



Unlocked Dynamic Bible

Luke

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LUKE

Chapter 1

¹ Dear Theophilus,

Many people have written reports about the amazing events that have happened among us. ² We heard about these things from people who saw them happen, from the time everything first started happening. These people taught others about God's message. ³ I myself have carefully studied everything that these people wrote and taught. So I decided that it would also be good for me to write for you, noble Theophilus, an accurate account of these matters. ⁴ I am doing this so that you may know that what you have been taught about these things is true.

⁵ When King Herod ruled the province of Judea, there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. He belonged to the group of priests called the Abijah group. He and his wife Elizabeth were both descended from Aaron. ⁶ God considered that both of them were righteous, because they always obeyed without fault everything that God had commanded. ⁷ But they had no children, because Elizabeth was unable to bear children. Furthermore, she and her husband were very old.

⁸ One day Zechariah was serving as a priest in the temple in Jerusalem during his group's regular time of service there. ⁹ Following their custom, the priests chose him by lot to go into the Lord's temple and burn incense. ¹⁰ When the time came for him to burn the incense, many people were praying in the courtyard outside the temple. ¹¹ Then an angel whom the Lord had sent appeared to him. The angel was standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw the angel,

he was startled and became very afraid. ¹³ But the angel said to him, "Zechariah, do not be afraid! When you prayed, the Lord heard your request. So your wife Elizabeth will bear a son for you. You must name him John. ¹⁴ You will be very happy, and many other people will also be happy because he is born. ¹⁵ God will consider him to be very important. He must never drink wine or any other alcoholic drink. He will be empowered by the Holy Spirit even before he is born. ¹⁶ He will persuade many descendants of Israel to stop sinning and start obeying the Lord their God again. ¹⁷ Your son will go in advance of the Lord as his forerunner and will be powerful in his spirit like the prophet Elijah was. He will cause parents to love their children again. He will cause many people who do not obey God to live wisely and to obey him as righteous people do. He will do this in order to cause many people to be ready when the Lord comes."

¹⁸ Then Zechariah said to the angel, "I am very old, and my wife is also very old. So how can I believe that the things you said will really happen?"

¹⁹ Then the angel said to him, "I am Gabriel! I stand in God's presence! I was sent to tell you this good news about what will happen to you. ²⁰ What I have told you will certainly happen at the time God has decided, but you did not believe my words. So now God will cause you to be unable to talk until the day your son is born!"

²¹ While Zechariah and the angel were talking in the temple, the people in the courtyard were waiting for Zechariah to come out. They wondered why he was staying in the temple for such a long time. ²² When he came out, he was not able to speak to them. Because he could not talk, he made motions with his hands to try to explain what had happened. Then they realized that he had seen a vision from God

while he was in the temple.

²³ When Zechariah's time to work as a priest in the temple was finished, he left Jerusalem and went to his home.

²⁴ Some time after this, his wife Elizabeth became pregnant, but she did not go out in public for five months. ²⁵ She said to herself, "The Lord has enabled me to become pregnant. In this way, he had compassion on me and has taken away the reason that people looked down on me!"

²⁶ When Elizabeth had been pregnant for almost six months, God sent the angel Gabriel to the town of Nazareth in the district of Galilee. ²⁷ He went there to speak to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, who was a descendent of King David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel said to her, "Greetings! The Lord is with you and has shown great kindness to you!"

²⁹ But Mary felt very troubled when she heard his greeting. She wondered what the angel meant by these words. ³⁰ Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have received favor from God! ³¹ You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you must name him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king over his people as his ancestor David was. ³³ He will rule forever over the descendants of Jacob. He will rule forever!"

³⁴ Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this happen, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come to you and the power of God will cover you. So the baby you will bear will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ And listen to this. Your relative Elizabeth is pregnant with a son, even though she is very old. And though people thought that she could not bear children, she has now been pregnant for almost six months. ³⁷

For God can do anything!" ³⁸ Then Mary said, "All right, I am the Lord's servant, so let what you have said about me happen!" Then the angel left her.

³⁹ Very soon after that, Mary got ready and went quickly to the highlands of Judea, to the city where Zechariah lived. ⁴⁰ She entered his house and greeted his wife Elizabeth. ⁴¹ As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary greet her, the baby leaped inside Elizabeth's womb. Immediately the Holy Spirit guided Elizabeth to start praising God. ⁴² She exclaimed loudly to Mary, "God has blessed you more than he has blessed other women, and he has blessed the baby you will bear! ⁴³ How wonderful it is that you, the mother of my Lord, have come to me! ⁴⁴ As soon as I heard you greet me, the baby in my womb leaped because he was so happy that you had come! ⁴⁵ You are blessed because you believed that what the Lord told you would come true."

⁴⁶ Then Mary praised God by saying:

"Oh, how I praise the Lord!

⁴⁷ I feel very joyful about God,
who is the one who saves me.

⁴⁸ I was only his lowly servant girl, but he did not forget me.

So from now on, people living in all time periods will say that God has blessed me.

⁴⁹ They will say this because of the great things that God, the Powerful One, has done for me.

His name is holy!

⁵⁰ He acts mercifully from one generation to the next toward those who respect him.

⁵¹ He shows people that he is very powerful.

He scatters those who think proudly within their inner beings.

⁵² He has stopped kings from ruling,
and he has honored people who are oppressed.

⁵³ He has given good things to eat to those who are hungry,

and he has sent away rich people without giving them anything.

⁵⁴⁻⁵⁵ He has helped Israel, the people who serve him.

Long ago he promised our ancestors that he would be merciful to them.

He has kept that promise and has always acted mercifully toward Abraham and all who descended from him.”

⁵⁶ Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months. Then she returned to her home.

⁵⁷ When it was time for Elizabeth to bear her child, she bore a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had been so kind to her, and they were happy along with Elizabeth. ⁵⁹ On the eighth day after this, people gathered together for the ceremony to circumcise the baby. Since his father’s name was Zechariah, they wanted to give the baby the same name. ⁶⁰ But his mother said, “No, his name must be John!” ⁶¹ So they said to her, “But John is not the name of any of your relatives!” ⁶² Then they made motions with their hands to his father, for him to indicate what name he wanted to be given to his son. ⁶³ So he signaled that they should give him a tablet to write on. When they gave him one, he wrote on it, “His name is John.” All those who were there were surprised! ⁶⁴ Immediately Zechariah was able to speak again, and he began praising God. ⁶⁵ Everyone who lived nearby was completely awed by what God had done. They told many other people about what had happened and the news spread all over the high-

lands of Judea. ⁶⁶ Everyone who heard it kept thinking about it. They were saying, “We wonder what work this child will do when he grows up!” Because of everything that had happened, they were sure that God would be helping him in a powerful way. ⁶⁷ After Zechariah’s son was born, Zechariah was controlled by the Holy Spirit and he spoke these words from God:

⁶⁸ ”Praise the Lord, the God whom we people of Israel worship,

because he has come to set us, his people, free.

⁶⁹ He is sending us someone who will powerfully save us,

someone who is descended from his servant, King David.

⁷⁰ Long ago God caused his prophets to say that he would do that.

⁷¹ This powerful Savior will rescue us from our enemies,

and he will save us from the power of all those who hate us.

⁷² He has done this because he is merciful to our ancestors and remembers his holy covenant,

⁷³ which is the oath that he promised to our ancestor Abraham.

⁷⁴ God promised to rescue us from the power of our enemies,

and to enable us to serve him without being afraid,

⁷⁵ in holy and righteous ways all of our lives.

⁷⁶ Then Zechariah said this to his baby son:

”My child, you will be called a prophet of the Most High God.

You will go ahead of the Lord

to prepare a people to be ready when he comes.

⁷⁷ You will tell people that God is able to forgive them and save them from being punished for their sins.

⁷⁸ God will forgive us because he is kind and merciful to us.

And because of that, this Savior, who is like the rising sun,

will come to us from heaven to help us.

⁷⁹ He will shine on people who live in spiritual darkness and in the fear of death.

He will guide us so that we will live peacefully.

⁸⁰ Over time, Zechariah and Elizabeth's baby boy grew up and became spiritually strong. Then he lived in a desolate region and was still living there when he began to preach publicly to God's people, Israel.
1

Chapter 2

¹ Around that time Caesar Augustus sent out an official order that every person living under Roman rule must be registered in a public record. ² This first happened during the time that Quirinius was governing the province of Syria. ³ So everyone had to go to his family's hometown to be registered. ⁴⁻⁵ Joseph also traveled to his family's hometown, along with Mary who was engaged to him and was pregnant. Because Joseph was a descendant of King David, they left the town of Nazareth in the region of Galilee and traveled to the region of Judea, to the town of Bethlehem, which is also known as the city of David. Joseph and Mary went there to be registered in the public record. ⁶⁻⁷ When they arrived in Bethlehem, there was no

place for them to stay in a place where visitors usually stayed. So they had to stay in a place where animals slept overnight. While they were there the time came for Mary to give birth and she gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him in wide strips of cloth and laid him down where the food was kept for the animals inside the barn.

⁸ That night, there were some shepherds who were taking care of their sheep in the fields near Bethlehem. ⁹ Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared to them. A bright light shone all around them, showing the Lord's glory. So they became very afraid. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid! I have come to tell you good news, which will benefit all people and will make you all very happy!" ¹¹ Today, in the city of David, a baby has been born who will save you from your sins! He is the Messiah, the Lord! ¹² This is how you will recognize him: In Bethlehem you will find a baby who has been wrapped in strips of cloth and placed in a feeding place for animals."

