to move them with even one finger.^f ⁵All the things they do—they do them to be seen by other people. For example, they widen their prayer headbands,^g and they lengthen their tassels. ⁶They love to have the place of honor^h at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues. ⁷They also love to be greeted with respect in public placesⁱ and for people to call them “Teacher.” ⁸But you all should not be called “Teacher.” After all, you have One as teacher, and you are all brothers and sisters. ⁹And don’t call anyone “Father” here on earth. After all, you have One, your heavenly Father. ¹⁰And don’t call yourselves “leaders,” because you have one Leader: Messiah. ¹¹But your

^a Or “with all your mind.” Deut. 6:5.

^b Lev. 19:18.

^c Lit. “How does it seem to you about the Messiah?”

^d Ps. 110:1.

^e The word “son” in this context means “descendent.” I think the idea is, the Messiah seems to be older than David, not younger, since David looks up to him as his “Lord.” But if Messiah is younger, why is David deferential to him, rather than the Messiah being deferential to his ancestor?

^f Lit. “a finger.”

^g Lit. “phylacteries,” little boxes with scriptures in them.

^h Lit. “the first reclining place.”

ⁱ Lit. “in the marketplaces.”

greatest leader^a will be your servant. ¹²Those who lift themselves up are going to be humbled, and those who humble themselves are going to be lifted up.^b

¹³So it's going to be horrible for you, scripture experts and Pharisees—you play-actors! Because you lock the gates of Heaven's Reign in people's faces!^c Not only do you not go in yourselves, but you also won't let others go in.^d

¹⁴It's going to be horrible for you, scripture experts and Pharisees—you play-actors! Because you travel all the way around the sea and the desert to make one convert, and when the person converts, you make them twice as fit for Gehenna^e as yourselves.

¹⁵It's going to be horrible for you, you blind guides! You say, "If somebody swears by the Temple, it doesn't count. But if they swear by the gold in the Temple, it's binding." ¹⁷Stupid, blind people! Which is greater—the gold, or the Temple that makes the gold holy? ¹⁸You also say, "If somebody swears by the altar, it doesn't count. But if they swear by the offering on the altar, it's binding." ¹⁹You're so blind! After all, what's greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift holy? ²⁰So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. ²¹And whoever swears by the Temple swears by it and by the One who lives in it. ²²And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God, and by the One who sits on it.

²³It's going to be horrible for you, scripture experts and Pharisees—you play-actors! Because you tithe your mint and dill and cumin, but you've ignored the important things in the Law: justice, mercy, and faith. These are the necessary things (not to say that you should ignore the others). ²⁴Blind guides, you strain out the gnat, but swallow the camel right down!

²⁵It's going to be horrible for you, scripture experts and Pharisees—you play-actors! Because you clean the outside of your bowls and cups, but inside they're full of violent thievery and lack of restraint. ²⁶Listen, blind Pharisee! Clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside will be clean too.

²⁷It's going to be horrible for you, scripture experts and Pharisees—you play-actors! Because you are like white-painted tombs. They look beautiful outside, but inside they're full of dead people's bones and all kinds of filth. ²⁸In the same

^a Lit. "the greatest of you."

^b I've put this saying in the plural for gender-inclusiveness.

^c Lit. "in front of people."

^d Lit. "those who are going in you don't allow to go in." Some later ancient mss add v. 14, either here or before v. 13: "It's going to be horrible for you, scripture experts and Pharisees—YOU play-actors! Because you eat up [lit. "down"] widows' houses and make long prayers for show. Because of this, you are going to receive a harsher [lit. "greater"] judgment" (see Mk 12:40; Lk. 20:47).

^e Lit. "twice as much a child of Gehenna." See "Bible Words" under "Children of."

^f Lit. "Blind ones!"

way, you appear externally to others^a as people of integrity,^b but inside you're full of hypocrisy^c and lawlessness.

²⁹It's going to be horrible for you, scripture experts and Pharisees—you play-actors! Because you build tombs for the prophets, and decorate the tombs of people of integrity^d—³⁰and you say, “If we had lived in our ancestors' time, we wouldn't have been involved in killing the prophets.”^e ³¹That way you testify against yourselves—that you're the offspring of those who killed the prophets. ³²So finish up what your ancestors started!^f ³³Snakes! Offspring of poisonous snakes! How will you get away from the judgment of Gehenna?

³⁴Because of all this, I'm sending you prophets, wise people, and scripture experts. Some of them you will kill and hang on crosses, and some you will whip in your synagogues and chase from town to town. ³⁵In that way all the blood of people of integrity^g—that keeps getting poured out on the earth—will come back on you: from the blood of Abel, who was a person of integrity, to the blood of Zechariah, Berechiah's son.^h He's the one you murdered between the Temple and the altar. ³⁶I'm telling you seriously: all these will land onⁱ this generation!

Jesus Cries Out in Grief over Jerusalem (Lk. 13:34-35)

³⁷Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets and stone the people who are sent to you! How many times have I wanted to gather your children together—just like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings? And you didn't want it. ³⁸Look, your house is left to you deserted!^j ³⁹Because I'm telling you: you'll never see me from now on until you say, “Bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord!”^k

Jesus Prophesies the Destruction of the Temple (Mk 13:1-2; Lk. 21:5-6)

24 Jesus left the Temple,^l and his followers came up to him as he was walking along. They were pointing to the buildings of the Temple. But he said to them, ²“Do you see all this? I'm telling you seriously: there won't be one stone left on top of another here—they'll all be torn down!”^m

^a Lit. “people.”

^b Traditionally: “as righteous people.”

^c Lit. “play acting.” Pretending you're something when you're not.