¹³ Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven appeared and joined the other angel. They all praised God, saying,

¹⁴ "May all the angels in the highest heaven praise God! And may there be peace on earth among people who are pleasing to God!"

¹⁵ After the angels left them and returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "We should go right now to Bethlehem to see this wonderful thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about!" ¹⁶ So they went quickly and when they had found the place where Mary and Joseph were staying, they saw the baby lying in a feeding place for animals. ¹⁷ After seeing him, they told everyone what had been told to them about this child. ¹⁸ All the people who heard what the shepherds

said to them were amazed. ¹⁹ But Mary kept thinking about all the things she had heard and carefully remembered them. ²⁰ The shepherds returned to the fields where their sheep were. They kept talking about how great God is and praising him for all the things that they had heard and seen, because everything happened exactly like the angels had told them.

²¹ On the eighth day after the baby was born, he was circumcised and they gave him the name Jesus. This was the name the angel had told them to give him, even before he was conceived.

²² When the required number of days for their purification had gone by, according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph traveled up to Jerusalem to dedicate their son to the Lord. ²³ It had been written in the law of the Lord, "Every male offspring that is the first to be born will be set apart to be holy to the Lord." ²⁴ The law of the Lord also said the parents of a newborn son must offer as a sacrifice, "Two turtledoves or two young pigeons."

²⁵ At that time there was an old man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. He did what was pleasing to God and obeyed God's laws. He was eagerly waiting for God to send the Messiah to encourage the Israelite people and the Holy Spirit was directing him. ²⁶ The Holy Spirit had previously revealed to him that he would see the Lord's promised Messiah before he died. ²⁷ When Joseph and Mary brought their baby, Jesus, to the temple in order to perform the rituals that God had commanded in his laws, the Spirit led Simeon to enter the temple courtyard. ²⁸ Then he took Jesus up in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹ "Lord, you have made me content and I can now die in peace according to your promise.

³⁰ I have seen the one whom you sent to save people,

³¹ the one you prepared in the midst of all the peoples.

³² He will be like a light that will reveal your truth to the Gentiles, and he will bring honor to the Israelite people."

³³ Jesus' father and mother were very amazed at what Simeon said about him. Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Jesus' mother, Mary, ³⁴ "Note what I say: God has determined that because of this child, many Israelite people will turn away from God, and many others will turn to God. He will be like a sign to warn people, and many people will oppose him. ³⁵ As a result, the thoughts of many people will be made evident. A sword will also pierce your own soul."

³⁶ There was also in the temple courtyard a prophetess named Anna who was very old. Her father Phanuel was a member of the tribe of Asher. She had been married for seven years and then her husband died. ³⁷ After that, she lived eighty-four more years as a widow. She was always serving in the temple area and worshiped God night and day. She often fasted and prayed. ³⁸ At that very moment, Anna came up to them and began thanking God for the baby. Then she spoke about Jesus to many people who were expecting God to redeem Jerusalem.

³⁹ After Joseph and Mary had finished doing everything required of them by the laws of the Lord, they returned to their own town, Nazareth, in the district of Galilee. ⁴⁰ As the child grew up, he became strong and very wise, and God was very pleased with him.

⁴¹ Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. ⁴² So when Jesus was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem for the festival as

they always did. ⁴³ When all the days for the festival had ended, his parents started to return home, but Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know he was still there. ⁴⁴ They assumed that he was with the other people who were traveling with them. After walking a whole day's journey, they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶ After three days, they found him in the temple courtyard, sitting in the midst of the Jewish religious teachers. He was listening to them teach, and he was asking them questions. ⁴⁷ All the people who heard what he said were amazed at how much he understood and how well he answered the questions that the teachers asked. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were very surprised. His mother said to him, "My son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been very worried as we have been searching for you!" ⁴⁹ He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I needed to be involved in what my Father does?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand the meaning of what he said to them. ⁵¹ Then he returned with them to Nazareth and he always obeyed them. His mother kept thinking deeply about all those things.

⁵² As the years passed, Jesus continued to become wiser and he grew taller. God and people continued to approve of him more and more.

Chapter 3

¹ When Tiberius Caesar had been ruling the Roman Empire for about fifteen years, Pontius Pilate was the governor of the province of Judea, Herod Antipas was ruling the district of Galilee, his brother

Philip was ruling the regions of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was ruling the region of Abilene. ² During that time, when Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests in Jerusalem, God spoke to Zechariah's son John while he was living out in the wilderness. ³ John was traveling all around the area near the Jordan River. He kept telling people, "If you want God to forgive your sins, you must repent; then I will baptize you!" ⁴ The prophet Isaiah wrote these words on a scroll long ago:

"In the wilderness, someone will be calling out:

Prepare the way of the Lord,

Make straight paths for him.

⁵ Every valley will be filled,

And every mountain and hill will be made level;

The crooked roads will become straight,

And the rough ways will be made smooth.

⁶ Then everyone will see God's way of saving people."

⁷ John said to the crowds of people who were coming to be baptized by him, "You people are evil like poisonous snakes! No one warned you that one day God will punish everyone who sins, did they? Do not think that you can escape from him!

⁸ Do the things that show that you have truly turned away from your sinful behavior! And do not start saying to yourself, 'We are descendants of Abraham!' Because I tell you that God could make even these stones become descendants of Abraham! ⁹ The ax is already placed at the root of the trees, so that every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." ¹⁰ Then some of the people in the crowd asked

him, "What, then, should we do?" ¹¹ He answered them, "If any of you has two shirts, you should give one of them to someone who does not have a tunic. If any of you has plenty of food, you should give some to those who do not have food." ¹² Some tax collectors also came to John to be baptized. They asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" ¹³ He said to them, "Do not collect from the people more money than the Roman government tells you to collect!" ¹⁴ Some soldiers asked him, "And us? What should we do?" He said to them, "Do not force people to give you money by threatening them, and do not falsely accuse anyone of doing something wrong! Be content with the amount of money you earn." ¹⁵ People were getting very hopeful that the Messiah might be coming soon, and many of them were wondering if John might be the Messiah. ¹⁶ But John replied to them all, "No, I am not. The Messiah is far greater than I am. He is so great that I am not worthy even to untie the straps of his sandals! When I baptized you, I used only water. But when the Messiah comes, he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." ¹⁷ A winnowing fork is in his hand, ready to separate good grain from the useless chaff. He will store the grain safely in his barn but will burn up the chaff in a fire that never stops burning. ¹⁸ In many different ways like this, John urged the people to repent and turn back to God, as he kept telling them the good message from God. ¹⁹ He also rebuked King Herod for marrying his brother's wife, Herodias, while his brother was still alive, and for doing many other evil things. ²⁰ Then Herod had his soldiers put John in prison, which was another very evil thing. ²¹ But before John was put in prison, when many people were being baptized, Jesus also was baptized. Afterwards, while he was praying, the sky opened. ²² Then the Holy Spirit, resembling a dove, came down and landed on Jesus. And God spoke to Jesus from heaven, saying, "You are my Son, the one whom I love dearly. I am very pleased with you!" ²³ When Jesus began his work for God, he was about thirty years old. He was the son of Joseph (or so it was thought). Joseph was the son of Heli. ²⁴ Heli was the son of Matthat. Matthat was the son of Levi. Levi was the son of Melchi. Melchi was the son of Jannai. Jannai was the son of Joseph. ²⁵ Joseph was the son of Mattathias. Mattathias was the son of Amos. Amos was the son of Nahum. Nahum was the son of Esli. Esli was the son of Naggai. ²⁶ Naggai was the son of Maath. Maath was the son of Mattathias. Mattathias was the son of Semein. Semein was the son of Josech. Josech was the son of Joda. ²⁷ Joda was the son of Joanan. Joanan was the son of Rhesa. Rhesa was the son of Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel. Shealtiel was the son of Neri. ²⁸ Neri was the son of Melchi. Melchi was the son of Addi. Addi was the son of Cosam. Cosam was the son of Elmadam. Elmadam was the son of Er. ²⁹ Er was the son of Joshua. Joshua was the son of Eliezer. Eliezer was the son of Jorim. Jorim was the son of Matthat. Matthat was the son of Levi. ³⁰ Levi was the son of Simeon. Simeon was the son of Judah. Judah was the son of Joseph. Joseph was the son of Jonam. Jonam was the son of Eliakim. ³¹ Eliakim was the son of Melea. Melea was the son of Menna. Menna was the son of Mattatha. Mattatha was the son of Nathan. Nathan was the son of David. ³² David was the son of Jesse. Jesse was the son of Obed. Obed was the son of Boaz. Boaz was the son of Salmon. Salmon was the son of Nahshon. ³³ Nahshon was the son of Amminadab. Amminadab was the son of Admin. Admin was the son of Arni. Arni was the son of Hezron. Hezron was the son of Perez. Perez was the son

of Judah. ³⁴ Judah was the son of Jacob. Jacob was the son of Isaac. Isaac was the son of Abraham. Abraham was the son of Terah. Terah was the son of Nahor. ³⁵ Nahor was the son of Serug. Serug was the son of Reu. Reu was the son of Peleg. Peleg was the son of Eber. Eber was the son of Shelah. ³⁶ Shelah was the son of Cainan. Cainan was the son of Arphaxad. Arphaxad was the son of Shem. Shem was the son of Noah. Noah was the son of Lamech. ³⁷ Lamech was the son of Methuselah. Methuselah was the son of Enoch. Enoch was the son of Jared. Jared was the son of Mahalalel. Mahalalel was the son of Cainan. ³⁸ Cainan was the son of Enos. Enos was the son of Seth. Seth was the son of Adam. Adam was the son of God, the man God created.

Chapter 4

¹ Then Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan River, and the Holy Spirit led him into the wilderness. ² The Holy Spirit led him around in the wilderness for forty days. While he was there, the devil kept tempting him. During the entire time Jesus was in the wilderness he did not eat anything, so when the forty days were over, he was very hungry. ³ Then the devil said to Jesus, "If you really are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread for you to eat!" ⁴ Jesus replied, "No, I will not do that, because it is written in the scriptures, 'People need more than just food in order to live.'" ⁵ Then the devil took Jesus up to the top of a high mountain and showed him in an instant all the nations in the world. ⁶ Then he said to Jesus, "I will give you the right to rule all these nations and you will possess all their splendor and wealth. God has permitted me to control them all, and so I can do whatever I want to do with them. ⁷

So if you worship me, I will let you rule them all!" ⁸ But Jesus replied, "No, I will not worship you, because it is written in the scriptures, 'You must only worship the Lord, your God. He is the only one you may serve!'"

⁹ Then the devil took Jesus to Jerusalem. He set him on the highest part of the temple and said to him, "If you really are the Son of God, jump down from here. ¹⁰ You will not be hurt, because it is written in the scriptures,

'God will command his angels to protect you.' ¹¹ And it also says,

'They will lift you up in their hands when you are falling, so that you will not get hurt. You will not even strike your foot on a stone.'" ¹² But Jesus replied, "No, I will not do that, because it is written in the scriptures: 'Do not try to test the Lord your God'."

¹³ Then, after the devil had finished trying to tempt Jesus in many ways, he left him until a later time.

¹⁴ After this, Jesus left the wilderness and returned to the district of Galilee. The Holy Spirit was empowering him. Throughout that region, people heard about Jesus and told others about him. ¹⁵ He taught people in their synagogues and they all spoke highly of him because of his teaching.

¹⁶ Then Jesus went to Nazareth, the town where he grew up. On the Sabbath he went to the synagogue, as he usually did. He stood up to read aloud something from the scriptures. ¹⁷ A synagogue attendant handed him a scroll containing the words that the prophet Isaiah had written long ago. Jesus unrolled the scroll and found the place where these words were written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is in me.

He has appointed me to declare God's good news to people who are poor.

He has sent me here to proclaim that the captives will go free,

And will tell those who are blind that they will see again.

I will free people who have been oppressed.

¹⁹ He sent me here to declare that now is the time when the Lord will act favorably toward people.

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. Everyone in the synagogue was looking intently at him. ²¹ He said to them, "Today this scripture passage was fulfilled as you heard it." ²² Everyone there heard what he said and marveled at him, and they were amazed at how well he spoke. But some of them said, "This man is only Joseph's son, right?" ²³ He said to them, "Surely some of you will quote to me the proverb that says, 'Doctor, heal yourself!' You will say, 'Do here in your hometown the same kind of miracles that you did in Capernaum!'" ²⁴ Then he said, "It is certainly true that the people in a prophet's own hometown do not accept his message. ²⁵ But think about this: There were many widows in Israel during the time when the prophet Elijah lived, when there was a great famine throughout the country because there had been no rain for three and half years. ²⁶ But God did not send Elijah to help any of those Israelite widows. God sent him to the town of Zarephath near the city of Sidon, to help a widow. ²⁷ There were also many Israelite lepers in Israel during the time when the prophet Elisha lived. But Elisha did not heal any of them. He healed only Naaman, a man from Syria." ²⁸ When all the people in the synagogue heard him say that, they were very angry. ²⁹ So they all got up and

shoved him out of the city. They took him to the top of the hill outside their city in order to throw him off the cliff and kill him. ³⁰ But he simply walked through their midst and went away.

³¹ One day he went down to Capernaum, a city in the district of Galilee. On the next Sabbath, he taught the people in the synagogue. ³² They were continually amazed at what he was teaching, because he spoke with confidence. ³³ That day, there was a man in the synagogue who was controlled by an evil spirit. The man shouted very loudly, ³⁴ "Ha! Jesus, from Nazareth! Evil spirits have nothing to do with you! Have you come to destroy us all? I know who you are. You are the Holy One from God!" ³⁵ Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, saying, "Be quiet and come out of him!" The demon threw the man down on the ground in the midst of the people and came out of him without harming him. ³⁶ All the people in the synagogue were very amazed. They said to each other, "He speaks with confidence, and his words have so much power! Even evil spirits obey him and come out of people when he commands them to!" ³⁷ And in every place throughout the surrounding regions, people kept talking about what Jesus had done.

³⁸ Then Jesus left the synagogue and went to Simon's house. Simon's mother-in-law was sick and had a high fever. Some people who were there asked Jesus to heal her. ³⁹ So he bent over her and commanded the fever to leave her. Immediately she became well! She got up and served them some food.

⁴⁰ When the sun was setting that day, many people brought to Jesus their friends or relatives who were sick with various diseases. He put his hands on them and healed all of them. ⁴¹ He also was forcing evil spirits to come out of many people. As the evil spirits left those

people, they shouted to Jesus, “You are the Son of God!” But he commanded those evil spirits not to tell people about him, because they knew that he was the Messiah.

⁴² The next morning Jesus went out to an uninhabited place. Crowds of people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. ⁴³ But he said to them, “I must tell people in other cities also the message about how God is going to rule everyone, because that is what I was sent to do.” ⁴⁴ So he kept preaching in the synagogues in various towns in the province of Judea.

Chapter 5

¹ One day, while many people were crowding around Jesus and listening to him teach God’s message, he was standing next to Lake Gennesaret. ² He saw two fishing boats there at the edge of the lake. The fishermen had left the boats and were washing their fishing nets. ³ Jesus stepped into one of the two boats; this boat belonged to Simon. Jesus asked Simon to push the boat away from the shore a little ways. Jesus sat in the boat and continued to teach the crowds from there. ⁴ After he finished teaching them, he said to Simon, “Take the boat out to deeper water and let your nets down into the water to catch some fish.” ⁵ Simon replied, “Master, we worked hard through the whole night, and yet we did not catch any fish. But I will let down the nets again, because you told me to.” ⁶ So Simon and his men let down their nets and they caught so many fish that their nets began to break. ⁷ They motioned to their fishing partners in the other boat to come and help them. So they came and filled both boats so full with fish

that they began to sink. ⁸ Seeing this, Simon Peter fell at the knees of Jesus and said, “Please leave me, because I am a sinful man, Lord.” ⁹ He said this because he marveled at the huge number of fish that they had caught. All the men who were with him also marveled, including James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were two of Simon’s fishing partners. ¹⁰ But Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid! Until now you gathered in fish, but from now on you will gather in people to become my disciples.” ¹¹ So after the men brought the boats to the shore, they left their fishing business and everything else and went with Jesus.

¹² While Jesus was in one of the towns nearby, there was a man there who was covered with a skin disease called leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he bowed down to the ground in front of him and pleaded with him, “Lord, please heal me, because you are able to heal me if you are willing!” ¹³ Then Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. He said, “I am willing to heal you, and I heal you now!” Immediately the man was healed. He no longer had leprosy! ¹⁴ Then Jesus told him, “Make sure that you do not tell people about your healing immediately. First, go to a priest in Jerusalem and show yourself to him so that he can examine you and see that you no longer have leprosy. Also take to the priest the offering that Moses commanded that people who have been healed from leprosy should offer.” ¹⁵ But many people heard about how Jesus had healed the man. The result was that large crowds came to Jesus to hear him teach and to have him heal them from their sicknesses. ¹⁶ But he often would go away from them to isolated areas and pray.

¹⁷ One day when Jesus was teaching, some men from the Pharisee sect were sitting nearby. Some of them were expert

teachers of the Jewish laws. They had come from many villages in the district of Galilee and also from Jerusalem and other cities in the province of Judea. At that same time, the Lord was giving Jesus power to heal people. ¹⁸ While Jesus was there, several men brought to him a man who was paralyzed. They were carrying the man on a sleeping pad and tried to bring him into the house to lay him down in front of Jesus. ¹⁹ But they were not able to bring him in because there was such a large crowd of people in the house, so they went up the outside steps onto the roof. Then they removed some of the tiles from the roof to make an opening. They lowered the man on his sleeping pad through the opening into the middle of the crowd and put him down right in front of Jesus. ²⁰ When Jesus perceived that they believed that he could heal the man, he said to him, "Friend, I forgive your sins!" ²¹ The men who were expert teachers of the Jewish laws and the rest of the Pharisees began to think to themselves, "This man is proud and insults God by saying that! We all know that nobody except God can forgive sins!" ²² Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he said to them, "You should not question within yourselves about what I said! Consider this: ²³ It is easy to say, 'Your sins are forgiven' because no one can see whether or not the person was really forgiven. But it is not easy to say 'Get up and walk' because people can immediately see whether or not he was healed. ²⁴ So I will heal this man so that you will know that God has also given to me, the Son of Man, permission to forgive people on earth their sins." Then he said to the man who was paralyzed, "To you I say, 'Get up, pick up your sleeping pad, and go home!'" ²⁵ Immediately the man was healed! He got up in front of them all. He picked up the sleeping pad on which he

had been lying, and he went home, praising God. ²⁶ All the people there were astonished! They praised God and were overcome with amazement at what they saw Jesus do. They kept saying, "We have seen wonderful things today!"