^d Traditionally: “the tombs of the righteous.”

^e Lit. “we wouldn't have joined in the blood of the prophets.”

^f Lit. “And you, fill up the measure of your ancestors!”

^g Traditionally: “the righteous.”

^h Ptn. *ber-a-kye-a*, so that it rhymes with Zechariah.

ⁱ Or “come upon.”

^j Jer. 12:37; 22:5.

^k Ps. 118:26.

^l This statement really wraps up the previous interaction.

^m Lit. “—that won't be torn down.”

Signs of the Wrapping Up of the Age (Mk 13:3-8; Lk. 21:7-11)

Later,^a when Jesus sat down at the Mount of Olives, his followers came up to him privately. They said, “Tell us, when will these things happen? Also, what’s the sign^b of your coming,^c and of the wrapping up of the age?” Jesus answered them:

Make sure nobody fools you.^d Because lots of people are going to come using my name. They’re going to be saying, “I’m the Messiah!” Lots of people will be fooled by them. And you’re going to be hearing of wars and rumors about wars. Make sure you don’t panic. Because it has to happen, but it’s definitely not the end yet.

For example, one nation is going to get up and make war against another nation,^e and one kingdom against another kingdom. And there are going to be famines and earthquakes in various places. All of these are the start of the labor pains.

Persecution is Coming for Followers of Jesus (Mk 13:9-13; Lk. 21:12-19)

At that time people are going to betray you, and you’ll be persecuted. People are going to kill you, and you’re going to be hated in^f every nation because of my name. At that time lots of people are going to get tripped up, and they’re going to betray one another and hate one another. Lots of false prophets are going to get up and fool most people.^g And because of the increase in lawlessness, most people’s love will go cold. But the person who holds out to the end will be saved. And this good news of God’s Reign^h is going to be preached throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations. Then the end will come.

The “Horror That Causes Abandonment” (Mk 13:14-23; Lk. 17:23-24, 27; 21:20-24)

So when you see “the horror that causes abandonment”ⁱ that Daniel the prophet talked about, set up “in the holy place” (the reader should understand), then the people in Judea should run away into the mountains. Whoever is up on the roof shouldn’t go down to get things out of their house. Whoever is out in the field shouldn’t even turn around to get their coat. It’s going to be horrible for pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days. But pray that your escape won’t have to be in the wintertime or on a Sabbath. Because at that time there will be terrible trouble—unlike anything that has ever happened before, or could

^a Lit. “And.”

^b Jews believed there would be certain striking events (“signs”) that would give the clue that God was about to intervene to put an end to human history and renew the world through the Messiah.

^c In the present context, the Greek word here means more than just “coming,” “appearance,” or “arrival.” It can often mean the official arrival of a king or emperor. Since Matthew represents Jesus’ followers as associating his arrival with the end of the age, it is clear that we are to understand that they see him as the hoped-for Messiah, who just hasn’t gone public yet. It means here, “your coming as Messiah.”

^d Lit. “leads you astray.” The “you” here and in all instances in Mt. 24 is plural.

^e Lit. “nation will rise up against nation.”

^f Lit. “by.”

^g Or “a lot of people.”

^h Traditionally: “the kingdom.”

ⁱ Lit. “the horror of abandonment,” Dan. 9:27.

ever happen again!^a ²²If that time weren't cut short, not one living soul would be saved.^b But for the sake of God's chosen ones, that time will be cut short.

²³At that time, if anyone says to you, "Look! The Messiah is here!" or "No, over here!"—don't believe it. ²⁴Because false messiahs and false prophets are going to get up and show huge miracles^c and wonders. If possible, they'd even fool God's chosen ones. ²⁵Look, I've told you beforehand. ²⁶So if they say to you, "Look! He's out in the desert!" don't go out there. Or if they say, "Look! He's in the banks!"^d don't believe it. ²⁷After all, you know how lightning goes across the sky and shines all the way from the east to the west. That's just how the appearance of the Human One will be. ²⁸Wherever there's a dead body, that's where the vultures will show up.

The Coming of the Human One (Mk 13:24-27; Lk. 21:25-28)

²⁹Right after that time of trouble,

The sun will go dark,
And the moon won't shine,^e
The stars will fall out of heaven,
And the heavenly powers will be shaken.^f

³⁰Then the sign of the Human One will appear in heaven. All the families on earth will be crying, when they see^g the Human One coming on the clouds, up in the sky,^h with power and intense glory. ³¹And he'll send out his angels with a huge trumpet blast. They'll gather together his chosen ones from the four winds—from one end of the skies to the other.

The Parable of the Fig Tree (Mk 13:28-31; Lk. 21:29-33)

³²However, you should all learn the parable of the fig tree. After its branches get tender shoots, and it puts out leaves, you know summer is nearly here. ³³In the same way, when you see all these things, you know that he's nearly at your doorsteps. ³⁴I'm telling you seriously: this generation will not go away until every single one of these things happens! ³⁵Heaven and earth are going to go away, but my words are never going to go away.

^a Dan. 12:1; Joel 2:2.

^b Lit. "if those days weren't cut short, all flesh wouldn't be saved."

^c Lit. "signs."

^d Lit. "treasuries."

^e Lit. "the moon won't give her light."

^f Isa. 13:10; Ezek. 32:7; Joel 2:10, 31: 3:15; Isa. 34:4; Hag. 2:6, 21.

^g Lit. "and they'll see."

^h Lit. "the clouds of the sky." Zech. 12:10, 14; Dan. 7:13-14.

ⁱ Or "it's," referring to the end of the age. I think Matthew understands Jesus to be referring to the Human One (see v. 30), i.e. to himself.