²⁷ Then Jesus left that place and saw a man named Levi who collected taxes for the Roman government. He was sitting in the booth where the people came to pay him the taxes that the government required. Jesus said to him, "Come with me and become my disciple!" ²⁸ So Levi left his work and went with Jesus.

²⁹ Later on, Levi prepared a big feast in his own house for Jesus and his disciples. There was a large group of tax collectors and others eating together with them. ³⁰ Some men who belonged to the Pharisee sect, including those of them who taught Jewish laws, complained to Jesus' disciples, saying, "You should not be eating with tax collectors and other terrible sinners. ³¹ Then Jesus said to them, "It is people who are sick who know they need a doctor, not those who think they are well. ³² Similarly, I did not come from heaven to invite those who think they are righteous to come to me. On the contrary, I came to invite those who know that they are sinners, to turn from their sinful behavior and come to me."

³³ Those Jewish leaders said to Jesus, "The disciples of John the Baptizer often abstain from food and pray, and the disciples of the Pharisees do that, too. But your disciples keep on eating and drinking! Why do they not fast like the others?" ³⁴ Jesus answered, "You do not tell the friends of the bridegroom to fast while he is still with them, do you? No, no one would do that! ³⁵ But some day the bridegroom will be taken away from his friends. Then, at that time, they will abstain from food."

³⁶ Then Jesus gave other examples to explain what he meant: He said, "People never tear a piece of cloth from a new garment and attach it to an old garment to mend it. If they did that, they would ruin the new garment by tearing it and the new piece of cloth would not match the old garment. ³⁷ And no one puts newly squeezed wine into old skin bags to store it. If anyone did that, the skin bags would tear open because they would not stretch when the new wine fermented and expanded. Then the skin bags would be ruined, and the wine would also be ruined because it would spill out. ³⁸ On the contrary, new wine must be put into new skin bags.

³⁹ Furthermore, those who have drunk only old wine are content with that. They do not want to drink the new wine, because they say, "The old wine is good!"

Chapter 6

¹ One Sabbath day, as Jesus and his disciples were walking through some grain fields, the disciples were picking some heads of grain. They rubbed them in their hands to separate the grains from the husks, and ate the grain. ² Some Pharisees who were watching this said to them, "You should not be doing work; our laws forbid us to do work on the Sabbath day!" ³ Jesus replied to the Pharisees, "Certainly you have read what is written in the scriptures about what King David did when he and the men with him were hungry! ⁴ As you know, David entered the tabernacle and asked for some food. The priest gave him the bread that had been on display before God. In one of Moses' laws God had said that only the priests were permitted to eat that bread. But even though David and his men were not priests, he ate

some of the bread, and also gave some to the men who were with him!" ⁵ Jesus also said to them, "In the same way, the Son of Man has the authority to determine what is right for people to do on the Sabbath!"

⁶ On another Sabbath day, Jesus was teaching the people in the synagogue and a man was there whose right hand was withered. ⁷ The men who taught the Jewish laws and the Pharisees who were there were watching Jesus closely. They wanted to see if he would heal the man and then they would accuse him of disobeying their laws about not working on the Sabbath. ⁸ But Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come and stand here in front of everyone!" So the man got up and stood there. ⁹ Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you this: Do the laws that God gave Moses command people to do good on the Sabbath, or to do harm? To save a life on the Sabbath, or destroy it?" ¹⁰ No one answered him, so he looked around at them all and then said to the man, "Stretch out your withered hand!" The man did that, and his hand became completely well again! ¹¹ But the religious leaders were very angry, and they discussed with one another about what they could do to get rid of Jesus.

¹² One day, some time after that, Jesus went up into the hills to pray. He prayed to God all night there. ¹³ The next day he summoned all his disciples to come near him. From them he chose twelve men whom he also called apostles. ¹⁴ These men were: Simon, to whom he gave the new name, Peter; Andrew, Peter's younger brother; James and his younger brother, John; Philip; Bartholomew; ¹⁵ Matthew, whose other name was Levi; Thomas; another James, the son of Alphaeus; Simon the Zealot, ¹⁶ Judas, the son of a different man named James; and Judas Iscariot, who later betrayed Jesus.

¹⁷ Jesus came down from the hills with his disciples and stood on a level area. There was a great crowd of his disciples there. There was also a large group of people who had come from Jerusalem and from many other places in the region of Judea, and from the coastal areas near the cities of Tyre and Sidon. ¹⁸ They came to hear Jesus teach them and to be healed from their diseases. He also healed those whom evil spirits had troubled. ¹⁹ Everyone in the crowd tried to touch him, because he was healing everyone by his power. ²⁰ Then he looked at his disciples and said, "It is very good for you who are poor, because God is ruling you. ²¹ It is very good for you who are hungry now, because God will give you everything you need.

It is very good for you who are grieving now, because God will someday make you laugh with joy.

²² It is very good when other people hate you, when they reject you, when they insult you and say that you are evil because you follow me, the Son of Man. ²³ When that happens, rejoice! Jump up and down because you are so happy! God will give you a great reward in heaven! Do not forget that their ancestors did similar things to God's prophets long ago!

²⁴ But how sad for you who are rich; your riches have already given you all the comfort you will get. ²⁵ How sad for you who think that you have everything that you need now; you will realize that these things will not satisfy you.

How sad for you who are joyful now; later you will grieve and be very sad. ²⁶ How sad it is when everyone says good things about you. In the same way, their ancestors used to say good things about men who falsely claimed to be God's prophets.

²⁷ "But I say this to each of you who are listening to what I say: Love your enemies,

not only your friends! Do good things for those who hate you! ²⁸ Ask God to bless those who curse you! Pray for those who treat you badly! ²⁹ If someone insults you by striking you on one of your cheeks, turn your face so that he can strike the other cheek also. If someone wants to take away your tunic, let him also have your shirt. ³⁰ Give something to everyone who asks you. If someone asks you to give him things that belong to you, do not ask him to return them. ³¹ In whatever way you want others to act toward you, that is the way that you should act toward them.

³² If you love only those who love you, do not expect God to praise you for doing that, because even sinners love those who love them. ³³ If you do good things only for those who do good things for you, do not expect God to reward you for doing that, because even sinners do that. ³⁴ If you lend money or property only to those who will give it back to you, do not expect that God will reward you for doing that! Even sinners lend to other sinners, because they expect them to pay everything back. ³⁵ Instead, love your enemies! Do good things for them! Lend to them, and do not expect them to pay anything back! Then God will give you a great reward. And you will be children of God the Most High, since God is kind even to people who are unthankful and wicked. ³⁶ So you should act mercifully toward other people, just like your Father in heaven acts mercifully toward people.

³⁷ Do not harshly criticize people and then God will not harshly criticize you. Do not condemn other people, and then he will not condemn you. Forgive others for the evil things that they have done, and then God will forgive you. ³⁸ Give good things to others, and then God will give good things to you. It will be like he is giving you a generous amount of grain, pressing

it down in a basket and shaking the basket to make sure it is completely full, to the point that some of the grain even spills over the sides! Remember that the standard you use to judge or bless others will be the standard God uses to judge or bless you!”

³⁹ He also gave his disciples this parable: “A blind man should not try to lead another blind man. If he did, they both would fall into a hole! ⁴⁰ A disciple is not greater than his teacher. But when he is fully trained, he will become like his teacher. So you should become like me.

⁴¹ None of you should be concerned about someone else’s small faults. That is like noticing a speck of straw in that person’s eye while not noticing a huge wooden plank in your own eye. ⁴² If you do that, you are a hypocrite! You should first remove the plank out of your own eye before trying to get the speck out of someone else’s eye. When you have stopped sinning, then you will have the spiritual insight to help others get rid of their sins.

⁴³ Everyone knows that healthy trees do not produce bad fruit and unhealthy trees do not produce good fruit. ⁴⁴ And anyone can tell what kind of tree it is by looking at the kind of fruit it has. For example, a thornbush does not produce figs and a bramble bush does not produce grapes. In the same way it is easy to know what a person is like inside by looking at what that person does. ⁴⁵ Good people do good things which show that they think good thoughts, and evil people do evil things which show that they think evil thoughts. People will speak and act according to what they think about in their minds.”

⁴⁶ Jesus said to the people, “Why do you call me ‘Lord’ when you do not even obey what I say to do? ⁴⁷ Let me tell you what people are like who come to me, hear my teachings, and obey them. ⁴⁸ They are

like a man who dug deep into the ground to prepare to build his house. He made sure that the foundation for the house was built on solid rock. Then there was a flood and a torrent of water was beating against the house. But the torrent could not even shake the house, because the house was built on a solid foundation. ⁴⁹ But some people who hear my teachings do not obey them. They are like a man who built a house on top of the ground without building a foundation. When the river flooded, the house collapsed immediately and was completely ruined.”

Chapter 7

¹ After Jesus finished speaking to the people, he went to the town of Capernaum.