Nobody Knows the Exact Day and Hour! (Mk 13:23-37; Lk. 17:26-27, 34-35; 21:34-36)

³⁶But as for the exact day and hour, no one knows that—not even the angels in heaven, and not even the Son. Only the Father knows. ³⁷So it will be like in Noah’s days when the Human One comes. ³⁸Because in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, getting married and making marriage arrangements—right up to the day that Noah went into the ark. ³⁹They didn’t recognize what was happening until the flood came and swept them all away.^a It’ll be the same at the coming of the Human One.

⁴⁰At that time two people will be out in the field, and one will be taken and one will be left behind. ⁴¹Two people will be grinding flour at the mill, and one will be taken and one will be left behind. ⁴²So keep watch! Because you don’t know what day your Lord will come. ⁴³And know this: if the owner of a house knows what time of night the burglar is coming, they’ll keep watch and won’t let their house be broken into. ⁴⁴So you get ready too! Because the Human One is coming at a moment that you don’t expect him to.^b

The Parable of the Reliable Slave and the Abusive Slave (Lk. 12:41-48)

⁴⁵So who is the reliable slave, the smart one? Suppose the owner has put the slave in charge of his household, to give out food to everyone at the right times. ⁴⁶The blessed slave is the one the owner finds doing that when he comes. ⁴⁷I’m telling you seriously: he’ll put that one in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸But suppose the slave is bad, and says inwardly,^c “My master is taking a long time.” ⁴⁹And the person begins to beat the other slaves, and eat and drink with drunks. ⁵⁰That slave’s master will come on a day they don’t predict, and at a time they don’t expect.^d ⁵¹He’ll cut that slave in two with the whip, and he’ll put the person over with the play-actors. Over there, people are going to be crying and grinding their teeth.

The Parable of the Ten Young Women

25 At that time Heaven’s Reign will be like this: Ten young women each took their own lamps, and were going off to the ceremony of welcoming the groom and bride.^e ²Five of them were stupid and five were smart. ³Because the stupid ones took their lamps, but they didn’t take fuel with them. ⁴The smart ones took fuel containers along with their lamps. ⁵When the groom took a long time, they all got drowsy and were falling asleep. ⁶In the middle of the night the call came: “Look! The groom! Go out and welcome him!” ⁷Then all the young women got up and each got her lamp ready. ⁸And the stupid ones said to the smart ones, “Give us some of your fuel, because our lamps are going out!” ⁹But the smart ones

^a Lit. “took them all.”

^b Lit. “at an hour that you don’t think.”

^c Lit. “But if that bad slave says in his heart.”

^d Lit. “know.”

^e The ancient mss are pretty evenly divided between the reading “the groom” and “the groom and bride.”

said back to them, “There’s probably not going to be enough for us and for you. So you should go over to the vendors and buy some for yourselves.” ¹⁰But when they went off to buy more fuel, the groom came. The ones who were ready went in with him to the wedding, and the door was locked. ¹¹Later, the rest of the young women came and said, “Sir! Sir! Let us in!” ¹²But he said to them, “I’m telling you seriously: I don’t know you!” ¹³So keep watch! Because you don’t know the day or the time.

The Parable of the Talents (Lk. 19:11-27)

¹⁴It’s just like a man who is going out of town. He calls his slaves over and gives them responsibility for his properties. ¹⁵He gives five talents to one, he gives two talents to another, and he gives one talent to another.^a Each one gets an amount in line with their own ability. And he leaves town. ¹⁶Right away, the person with five talents goes and does business with them and makes another five. ¹⁷In the same way, the person with two makes two more. ¹⁸But the person with one talent takes it and goes off and hides it in the master’s field. ¹⁹After a long time their master^b comes and settles accounts with them. ²⁰The person with five talents comes up to him and presents five more, and says, “Master, you gave me five talents. See, I’ve made five more talents.” ²¹The master says, “Well done! You’re a good and trustworthy slave. You’ve been trustworthy in charge of a few things; I’m going to put you in charge of a lot of things! Come in and celebrate with your master!”^c ²²Then the one with the two talents comes up and says, “Master, you gave me two talents. See, I’ve made two more talents.” ²³The master says, “Well done! You’re a good and trustworthy slave. You’ve been trustworthy in charge of a few things; I’m going to put you in charge of a lot of things! Come in and celebrate with your master!”^d ²⁴Finally the slave that received one talent comes up and says, “Master, I know you—you’re a tough businessman. You harvest where you didn’t plant, and you gather in places where you didn’t scatter seed. ²⁵I was afraid, so I went off and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have your money back.”^e ²⁶But the master says back to him, “You bad, cowardly slave! You already knew that I harvest where I haven’t planted, and gather in places where I haven’t scattered seed! ²⁷So you should have put my money in the bank. That way,^f when I came I would have gotten my money back with interest. ²⁸So take the talent away from him, and give it to the one who has ten talents. ²⁹As the saying goes,^g ‘Everyone who has will get more,^h and they’ll have more than

^a A talent was unit of money that could be considered worth many thousands of dollars.

^b Lit. “the master of those slaves.”

^c Or “Come, enjoy your master’s approval!” Lit. “Come into your master’s joy!”

^d See the nt. on v. 21.

^e Lit. “See—you have what is yours.”

^f Lit. “You should therefore have put it with the bankers, and.”

^g Lit. “For.” The master in the story appears to be quoting a proverb.

^h Lit. “to everyone who has will be given.”

enough. But the one who doesn't have will even get what they have taken away from them.' ³⁰Now^a throw that useless slave out there in the darkness! There are going to be people crying and grinding their teeth out there."