² In that town there was a centurion in the Roman army who had a slave that was dear to him. This slave was so sick that he was about to die. ³ When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to Jesus to ask him to come and heal his slave. ⁴ When they came to Jesus, they earnestly asked him to help the centurion’s slave. They said, “He deserves that you do this for him, ⁵ because he loves our people and he built our synagogue for us.” ⁶ So Jesus started going to the officer’s house with them. When he was almost there, the officer sent some friends to give this message to Jesus: “Lord, do not trouble yourself any further, since I am not worthy that you should come into my house. ⁷ That is why I do not think that I am worthy to come to you myself. But you can heal my slave if you say just one word. ⁸ I know that you can do this because I am a man who must obey the orders of my superiors, and I also have soldiers who must obey my orders. When I say to one of them, ‘Go!’, he goes, and when I say to another, ‘Come!’, he comes.

When I say to my slave, ‘Do this!’, he does it.”⁹ When Jesus heard what the officer had said, he was amazed at him. Then he turned to the crowd that was with him and said, “I tell you, I have not found any Israelite who trusts me as much as this Gentile does!”¹⁰ When those people who had come from the centurion returned to his house, they found out that the slave was in good health again.

¹¹ Soon after that, Jesus traveled to the town of Nain. His disciples and a large crowd went with him. ¹² As Jesus came near to the town gate, he saw a large crowd coming out of the town, carrying a man who had just died. Now his mother was a widow, and he was her only son. She was with the crowd, and they were going to bury her son. ¹³ When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, “Do not cry!” ¹⁴ Then he came close to them and touched the stretcher on which the body was lying. The men carrying it stood still. He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!” ¹⁵ The man sat up and began to talk! Then Jesus led him back to his mother. ¹⁶ Everyone there was overcome with awe. They praised God and said to each other, “A great prophet has come among us!” and “God has come to care for his people!” ¹⁷ Then this news about what Jesus had done spread throughout the region of Judea and all the other nearby areas.

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ The disciples of John the Baptizer told him about all these things. So John called for two of his disciples and told them to go to the Lord and ask him: “Are you the one whom God promised would come, or should we be expecting someone else?” ²⁰ When those two men came to Jesus, they said, “John the Baptizer sent us to ask you, ‘Are you the one whom God promised would come, or should we expect someone else?’” ²¹ At that same time Jesus was

healing many people from sicknesses and serious diseases, and from evil spirits. He also healed many blind people so that they were able to see. ²² So he answered those two men, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: People who were blind are now seeing. People who were lame are now walking. People who had skin diseases are being healed. People who were deaf can now hear. People who were dead are being made to live again and good news is being proclaimed to the poor. ²³ And also tell him, “God will bless anyone who sees what I do and hears what I teach and does not turn away from me.”

²⁴ When the men whom John had sent left, Jesus began to talk to the crowd of people about John. He said, “What did you go into the wilderness to see? A thin stalk of a plant shaken by the wind? ²⁵ But what did you go out to see? A man in fancy clothing? Look, those who wear splendid clothes and who have the best of everything live in kings’ palaces. ²⁶ Then what did you go out there to see? A prophet? Yes! But I tell you that John is more important than an ordinary prophet. ²⁷ He is the one about whom the prophets wrote long ago: ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you. He will prepare people for your coming.’

²⁸ I tell you that of all the people who ever lived, there is no one greater than John. Yet, the most insignificant people who will live with God where he dwells, will be greater than John.”

²⁹ When all the people who had been baptized by John heard what Jesus said—including the tax collectors—they agreed that God was just. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and the experts in the Jewish laws had not been baptized by John and they rejected God’s will for them.

³¹ Then Jesus also said, “What are you peo-

ple living in this time period like? I will tell you: ³² You are like children playing games in an open area. They call out to each other, saying, “We played happy music for you on the flute, but you did not dance! Then we sang sad funeral songs for you, but you did not cry!” ³³ Similarly, when John came to you and did not eat ordinary food or drink wine, you rejected him and said, ‘A demon is controlling him!’ ³⁴ But when the Son of Man came to you and he ate ordinary food and drink wine as others do, then you rejected him and said, ‘Look! This man eats too much food and drinks too much wine, and he associates with tax collectors and other sinners!’ ³⁵ But God’s wisdom is proved right by those who follow it.

³⁶ One day a certain Pharisee named Simon invited Jesus to eat a meal with him. So Jesus went to the man’s house and reclined at a table to eat. ³⁷ There was also a woman in that city whom many people knew had been a prostitute. When she heard that Jesus was eating in the Pharisee’s house, she went there, taking a stone jar that contained perfume. ³⁸ As Jesus was reclining to eat, the woman stood behind him at his feet. She was crying, and her tears fell on Jesus’ feet. She continually wiped his feet with her hair, and kept kissing them and anointing them with the perfume. ³⁹ When the Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw what the woman was doing, he thought, “If this man were really a prophet, he would have known who this woman is who is touching him, and what kind of person she is, that she is a sinner.” ⁴⁰ In response, Jesus said to him, “Simon, there is something I want to tell you.” He replied, “Teacher, what is it?” ⁴¹ Jesus told him this story: “Two people owed money to a man who had a business lending money to people. One of these people owed him five hundred silver coins, and the other one owed

him fifty silver coins. ⁴² Neither of them was able to pay back what he owed, so the man very kindly said that they did not have to pay back anything. So, which of those two men will love that man more?” ⁴³ Simon replied, “I assume that the one who had owed him the most money will love him more.” Jesus said to him, “You are correct.” ⁴⁴ Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Think about what this woman has done! When I entered your house, you did not do what hosts usually do to welcome their guests. You did not give me any water to wash my feet, but this woman has washed my feet with her tears and then wiped them with her hair! ⁴⁵ You did not greet me with a kiss, but from the moment I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet! ⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with olive oil, but she has anointed my feet with fragrant perfume. ⁴⁷ So I tell you that she has been forgiven for her many sins and that is why she loves me very much. But a person who thinks he has only a few sins, and has been forgiven, will love me only a little bit.” ⁴⁸ Then he said to the woman, “You have been forgiven for your sins.” ⁴⁹ Then those who were eating with him said among themselves, “Who is this man who says that he can forgive sins?” ⁵⁰ But Jesus said to the woman, “Because you have believed in me, God has saved you. May God give you peace as you go!”

Chapter 8

¹ After that, Jesus and his twelve disciples traveled around through various cities and villages. As they went, Jesus preached to people, proclaiming the good news that God would soon reveal himself as king. ² Also traveling with them were several women whom he had healed from evil spirits and sicknesses. These included

Mary from the village of Magdala, out of whom he had forced seven evil spirits, ³ Joanna, the wife of Chuza, who was one of King Herod Antipas' managers, Susanna, and many others. They were providing some of their own funds to support Jesus and his disciples.

⁴ One day a very large crowd was gathering, because people were traveling to see Jesus from many different towns. Then he told them this story: ⁵ "A man went out to his field to plant some grain seeds. As he was scattering them over the soil, some of the seeds fell on the hard pathway. Then people walked on those seeds, and birds ate them. ⁶ Some of the seeds fell on rocky ground which had very little soil. Therefore, as soon as the seeds grew, the plants dried up because there was no moisture. ⁷ Some of the seeds fell on ground that contained seeds of thorn plants. The thorn plants grew up together with the young grain plants and crowded them out so that they could not grow. ⁸ But some of the grain seeds fell on fertile soil, and grew so well that they produced a crop that had a hundred times as many seeds." After saying these things, Jesus called out to them, "All of you should think carefully about what you just heard me say!"

⁹ Then Jesus' disciples asked him to tell them the meaning of the story. ¹⁰ And he said, "To you has been granted the privilege of knowing the hidden things about how God will rule as king. But I speak to everyone else only in parables, so that,

'Although they see, they may not perceive, and although they hear, they may not understand.'

¹¹ Now, this is what the story means: The seeds represent God's word. ¹² The seeds that fell on the pathway show what happens when people hear God's word, but afterwards the devil comes and takes that word away from their minds and hearts.

As a result, they do not believe it and are not saved. ¹³ The seeds that fell on the rocky ground show what happens when people hear God's word and receive it joyfully, but they do not have deep roots. As a result, they only believe for a short time. As soon as difficult things happen to them, they stop believing God's word. ¹⁴ The seeds that fell among the thorny plants show what happens when people hear God's word, but then as they go on in life they allow such things as the worries, riches and pleasures of this life to crowd out God's word from their life. As a result, they do not become spiritually mature. ¹⁵ But the seeds that fell on the fertile ground show what happens when people hear God's word and receive it with an honorable and upright heart. They persevere in believing and obeying the word, and so they produce good spiritual fruit.

¹⁶ After lighting a lamp, people do not cover it with a basket or put it under a bed. Instead, they put it on a lampstand, so that everyone who enters the room can see by its light. ¹⁷ This illustrates that everything that is hidden now will someday be made visible. And everything that is secret now will someday be brought out into the open. ¹⁸ So make sure that you are listening carefully to what I tell you, because God will enable those who believe his truth to understand even more. But God will cause those who do not believe his truth to not understand even the little that they think they have understood."

¹⁹ One day Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him, but they could not get near to him because there was such a large crowd around him in the house where he was. ²⁰ Then someone told him, "Your mother and your brothers have been standing outside, wanting to see you." ²¹ But he replied to them, "Those who hear God's word and obey it are as

dear to me as my mother and my brothers.”

²² On another day Jesus got into a boat with his disciples. He said to them, “I would like us to go across to the other side of the lake.” So they started to sail across the lake. ²³ But as they were sailing, Jesus fell asleep. Then a powerful windstorm came down on the lake. Soon the boat was filling with water, and they were in danger. ²⁴ So Jesus’ disciples came to him and woke him up. They said to him, “Master! Master! We are going to die!” He then woke up and commanded the wind and the violent waves to be still and they became still. Everything became calm. ²⁵ Then he said to them, “Why is your faith so weak?” The disciples were alarmed and amazed because of what had just happened. They kept saying to one another, “Who is this, that he is able to command even the winds and the water, and they obey him?”

²⁶ Jesus and his disciples continued sailing and came to the region where the Gerasene people lived, on the opposite side of the lake from the district of Galilee. ²⁷ After Jesus stepped out of the boat onto the land, he was met by a certain man from the town in that area. This man had demons in him. For a long time this man had not worn clothes and did not live in a house. Instead, he lived in the burial caves.

²⁸ When he saw Jesus, the man cried out, lay facedown before him, and said with a loud voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me!” ²⁹ The man said this because Jesus had just commanded the evil spirit to come out of him. Although the man had been bound with chains on his wrists and ankles while people guarded him, many times the evil spirit would suddenly seize him by force.

Then the man would break the chains and the demon would make him go out into deserted places. ³⁰ Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” He replied, “My name is Thousands.” He said that because many demons had entered that man. ³¹ The demons kept begging Jesus not to command them to go into the deep pit where God punishes demons. ³² There was a large herd of pigs grazing on the hillside nearby. The demons begged Jesus to allow them to enter the pigs, and he allowed them. ³³ So the demons left the man and entered the pigs, and the herd of pigs rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

³⁴ When the men who were taking care of the pigs saw what happened, they ran away! They reported what they had seen to people in the town and in the countryside. ³⁵ Then the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to where Jesus was, they saw that the man from whom the demons had gone out was sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to him. They saw that he had clothes on, and that his mind was normal again, and they became afraid. ³⁶ The men who had seen what had happened told the people who had just arrived how Jesus had healed the man who had been controlled by demons. ³⁷ Then many people from the surrounding region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave their area because they were very afraid. So Jesus and the disciples got into the boat to go back across the lake. ³⁸ Before they left, the man from whom the demons had gone out begged Jesus saying, “Please, let me go with you!” But instead, Jesus sent him away by saying to him, ³⁹ “No, go back to your house and tell people how much God has done for you!” So the man went away and told people throughout the town how much Jesus had done for him.

⁴⁰ Then Jesus and the disciples went back across the lake to Capernaum. A crowd of people was waiting for him there, and they welcomed him. ⁴¹ Just then a man named Jairus, who was one of the leaders of the synagogue there, came near to Jesus and he laid facedown before him. He pleaded with Jesus to come to his house ⁴² because his only daughter, who was about twelve years old, was dying and he wanted Jesus to heal her.

But as Jesus went, many people were crowding around him. ⁴³ Now in the crowd there was a woman who had been suffering for twelve years from a disease that caused continual bleeding. She had spent all her money to pay doctors to help her, but none of them was able to heal her. ⁴⁴ She came behind Jesus and touched the edge of his robe. At once her bleeding stopped. ⁴⁵ Jesus said, "Who touched me?" As everyone around Jesus was saying they had not touched him, Peter said, "Master, there are many people crowding around you and pressing up against you, so any one of them might have touched you!" ⁴⁶ But Jesus said, "I know that someone deliberately touched me, because power has gone out of me to heal that person." ⁴⁷ And when the woman realized that she could not hide, she came trembling to him and she laid facedown on the ground before him. As the other people were listening, she told Jesus why she had touched him and that she had been healed immediately. ⁴⁸ And Jesus said to her, "My dear woman, because you believed that I could heal you, you are now well. Now go on your way, and may God's peace be with you."

⁴⁹ While he was still speaking to her, a man from Jairus' house came and said to Jairus, "Your daughter has died. So do not bother the teacher anymore!" ⁵⁰ But when Jesus heard that, he said to Jairus, "Do not

be afraid. Just believe in me and she will live again." ⁵¹ When he arrived outside the house, Jesus did not allow anyone to go in the house with him, except for Peter, John and James, and the girl's mother and father. ⁵² And all the people there were crying loudly to show that they were very sad because the girl had died. But Jesus said to them, "Stop crying! She is not dead! She is just sleeping!" ⁵³ And the people laughed at him, because they knew that the girl was dead. ⁵⁴ But Jesus took hold of her hand and called to her, saying, "Child, get up!" ⁵⁵ And immediately her spirit returned to her body and she got up. Jesus told them to give her something to eat. ⁵⁶ And her parents were amazed, but Jesus told them not to tell anyone else yet what had happened.

Chapter 9

¹ Then Jesus called together his twelve disciples and gave them the right and power to drive out all kinds of demons and to heal people's diseases. ² He sent them out to heal people and to teach them about how God was going to show himself as king. ³ Before they left, he said to them, "Do not take anything with you for your journey. Do not take a walking stick or a traveler's bag or food or money. Do not even take an extra tunic. ⁴ Whatever house you enter, stay in that house until you leave that area. ⁵ In any town where the people do not welcome you, you should not continue to stay there. As you leave that town, shake off the dust from your feet. Do that as a warning against them for rejecting you." ⁶ Then Jesus' disciples left and traveled through many villages. Everywhere they went, they talked to people about the good news from God and healed sick people.

⁷ Herod, the ruler over the district of

Galilee, heard about everything that was happening. He was perplexed, because some people were saying that John the Baptizer had become alive again.⁸ Other people were saying that the prophet Elijah had appeared again and still others were saying that one of the other prophets from long ago had become alive again.⁹ But Herod said, "It cannot be John because I had his head cut off. So who is this man that I am hearing these things about?" And he kept looking for a way to see Jesus.

¹⁰ When the apostles returned from their trip, they told Jesus everything that they had done. Then he took them aside to go by themselves with him to the town of Bethsaida.¹¹ But when the crowds heard about where Jesus had gone, they followed him there. He welcomed them and spoke to them about how God was soon going to show himself as king, and he healed those who needed to be healed.

¹² Now it was getting late in the day, so the twelve disciples came to him and said, "Please send this large crowd of people away so that they can go to the surrounding villages and farms to get some food and find places to stay, since we are out here in this isolated place"¹³ But he said to them, "You must give them something to eat!" They replied, "All we have are five small loaves of bread and two small fish. We could never go buy enough food for all these people!"¹⁴ They said this because there were about five thousand men there. Then Jesus said to the disciples, "Tell the people to sit down in groups, with about fifty people in each group."¹⁵ So the disciples did that and the people all sat down.¹⁶ Then he took the five bread loaves and the two fish. He looked up toward heaven and praised God for them. Then he tore them into pieces and gave them to the disciples for them to distribute to the people.

¹⁷ They all ate and everyone had enough to eat. Then the disciples collected the leftover pieces of food, which filled twelve baskets!

¹⁸ One day while Jesus was praying in private, his disciples came to him and he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?"¹⁹ They replied, "Some people say that you are John the Baptizer, but others say that you are the prophet Elijah, and still others say that you are one of the other prophets from long ago who has come back to life again."²⁰ He asked them, "What about you? Who do you say that I am?" Peter replied, "You are the Messiah, who has come from God."²¹ Then Jesus warned them strongly to not tell that to anyone yet.²² Then he said, "I, the Son of Man, must suffer many things: I will be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the Jewish laws and then I will be killed. Then, on the third day after that, I will come back to life again."

²³ Then he said to them all, "If any one of you wants to follow me as my disciple, you must not do only what you desire to do. Rather, every day you must be willing to suffer, even to the point of giving up your life."²⁴ You must do that, because those who try to save their own lives for themselves will lose them eternally, but those who give up their lives because of being my disciples will save their lives eternally.²⁵ How does it benefit you if you gain everything in this world but then end up losing, or even giving up, your own self?²⁶ As for people who reject my message and refuse to say that they belong to me, I, the Son of Man will also refuse to say that they belong to me when I come back in my glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.²⁷ But I tell you this fact: Some of you standing here now will not die until you see God show himself as king!"

²⁸ About eight days after Jesus said those words, he took with him Peter, John and James, and went up onto a mountain to pray there. ²⁹ While he was praying, the appearance of his face became very different and his clothes became dazzling white and shining like lightning. ³⁰ Suddenly, two prophets from long ago were there talking with Jesus; they were Moses and Elijah. ³¹ They appeared surrounded in glory, and spoke with Jesus about his departure, which would soon be accomplished in Jerusalem. ³² Peter and the other disciples who were with him were very sleepy. When they woke up, they saw Jesus' glory; they also saw the two men standing with him. ³³ As Moses and Elijah were starting to leave Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here! We should make three shelters, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah!" But he really did not realize what he was saying. ³⁴ As he was saying these things, a cloud formed and covered them. The disciples were afraid as the cloud surrounded them. ³⁵ God's voice spoke to them from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him!" ³⁶ When the voice had finished speaking, the three disciples saw that only Jesus was there. They were silent and for a long time they did not tell anyone what they had seen.

³⁷ The next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a large crowd of people met Jesus. ³⁸ Suddenly a man from the crowd called out, "Teacher, I plead with you, do something to help my son! He is my only child. ³⁹ An evil spirit suddenly seizes him and causes him to scream. It shakes him violently and causes him to foam at the mouth. It hardly ever leaves my child and when it does, it injures him severely. ⁴⁰ I pleaded with your disciples to command the evil spirit to come out of him, but they were not able

to do it!" ⁴¹ In response, Jesus said, "This generation of people does not believe and so your thinking is corrupt! How much longer must I be with you before you believe?" Then he said to the boy's father, "Bring your son here to me!" ⁴² While they were bringing the boy to him, the demon threw the boy down to the ground, and shook him severely. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit and healed the boy. Then he returned him to his father. ⁴³ Then all the people there were completely amazed at the great power of God.