When the Human One Comes to Judge All Nations

³¹When the Human One comes in his glory, all his angels will be with him too. Then he's going to sit on his glorious throne. ³²All the nations are going to be assembled there in front of him. He'll sort them out from one another, just like a shepherd sorts the sheep out from the goats. ³³He'll put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. ³⁴Then the King will say to the ones on his right, "Come, all of you who have my Father's blessing! Come inherit the Reign that has been prepared for you ever since the creation^b of the world! ³⁵Because I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink; I was a foreigner,^c and you welcomed me in; ³⁶I was naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you looked after me; I was in prison, and you came to visit me." ³⁷Then the people of integrity^d will say back to him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? ³⁸When did we see you as a foreigner and welcome you in, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹And when did we see you sick or in prison, and come and visit you?" ⁴⁰And the King will answer them, "I'm telling you seriously: whatever you did for the most insignificant one of my brothers and sisters here, you did it for me." ⁴¹Then he will say to the ones on his left, "Get away from me, all of you cursed ones! Go away into the age-long^e fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

⁴²Because I was hungry, and you didn't give me anything to eat; I was thirsty, and you didn't give me anything to drink; ⁴³I was a foreigner, and you didn't welcome me in; I was naked, and you didn't clothe me; I was sick and in prison, and you didn't look after me." Then those ones will also say back to him, ⁴⁴"Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or as a foreigner, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and not serve you?" ⁴⁵Then he will say to them, "I'm telling you seriously: whatever you didn't do for the most insignificant one of my brothers and sisters here, you didn't do it for me either." ⁴⁶And that group will go off into age-long punishment. But the people of integrity will go off into age-long life.

^a Lit. "And."

^b Lit. "foundation."

^c Or "a stranger," and so throughout this parable.

^d Traditionally: "the righteous," here and in v. 46.

^e Traditionally: "eternal," here and in v. 46.

The Chief Priests and Elders Meet to Plan a Trap (Mk 14:1-2; Lk. 22:1-2; Jn 11:45-53)

26 When Jesus had finished saying all this, he said to his followers, ²“You know, the Passover^a is two days away. The Human One is going to be betrayed and then hung on a cross.”^b

³At that time the chief priests and the elders of the nation met together in the courtyard of the High Priest (his name was Caiaphas^c). ⁴They planned how to kidnap^d and kill Jesus by laying some kind of trap. ⁵They were saying, “It shouldn’t be during the festival—otherwise the people will riot.”

A Woman Anoints Jesus’ Head with Scented Oil (Mk 14:1-2; Jn 12:1-8)

⁶Meanwhile, ^eJesus was staying in Bethany at Simon the Leper’s house. While he was there, ^{7a}a woman came up to him. She had an alabaster bottle of scented oil, super-expensive stuff. She poured it over his head as he was lying there at dinner. ⁸But when his followers saw that, they were offended. They were thinking, “What’s the point of throwing it away like that?^f ⁹After all, it could’ve been sold for a lot of money and given to the poor!” ¹⁰But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said to them, “Why are you making trouble for this woman? She’s just done something kind for me. ¹¹After all, you’ll always have the poor with you—but you won’t always have me. ¹²When she put this scented oil on my body, she was preparing me for burial. ¹³I’m telling you seriously: wherever the good news is preached throughout the world, the thing she just did will also be told, as her memorial.”^g

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus (Mk 14:10-11; Lk. 22:3-6)

¹⁴Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot,^h went to the chief priests. ¹⁵He said, “What are you willing to give me if I betray Jesus for you?” And they put up thirty silver coins.ⁱ ¹⁶From then on he looked for a good moment to betray him.

Jesus Has a Passover Meal with His Closest Followers (Mk 14:12-21; Lk. 22:7-13)

¹⁷On the first day of Unleavened Bread,^j Jesus’ followers came up to him and said, “Where do you want us to get the Passover^k meal ready for you?” ¹⁸Jesus said, “Go

^a See “Bible Words.”

^b Lit. “betrayed to be hung on a cross.”

^c Prn. **kay**-a-fuss.

^d Or “arrest”; lit. “grab.”

^e Lit. “And while.”

^f Lit. “They were saying, ‘What is this waste for?’” In Greek (and in the Hebrew OT), “he said” can often mean, “he said to himself,” or “he thought.” Since Matthew says Jesus “knew,” rather than “heard them,” it seems a fair assumption that they were thinking it rather than saying it.

^g Most translations: “in memory of her.” I suspect that he might mean something else: that this act of hers will become her personal memorial to Jesus, more permanent and powerful than any inscription on a tomb.

^h Prn. is **kerr**-ee-ut.

ⁱ Lit. “they stood him thirty pieces of silver.” Zech. 11:12.

^j This is bread that has no yeast in it, so it doesn’t rise. Matzo cracker bread is an example. See Exod. 12 (esp. vv.14-15) for the story behind the custom.

^k See “Bible Words.”

into the city to such and such a man. Say to him, ‘The teacher says, “My time has almost come.^a I’m keeping the Passover at your house with my followers.”’¹⁹ And his followers did what he told them to do, and got the Passover ready.