While they were all still in wonderment at all the miracles Jesus was doing, he said to his disciples, ⁴⁴ "Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: I, the Son of Man, will soon be handed over to my enemies." ⁴⁵ But the disciples did not understand what he meant by this. God prevented them from understanding it, so that they would not know yet what he meant, and they were afraid to ask him about what he had said.

⁴⁶ Sometime later, the disciples began to argue among themselves about which one of them would be the most important. ⁴⁷ But Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he brought a young child to stand beside him. ⁴⁸ He said to them, "If someone welcomes a little child like this because of me, it is the same as welcoming me. And if someone welcomes me, it is the same as welcoming God, who sent me. Remember that those among you who seem to be the least important are the ones whom God considers to be most important."

⁴⁹ John replied to Jesus, "Master, we saw a man who was using your name to command demons to come out of people. So we told him to stop doing that, because he is not following you as part of our group." ⁵⁰ But Jesus said, "Do not stop him from doing that! If someone is not doing something that is harmful to you, then what he

is doing is helpful to you!”

⁵¹ When it was getting close to the day when God would take him back up to heaven, Jesus firmly resolved to go to Jerusalem. ⁵² He sent some messengers to go ahead of him, and they entered a village in the region of Samaria to prepare for him to go there. ⁵³ But the Samaritans would not let Jesus come to their village because he was on his way to Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ When two of his disciples, James and John, heard that, they said, “Lord, do you want us to ask God to send fire down from heaven to destroy those people?” ⁵⁵ But Jesus turned to them and sternly told them they were wrong to say that. ⁵⁶ So they went to a different village.

⁵⁷ As Jesus and the disciples were walking along the road, someone said to him, “I will go with you wherever you go!” ⁵⁸ Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes in the ground to live in, and birds have nests, but I, the Son of Man, do not have a home to sleep in!” ⁵⁹ Jesus told a different person, “Follow me!” But that person said, “Lord, let me first go home and bury my father after he dies.” ⁶⁰ But Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead; but you go and tell people everywhere that God will soon show himself as king!” ⁶¹ Someone else said, “Lord, I will come with you and be your disciple, but first let me go home to say goodbye to my people.” ⁶² Jesus said to him, “Anyone who starts plowing his field and then looks behind him is not able to serve God when he rules everything as king.”

Chapter 10

¹ After that, the Lord Jesus appointed seventy other people to go preach. He prepared to send them out in pairs to go ahead of him to every town and village

where he intended to go. ² He said to them, “The harvest is certainly plentiful, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord of the harvest and plead with him to send more workers to reap his harvest. ³ Go now, but remember that I am sending you out to tell my message to people who will try to get rid of you. You will be like lambs among wolves. ⁴ Do not take along any money. Do not take a traveler’s bag. Do not take extra shoes. Do not stop to greet people along the way. ⁵ Whenever you enter a house, first say to those people, ‘May God give peace to you who are in this house!’ ⁶ If the people who live there are desiring to have God’s peace, they will experience the peace that you are offering them. If the people who live there are not desiring to have God’s peace, the peace you have offered will return to you. ⁷ Stay in that same house until you leave that village. Do not move around from one house to another. Eat and drink whatever they provide for you, because a worker deserves to receive payment for his work. ⁸ Whenever you enter a town and the people there welcome you, eat whatever food they provide for you. ⁹ Heal the people there who are sick. Tell them, ‘God will soon rule everywhere as king.’ ¹⁰ But if you enter a town whose people do not welcome you, go into its main streets and say, ¹¹ ‘As a warning against you, we will wipe off even the dust that sticks to our feet as we are leaving your town. Yet be sure of this; God will soon rule everything as king.’ ¹² I tell you that on the final day when God judges everyone, the people of that town will be punished even more severely than the wicked people who lived long ago in the city of Sodom!

¹³ How terrible it will be for you people who live in the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida, because you refuse to repent! If the miracles that I performed for you had

been done in the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon, the wicked people who lived there would long ago have shown that they were sorry for their sins by sitting on the ground wearing coarse cloth and putting ashes on their heads. ¹⁴ So on the final day when God judges everyone, he will punish you more severely than the wicked people who lived in Tyre and Sidon because you did not repent and believe in me even though you saw me do miracles! ¹⁵ I also have something to say to you people who live in the town of Capernaum. Do you think you will be honored up in heaven? On the contrary, you will be brought down to the place of the dead!”

¹⁶ Jesus also said to the disciples, “Whoever listens to your message is listening to me, and whoever rejects your message is rejecting me. And whoever rejects me is rejecting God, the one who sent me.”

¹⁷ The seventy people whom Jesus appointed went and did as he told them to. When they returned, they were very joyful. They said, “Lord, even the demons obeyed us when by your authority we commanded them to leave people!” ¹⁸ He replied, “While you were away doing that, I saw Satan fall from heaven as suddenly and quickly as lightning strikes! ¹⁹ Listen! I have given you the right to attack evil spirits. They will not hurt you. I have given you the right to be stronger than our enemy, Satan. Nothing will hurt you at all. ²⁰ But as you rejoice that evil spirits obey you, you should rejoice even more that your names have been written in heaven.”

²¹ Right then, Jesus was filled with great joy from the Holy Spirit. He said, “Father, you are Lord over everything in heaven and on earth. Some people think that they are wise because they are well educated. But I praise you that you have prevented

them from knowing these things. Instead, you have revealed them to people who accept your truth readily as little children do. Yes, Father, you have done that because it pleased you to do so.” ²² Jesus also said to the disciples, “God, my Father, has given everything to me. Only my Father really knows me, his Son. Furthermore, only I, the Son, really know who the Father is—that is, only I and those people to whom I choose to reveal him really know him.”

²³ Then when his disciples were alone with him, he turned toward them and said, “God has given you a great gift by letting you see the things that I have done! ²⁴ I want you to know that many prophets and kings who lived long ago desired to see the things that you are seeing me do, but they could not, because those things did not happen then. They longed to hear the things that you have been hearing me say, but I had not yet revealed those things at that time.”

²⁵ One day as Jesus was teaching people, a certain teacher of Jewish laws was there. He wanted to test Jesus by asking him a difficult question. So he stood up and asked, “Teacher, what must I do in order to live with God forever?” ²⁶ Jesus said to him, “You have read what Moses has written in the laws that God gave him. What do the laws say?” ²⁷ The man replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind. And love your neighbor as much as you love yourself.” ²⁸ Jesus replied, “You have answered correctly. If you do all that, you will live with God forever.”

²⁹ But the man wanted to find a reason to justify the way he treated other people. So he said to Jesus, “Which people are my neighbors that I should love?” ³⁰ Jesus replied, “One day, a Jewish man was

traveling along the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. As he was traveling, some bandits attacked him. They took away most of the man's clothes and everything else that he had, and they beat him until he was almost dead. Then they left him. ³¹ It happened that a Jewish priest was going along that road. When he saw that man, instead of helping him, he passed by on the other side of the road. ³² Similarly, a Levite, who worked in God's temple, came to that place and saw the man. But he also passed by on the other side of the road. ³³ Then a man from the region of Samaria came along that road to where the man was lying. When he saw that man, he pitied him. ³⁴ He went close to him and put some olive oil and wine on the wounds to help heal them. He wrapped strips of cloth around the wounds. Then he placed the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next morning he gave two silver coins to the innkeeper and said, "Take care of this man. If you spend more than this amount to care for him, I will pay you back when I return." ³⁶ Then Jesus said, "Three people saw the man whom bandits attacked. Which one of them showed he was a true neighbor to the man?" ³⁷ The teacher of the law replied, "The one who acted mercifully toward him." Jesus said to him, "Yes, so now you should go and act like that toward everyone whom you can help!"

³⁸ As Jesus and his disciples continued to travel, they entered a village near Jerusalem. A woman whose name was Martha invited them to come to her house. ³⁹ Her younger sister, whose name was Mary, was sitting near Jesus' feet. She was listening to what he was teaching. ⁴⁰ But Martha was very much concerned about preparing the meal. She went to Jesus and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to prepare everything by myself? Please tell her that she should

help me!" ⁴¹ But the Lord replied, "Martha, Martha, you are very worried about many things. ⁴² But the only thing that is truly necessary is to listen to what I am teaching. Mary has made the best choice. The blessing that she is receiving from doing that will not be taken away from her."

Chapter 11

¹ One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished praying, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us what to say when we pray, as John taught his disciples!" ² He said to them, "When you pray, say things like this: 'Father, may all people honor your name as holy. May you soon rule all people everywhere. ³ Please give us each day the food that we need. ⁴ Please forgive us for the wrong things that we have done, just as we ourselves must forgive people for the wrong things that they do to us. Help us to not sin when we are tempted.'"