“One of You is Going to Betray Me!” (Mk 14:18-19; Lk. 22:21-23; Jn 13:21-30)

²⁰When the sun went down, Jesus ate dinner^b with the twelve. ²¹As they were eating, he said, “I’m telling you seriously: one of you is going to betray me!” ²²They were very upset, and each of them began to say to him, “I’m not the one, am I, Teacher?” ²³Jesus said, “The person who’s been dipping his hand in the dipping bowl with me is the very same person who’s going to betray me. ²⁴It’s true that the Human One is going to go like scripture says he will;^c but it’s going to be horrible for the person responsible for his betrayal! It would have been better for that person if he’d never been born!” ²⁵And Judas, the one who betrayed him, said, “I’m not the one, am I, Teacher?” Jesus said to him, “You just said it.”^d

The Lord’s Supper (Mk 14:22-26; Lk. 22:14-23; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)

²⁶As they were eating dinner, Jesus took a loaf of bread, said a blessing over it, and broke it, and gave it to his followers. He said, “Here, eat this.^e It’s my body.” ²⁷Then he took a cup of wine, said a prayer of thanks, and gave it to them. He said, “Everybody drink some of this. ²⁸Because it’s my blood, that seals the covenant. It’s going to be poured out for lots of people, for forgiveness of their sins.^f ²⁹I’m telling you—from now on, I’m never going to drink from the fruits of the grape vine again, until that special day when I drink it new with you all, in the Reign of my Father.”

Jesus Prophesies That Peter Will Disown Him (Mk 14:27-31; Lk. 22:31-34; Jn 13:36-38)

³⁰After they sang a hymn, they went off to the Mount of Olives. ³¹Then Jesus said to them, “You’re all going to be offended at me^g tonight. Because scripture says:^h

I’m going to strike down the shepherd,
And his flock of sheep will be scattered.ⁱ

³²But after I’m raised, I’m going to go to Galilee ahead of you.” ³³Peter said back to him, “Even if everyone else gets offended at you, I’ll never get offended at you!”

^a Lit. “My time is nearly here.”

^b Lit. “lay down.” In those days, people lay on couches at the table to eat, rather than sitting.

^c Lit. “goes just as it is written about him.”

^d Andy Gaus, *The Unvarnished New Testament*, renders: “You tell me.” This, although not literal, strikes me as capturing the essence of the statement.

^e Or “Take some and eat it”; lit. “Take, eat.”

^f Lit. “For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.”

^g Or “caused to trip up because of me.” Jesus’ words can either mean (1) that they’re about to be disillusioned with him because he’s going to dash their hopes that he will appear as triumphant Messiah (he hints at the same disillusionment in John the Baptizer, see Mt. 11:2-7), or (2) that when he is arrested they’re going to succumb to the temptation of fear and cowardice (see v. 56).

^h Lit. “it is written.”

ⁱ Zech. 13:7.

³⁴Jesus said to him, “I’m telling you seriously: tonight the rooster’s not going to crow before you disown me three times!” ³⁵Peter said to him, “Even if I have to die with you, I’ll never disown you!” And all his followers said the same.

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane (Mk 14:32-42; Lk. 22:39-46)

³⁶Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane.^a He said to his followers, “Have a seat right here, while I go off over there and pray.” ³⁷And he took Peter, and the two Zebedee brothers with him. Jesus started to get really upset and distressed. ³⁸Then he said to them, “I’m nearly dying of grief!^b Stay here and keep watch with me!”

³⁹Jesus went on a little further and fell on his face, and was praying, “My Father, if it’s possible, let this cup pass me by! But still, not what I want, but what you want.”

⁴⁰He came over to his followers and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, you weren’t strong enough to keep watch for one hour with me? ⁴¹Keep watch! And all of you, pray that you don’t have to face the test!^c Your spirit’s willing enough,^d but your flesh is weak.”

⁴²He went off again a second time and prayed. He said, “My Father, if it isn’t possible for this cup to go by me without me drinking it, then whatever you want, so be it.”

⁴³Jesus came back and found them sleeping again. Their eyelids had gotten really heavy. ⁴⁴He let them alone, and went off and prayed a third time, saying the same thing again.

⁴⁵Then he came to his followers and said to them, “So, are you going to keep on sleeping and taking it easy? Look! The time has almost come.^e The Human One has just been betrayed^f into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Get up, let’s go. Look, the person who’s betraying me is nearly here.”^g

Jesus is Betrayed and Arrested (Mk 14:43-52; Lk. 22:47-53; Jn 18:1-11)

⁴⁷While Jesus was still talking, suddenly Judas, one of the twelve, came. A big crowd was with him, carrying swords and clubs—they were from the chief priests and the elders of the nation. ⁴⁸The one who betrayed Jesus had given them a signal. He said, “The person that I kiss is the one. Grab him.” ⁴⁹He quickly came up to Jesus and said, “Hello, Teacher!” And he gave him a big kiss. ⁵⁰But Jesus said to

^a Pm. get-**sem**-ma-nee.

^b Lit. “My soul is full of grief to the point of death.”

^c Lit. “Pray that you don’t come into the test.”

^d Or “eager,” “well-meaning.”

^e Lit. “the hour has come near.”

^f Lit. “is betrayed.”

^g Lit. “has come near.”

him, “Friend, what are you doing here?”^a Then people came up and grabbed Jesus and held him. ⁵¹Suddenly one of the people with Jesus reached down and drew his sword. He struck the high priest’s slave, and cut his ear off. ⁵²Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back where it belongs! People who take up the sword will get killed by the sword! ⁵³Or do you think I couldn’t call for help from my Father, and he’d send me more than twelve legions^b of angels right now? ⁵⁴Anyway, how else are the scriptures going to be fulfilled, that say it has to happen this way?”

⁵⁵At that time Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out to arrest^c me with swords and clubs, as though you were after an armed robber? I was sitting there every day in the Temple, teaching. And you never laid a hand on me.^d ⁵⁶But this whole thing has happened so that the prophetic scriptures will be fulfilled.” Then all his followers left him and ran away.

Jesus is Brought before Caiaphas the High Priest (Mk 14:53-65; Lk. 22:66-71; Jn 18:12-14, 19-24)

⁵⁷The people who were holding Jesus led him off to Caiaphas,^e the High Priest. The scripture experts and the elders of the nation had already come together at his house. ⁵⁸Now, Peter was following Jesus at a distance, right up to the wall of the High Priest’s courtyard. He went in and sat down with the attendants, to see what the outcome was going to be. ⁵⁹The chief priests were there, along with the whole High Council. They were trying to come up with a certain kind of false testimony against Jesus that would allow them to put him to death. ⁶⁰And they couldn’t come up with any, despite lots of people coming up and lying under oath. But finally two people came up ⁶¹and said, “That man said, ‘I have the power to destroy the Temple of God, and rebuild it in three days.’” ⁶²And the High Priest stood up and said to Jesus, “Don’t you have any response to that? What are these people saying against you?” ⁶³But Jesus just kept quiet.^f The High Priest said to him, “I command you to tell us the truth^g in the name of the Living God! Are you the Messiah, the Son of God?” ⁶⁴Jesus said to him, “From now on, you will see

...The Human One, sitting on the right of the Powerful One, and coming on the clouds in the sky!”^h

⁶⁵Then the High Priest tore his robes. He said, “He just blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? See, you’ve heard the blasphemy yourselves, now. ⁶⁶What do you think?” They all said, “He deserves death!” ⁶⁷Then they spat in his face and

^a Or “[Do] what you came for.”

^b That is, about 50,000 or 60,000.

^c Lit. “grab.”

^d Lit. “you didn’t seize me.”

^e Prn. **kay**-a-fuss.

^f Or “But Jesus didn’t say anything”; lit. “But Jesus was silent.”

^g Lit. “I adjure you.” The High Priest is officially putting Jesus under oath and commanding him to testify.

^h Dan. 7:13; Ps. 110:1.

slapped him. The ones who slapped him ⁶⁸said, “Prophesy to us, Messiah! Who just hit you?”^a

Peter Denies That He Knows Jesus (Mk 14:66-72; Lk. 22:54-62; Jn 18:15-18, 25-27)

⁶⁹Meanwhile,^b Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the servant girls came up to him and said, “You were with Jesus the Galilean too!” ⁷⁰But he denied it in front of everybody. He said, “I don’t know what you’re talking about.” ⁷¹Another servant girl came in the gate and saw him. She said to the people there, “That man was with Jesus the Nazarene.” ⁷²He denied it again, with an oath: “I don’t know that person!” ⁷³A little while later, the people standing there came up and said to Peter, “You’re definitely^c one of them too! After all, even your accent gives you away!” ⁷⁴Then he started to curse and swear: “I don’t know that person!” Right away, the rooster crowed. ⁷⁵And Peter remembered the words Jesus had said: “Before the rooster crows, you’re going to disown me three times.” He went outside and cried in anguish.

Jesus is Handed Over to Pilate, the Roman Governor (Mk 15:1; Lk. 23:1; Jn 18:28)

27 When it got to be early morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the nation plotted against Jesus, to put him to death. ²When they had tied him up, they led him away and handed him over to Pilate^d the governor.

Judas Commits Suicide (Acts 1:18-19)

³Then Judas, the one who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus had been condemned, and he felt bad about what he had done.^e He returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and elders. ⁴He said, “I’ve sinned! I’ve betrayed an innocent man to death!”^f But they said, “What’s that got to do with us? Look after yourself.” ⁵Judas threw the silver coins into the Temple and left, and went off and hanged himself. ⁶When the chief priests got the silver coins, they said, “It’s against the rules to put them in the Temple treasury, because it’s the price of somebody’s blood.” ⁷When they’d talked it over, they bought a place called Potter’s Field with the money. They made it into a cemetery for foreigners. ⁸Because of that, that field has been called “Blood Field,” right up to today. ⁹At that moment, Jeremiah’s prophecy was fulfilled—the one that says,^g

h^h took the thirty silver coins,

^a They had a belief that the Messiah would literally fulfill a scripture that said, “He will not judge by what his eyes see or by what his ears hear, but he will judge with just judgment” (Isa. 11:3-4). The implication is that they blindfolded him, and were taunting him that he couldn’t pass the test of the true Messiah. They were sure that if he were really the Messiah, he would know who was hitting him without being able to see them.

^b Lit. “But.”

^c Lit. “truly.”

^d Pm. *pye*-lit. Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea.

^e Lit. “he felt remorse.”

^f Lit. “I sinned, betraying innocent blood!”

^g Lit. “Then was fulfilled that which was said by Jeremiah the prophet, saying.”

^h Or “they.” The same word can mean either.

The price set on the One prized more than the children of Israel,
 10And gave them for the potter's field,
 Just like the Lord had told me.^a

Pilate Questions Jesus (Mk 15:2-5; Lk. 23:2-5; Jn 18:29-38a)

11Jesus stood in front of the governor. The governor asked him, “You—you’re the king of the Jews?” Jesus said, “It’s you saying it.”^b 12And when accusations were made against him by the chief priests and elders, he didn’t say anything back. 13Pilate finally said to him, “Don’t you hear how many things they’re accusing you of?” 14Jesus didn’t give him an answer for even one thing. The governor just couldn’t believe it.^c

The Crowd Shouts for Jesus to be Hung on a Cross (Mk 15:6-14; Lk. 23:13-24; Jn 18:39-40)

15At each feast, the governor had a custom of releasing one prisoner—whoever the crowd wanted. 16And at that time he had a well-known prisoner named Barabbas.^d 17So when they got all together, Pilate said to them, “Who do you want me to release for you? Barabbas, or Jesus, who’s being called Messiah?” 18(He actually knew that they had betrayed Jesus out of envy.) 19And as Pilate was sitting there on the judgment bench, his wife sent him a message that said, “That good man is no business of yours! I had a lot of distress in a dream today because of him.” 20But the chief priests and elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and ruin Jesus. 21The governor said back to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” They said, “Barabbas.” 22Pilate said to them, “So what should I do with Jesus, who’s being called Messiah?” They all said, “Hang him on a cross!” 23And he said, “But what^e has he done wrong?” But they started shouting even more, “Hang him on a cross!”

Pilate Washes his Hands—And Gives the Crowd What it Wants (Mk 15:15; Lk. 23:25; Jn 19:16)

24Pilate saw that he wasn’t accomplishing anything—in fact, it was getting more and more like a riot.^f So he took some water, and washed his hands in front of the crowd. He said, “I’m innocent of this person’s death!^g Look after yourselves!” 25And the entire assembly^h said, “Let his blood be on us and on our children!”

^a Matthew is mostly paraphrasing a mysterious prophecy in Zech. 11:12-13. There God tells Zechariah to do a role play and act out the part of a treacherous international leader. There is mention of a potter’s field in Jer. 32:6-9, but closer to the current context is a prophecy that God will “break” Jerusalem “and its people as a person breaks a clay pot,” because they have been “filling this place with innocent blood” (see Jer. 19:1-11).

^b Or, very possibly, “As you say,” i.e. “Yes, that’s true.”

^c Lit. “As a result, the governor was exceedingly amazed.”

^d Pm. bur-rabb-us.

^e Lit. “After all, what.”

^f Lit. “on the contrary, more of a riot was going on.”

^g Lit. “I’m innocent of this [person’s] blood.”

^h This is a heavy double meaning. It could be read as meaning, “the whole nation.”

Pilate's Soldiers Make Fun of Jesus (Mk 15:16-20)

²⁶At that point Pilate released Barabbas for them. He had Jesus whipped, and handed him over to be hung on a cross. ²⁷Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into his official residence.^a The whole cohort^b gathered around him. ²⁸They stripped him, and put a bright red robe on him. ²⁹And they wove a crown out of thorn bush branches, and put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand, and they knelt in front of him and made fun of him. They were saying, "Hello, King of the Jews!" ³⁰And they spat on him, and took the reed and hit him over the head. ³¹When they'd had their fun with him, they off took the robe and put on his own clothes. And they led him off to be hung on a cross.

Jesus is Hung on a Cross (Mk 15:21-32; Lk. 23:26-43; Jn 19:16b-27)

³²As they were going out, they found a man named Simon, who was from Cyrene.^c They grabbed^d this man and made him carry Jesus' cross. ³³And they came to a place called Golgotha, which means "The Skull Place." ³⁴They gave Jesus a drink of wine mixed with bitter stuff.^e But when he tasted it, he didn't wouldn't drink.

³⁵They hung Jesus on a cross. They divided up his clothes by drawing lots,^f ³⁶and sat down there and guarded him. ³⁷And they put up, over his head, the charge against him. It read,^g

THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS

³⁸Then they hung two armed robbers on crosses next to him—one on his right, and one on his left. ³⁹The people going by were saying abusive things towards him. They were shaking their heads at him^h ⁴⁰and saying, "Here's the one who's going to tear down the Temple and rebuild it in three days!" "He should save himself, if he's the Son of God, and come down off the cross!" ⁴¹The chief priests said the same sort of thing, and were joking with the scripture experts and elders. They were saying, ⁴²"He saved other people, but he can't save himself!" "He's 'The King of Israel'ⁱ—so now let him come down off the cross, and we'll believe in him!" ⁴³"He believes in God, so let God save him, if God wants him—after all, he said he

^a Lit. "into the praetorium."

^b A cohort is a unit of about 500 soldiers.

^c Cyrene (prn. *syee-ree-nee*) was an influential city in what is now Libya, North Africa.

^d Lit. "impressed," or "press ganged."

^e Lit. "bile." This could be a crude drug. See Ps. 69:21.

^f Lit. "casting lots." Tokens were thrown into a helmet and drawn without looking, to see who got what. Ps. 22:18.

^g Lit. "It was written."

^h Ps. 22:7; 109:25. The words "at him" are inserted because reference to head shaking alone connotes confusion, disagreement or reluctance. But head shaking (or "wagging") can definitely be an expression of contempt in our culture, just as it was in the culture of the writers and readers of the gospels.

ⁱ Referring sarcastically to the title above his head.

was the Son of God!”^a ⁴⁴And the armed robbers hanging on crosses next to Jesus were throwing the same taunts at him.

Jesus Dies on the Cross (Mk 15:33-41; Lk. 23:44-49; Jn 19:28-30)

⁴⁵From noon on, it got dark across the whole country, until about three o’clock. ⁴⁶Around three o’clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice. He said, *Eli, Eli! Lema sabachthani?*^b Which means, “My God, My God! Why have you abandoned me?”^c ⁴⁷And some of the people standing there heard it. They were saying, “He’s shouting for Elijah.” ⁴⁸One of them quickly ran and got a sponge filled with vinegar. He stuck it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹All the others were saying, “Hold off—let’s see if Elijah will come and save him.” ⁵⁰But Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and gave out his last breath.^d

⁵¹Suddenly the great veil in the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The ground shook, and rocks were being split apart. ⁵²Tombs were being opened up, and the bodies of many dead holy ones were raised.^e ⁵³They went out of the tombs after Jesus was raised, and went into the holy city and appeared to a lot of people.

⁵⁴The Roman officer,^f and the men guarding Jesus with him, saw the earthquake and the other things that happened. They were terrified,^g and were saying, “This man really was the Son of God!”

⁵⁵There were a lot of women there, watching from a distance. These women had followed Jesus from Galilee and had been ministering to him. ⁵⁶Mary Magdalene^h was one of them; so was Mary, James and Joseph’s mother, as well as the mother of the Zebedee brothers.ⁱ

Jesus is Buried in a Tomb (Mk 15:42-47; Lk. 23:50-56; Jn 19:38-42)

⁵⁷When it got to be evening, a wealthy man from Arimathea^j came, whose name was Joseph. He himself had become a follower of Jesus. ⁵⁸This man came up to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body. Pilate then gave the order to hand the body over. ⁵⁹Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. ⁶⁰He laid it in his own newly-constructed tomb, that he had cut into a rock face. When he had rolled a

^a Ps. 22:8.

^b Pm. **ell-ee, ell-ee, lem-mah sab-bahk-tha-nee.**

^c Ps. 22:1.

^d The same words could be read as, “and released the Spirit.” Matthew is probably making a double meaning here.

^e Lit. “and many bodies of the sleeping holy ones were raised.”

^f Lit. “centurion.”

^g Lit. “really frightened.”

^h Pm. **mag-da-leen.**

ⁱ Lit. “the sons of Zebedee.”

^j Pm. **a-ri-ma-thiyy-a.**

large stone door across the opening,^a he went away. ⁶¹And Mary Magdalene and the other Mary stayed^b there, sitting in front of the tomb.

Guards are Posted at the Tomb

⁶²The next morning, that is, the morning after the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees got together in front of Pilate. ⁶³They said, “Sir, we remember how that deceiver, when he was still alive, said, ‘After three days I’ll rise up.’ ⁶⁴So give orders to secure the tomb until the third day. That way, his followers won’t come and steal him, and say to the people, ‘He’s been raised from the dead.’ Otherwise, the last deception will be worse than the first.” ⁶⁵Pilate said to them, “You can have a guard unit. Go secure it as well as you know how.” ⁶⁶And they went and secured the tomb. They worked with the guard unit to seal the stone.

The Resurrection of Jesus (Mk 16:1-8; Lk. 24:1-12; Jn 20:1-10)

28 After^c the Sabbath, at sunup on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene^d and the other Mary came to have a look at the tomb. ²Suddenly there was a big earthquake. An angel of the Lord had come down from heaven and^e rolled away the stone door! And he was sitting on top of it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were as white as snow. ⁴The guards were so afraid of him that they started to shake, and fainted dead away.^f ⁵But the angel said to the women, “Don’t be afraid. I know that you’re looking for Jesus, who was hung on a cross. ⁶He isn’t here, because he was raised, just like he said. Come see the place where he was lying. ⁷Now,^g quickly—go tell his followers that he’s been raised from among the dead. And look! He’s going ahead of you to Galilee. You’ll see him there—see, I’ve told you.”

⁸They quickly took off from the tomb—afraid, but overjoyed^h—and ran to tell his followers. ⁹Suddenly, Jesus met them! He said, “Blessings!ⁱ And they bowed down and hugged him tight around his ankles.^j ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t be afraid—go and tell my brothers and sisters to go up to Galilee, and they’ll see me there.” And they went on their way.

^a Lit. “when he had rolled a large stone in the door.” The round stone door is part of the construction of the tomb.

^b Lit. “were being there.”

^c Lit. “Late on the Sabbath.” I conjecture that this is a standard expression for the morning after the Sabbath (which technically ends at sundown on the last day of the week), rather than an indication that Matthew thought the resurrection happened sometime just before sunset on Saturday.

^d Prn. **mag**-da-leen.

^e Lit. “and had gone up and.”

^f Lit. “they shook and became like corpses.”

^g Lit. “And.”

^h Lit. “—with fear and great joy—”

ⁱ Lit. “Be happy.” In the cultural context, it’s a standard greeting like “Good morning,” which is actually a blessing; may you have a good morning. In this special context, the greeting seems to sparkle with more literal blessing than usual.

^j Lit. “And they came up and grabbed his feet and bowed down to him.”

The Guards Get a Big Bribe to Say That Jesus' Followers Stole His Body

¹¹Meanwhile,^a some people from the guard unit went into the city and reported all these events to the chief priests. ¹²When the chief priests had met and discussed it with the elders, they gave the soldiers a fair amount of money.^b ¹³They said, “Say: ‘His followers came at night and stole him while we were sleeping.’ ¹⁴If the story gets around to the governor, we’ll win him over and make sure you don’t have anything to worry about.”^c ¹⁵And they took the money and did what they had been coached^d to do. And that explanation has been spread around among the Jews to this day.

Jesus Sends His Followers to the Whole World (Mk 16:14-18; Lk. 24:36-49; Jn 20:19-23; Acts 1:6-8)

¹⁶But the eleven followers went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷When they saw him, they bowed down to him, but some doubted. ¹⁸Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, “I’ve been given complete authority,^e both in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹So go and teach all the nations to follow me!^f Baptize them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teach them to obey all the things that I’ve commanded you. And look! I’m with you for all time,^g right up to the wrapping up of the age.”

^a Lit. “While they were on their way, behold...”

^b Lit. “enough money” (i.e. to buy them off).

^c Lit. “We’ll persuade him, and we’ll make you free of care.”

^d Lit. “taught.”

^e Or, more literally, “all authority has been given to me.”

^f The extra words supplied reflect the fact that the verb “teach” here stems from the same root as the word “follower” (typically rendered as “disciple”). I have been rendering the word as “follower,” because it implies more than being a student: it means a person is intent on following Jesus and learning his ways, not just his teachings.

^g Lit. “all the days.”