⁵ Then he said to them, "Suppose that one of you goes to the house of a friend at midnight. Suppose that you stand outside and call out to him, 'My friend, please lend me three loaves of bread! ⁶ Another friend of mine who is traveling has just arrived at my house, but I have no food ready to give to him!' ⁷ Suppose that he answers you from inside the house, 'Do not bother me! The door has been locked and all my family are in bed. So I cannot get up and give you anything!' ⁸ I tell you, he may not want to get up and give you any food even though you are his friend. But because you keep persisting in asking him, he will certainly get up and give you whatever you need. ⁹ So I tell you this: Keep asking God for what you need, and he will give it to you. Keep seeking his will and he will show it to you. Keep on praying urgently to God, like someone knocking on

a door, and he will open the way for you to receive what you pray for. ¹⁰ Remember that anyone who asks will receive and anyone who seeks will find, and anyone who knocks will have the door opened for him. ¹¹ If one of you had a son who asked you for a fish to eat, you certainly would not give him a poisonous snake instead, would you? ¹² And if he asked you for an egg, you certainly would not give him a scorpion instead, would you? ¹³ Even though you people are sinful, you know how to give good things to your children. So it is even more certain that your Father in heaven will give the Holy Spirit to you if you ask him to do that.”

¹⁴ One day there was a man there who was not able to speak, because a demon controlled him. After Jesus forced out the demon, the man began to talk. Most of the people there were amazed. ¹⁵ But some of them said, “It is Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, who enables this man to force out demons!” ¹⁶ Other people there asked him to perform a miracle to prove he was from God. ¹⁷ But he knew what they were thinking. So he said to them, “If the people in one nation fight against each other, their nation will be destroyed. If the people in one household oppose each other, their family will fall apart. ¹⁸ Similarly, if Satan and his demons were fighting against each other, his rule over them would certainly not last! I say this because you are saying that I force out demons by the power of the ruler of demons! ¹⁹ Now, if it is really true that Satan is enabling me to force out demons, is it also true that your disciples who force out demons do so by Satan’s power? Of course not! So they prove that you are wrong. ²⁰ But since it is actually by the power of God that I force out demons, I am showing you that God has begun to rule over you.”

²¹ Jesus continued, “When a strong man

who has many weapons guards his own house, no one can steal the things in his house. ²² But when someone else who is stronger attacks that man and subdues him, he is able to take away the weapons in which the man trusted. Then he can take from that man’s house anything he wants to. ²³ Anyone who is not supporting me is opposing me, and anyone who does not bring people to me causes them to go away from me.”

²⁴ Then Jesus said this: “Sometimes when an evil spirit leaves someone, it wanders around in desolate areas seeking relief. If it does not find any, it says to itself, ‘I will return to the person in whom I used to live!’ ²⁵ So it goes back and finds that the person is like a house that has been swept clean and put in order, but is still empty. ²⁶ Then this evil spirit goes and gets seven other spirits that are even more evil than it is. They all enter that person and begin living there. So, although that person’s condition was bad before, it became much worse.”

²⁷ When Jesus said that, a woman who was listening called out to him loudly, “How greatly blessed by God is the woman who gave birth to you and who nursed you at her breasts!” ²⁸ Then he replied, “Even more blessed by God are those who hear his message and obey it!”

²⁹ As more and more people were coming to join the crowd around Jesus, he said, “The people living at this time are evil people. Many of you want me to perform a miracle as proof that I have come from God. But the only proof that you will receive is a miracle like what happened to Jonah. ³⁰ Just as the miracle that God did for Jonah long ago was a testimony to the people from the city of Nineveh, so God will do a similar miracle for the Son of Man that will be a testimony to you people living now. ³¹ Long ago the Queen

of Sheba traveled a very long distance to hear Solomon speak wise things. And now someone who is much greater than Solomon is here, but you have not really listened to what I say. Therefore, at the time when God will judge all people, this queen will stand there and condemn the people alive now. ³² The men who lived in the ancient city of Nineveh turned from their sinful ways when Jonah preached to them. And now I, who am greater than Jonah, have come and preached to you, but you have not turned from your sinful ways. Therefore, at the time when God judges all people, the men who lived in Nineveh long ago will stand there and condemn the people alive now. ”

³³ ”People who light a lamp do not then hide it, or put it under a basket. Instead, they put it on a lampstand so that those who enter the room or house can see the light. ³⁴ Your eye is the lamp of your body. If your eye is healthy, then your whole body is full of light. If, on the other hand, it is unhealthy, then your body will be full of darkness. ³⁵ Therefore, be careful that the light in you is not darkness. ³⁶ If your whole body is full of light and no part of it is darkened, all of your body will be full of light like the light of a lamp that enables you to see everything clearly.”

³⁷ After Jesus finished saying those things, a Pharisee invited him to eat a meal with him. So Jesus went into the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table to eat. ³⁸ The Pharisee was surprised when he saw that Jesus did not ritually wash his hands before eating. ³⁹ The Lord Jesus said to Him, ”You Pharisees wash the outside of cups and dishes before you eat, but within yourselves you are very greedy and wicked. ⁴⁰ You foolish people! Surely you know that God not only made the outside, but he also made the inside! ⁴¹ Instead of worrying about dishes being ritu-

ally clean, be merciful and give whatever is inside the dishes to those in need, and then both the inside and outside of you will be clean.

⁴² But how terrible it will be for you Pharisees! You carefully give to God a tenth of all you have, including even the herbs that you grow in your gardens. But then you do not love God or act justly toward others. You should make sure that you love God and act justly toward others in addition to giving to God. ⁴³ How terrible it will be for you Pharisees, because you like to sit in the most important seats in the synagogues, and you like people to greet you with special honor in the marketplaces. ⁴⁴ How terrible it will be for you, because you are like unmarked graves that cannot be seen, which people walk over without realizing it and become ceremonially unclean.”

⁴⁵ One of those who were teachers of the Jewish laws replied, ”Teacher, by saying this you are criticizing us also!” ⁴⁶ Jesus said, ”How terrible it will be for you who are teachers of the Jewish laws! You weigh people down with very heavy burdens, yet you will not do even the smallest thing to help people bear those burdens! ⁴⁷ How terrible it will be for you, because you construct buildings to mark the graves of the prophets, but your ancestors are the ones who killed them! ⁴⁸ So when you build these buildings, you are declaring that you approve of what your ancestors did when they killed the prophets. ⁴⁹ So God, who is very wise, had said, ‘I will send prophets and apostles to guide my people. But they will cause them to suffer greatly and will even kill some of them.’ ⁵⁰ As a result, many of the people living now at this time will be considered guilty of the murder of all God’s prophets from the time the world was created, ⁵¹ starting from when Abel

was killed by his brother and continuing until the prophet Zechariah was killed in the temple between the altar and the holy place. Yes, the people living at this time will be considered guilty for all those murders of the prophets! ⁵² How terrible it will be for you men who teach the Jewish laws. Because of you, people cannot know how to have God rule over them! You do not let God rule over you, and you even get in the way of people who want to have God rule over them.”

⁵³ After Jesus finished saying those things, he left there. Then the men who taught the Jewish laws and the Pharisees began to act in a very hostile way toward him. They intensely questioned him about many things. ⁵⁴ They kept waiting for him to say something wrong for which they could accuse him.

Chapter 12

¹ Meanwhile, many thousands of people gathered around Jesus. There were so many that they were stepping on each other. But first he said to his disciples, “Be careful that you do not become like the Pharisees who act religious in public, but do evil things in secret. Just like yeast causes a lump of dough to rise, their evil behavior causes others to be hypocrites like they are. ² People cannot cover up their sins. Someday God will let everyone know everything people are trying to hide. ³ Everything you say in the dark, someday people will hear in the daylight. Whatever you whisper in your room will someday be as public as if it were shouted from the rooftops.”

⁴ “My friends, listen carefully! Do not be afraid of people; they can kill you, but they cannot do anything more to you after that! ⁵ But I will warn you about the

one that you should truly be afraid of. You should be afraid of God, because he not only has the right to cause people to die, he also has the right to throw them into hell afterward! Yes, he is truly the one that you should be afraid of! ⁶ Think about the sparrows. They have so little value that you can buy five of them for only two small coins and yet God never forgets any of them! ⁷ God even knows how many hairs there are on your head. Do not be afraid, because you are more valuable to God than many sparrows.

⁸ I tell you also, that if people tell others that they are my disciples, then I, the Son of Man, will say that they are my disciples to God’s angels. ⁹ But if they tell others that they are not my disciples, then I will say to God’s angels that they are not my disciples. ¹⁰ I also tell you that if people say evil things about me, the Son of Man, God will forgive them for that. But if people say evil things about the Holy Spirit, God will not forgive them for that. ¹¹ So when people bring you into the synagogues to question you before the religious leaders and other people who have power in the country, do not worry about how you will answer them or about what you should say, ¹² because the Holy Spirit will tell you at that very time what you should say.”

¹³ Then one of the people in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide my father’s property with me!” ¹⁴ But Jesus replied to him, “Man, no one made me a judge to settle arguments that people have about property!” ¹⁵ Then he said to the whole crowd, “Be careful not to be greedy in any way! The value of a man’s life is not determined by how many things he owns.”

¹⁶ Then he told them this illustration: “The fields of a certain rich man produced abundant crops. ¹⁷ So he thought to himself, ‘I do not know what to do, because I

do not have any place big enough to store all my crops!’¹⁸ Then he thought to himself, ‘I know what I will do! I will tear down my grain bins and build larger ones! Then I will store all my grain and other things in the big new bins.’¹⁹ Then I will say to myself, “Now I have enough things stored up to last many years. So now I will take life easy. I will eat and drink and be happy!”²⁰ But God said to him, ‘You foolish man! Tonight you will die! Then all the things you have saved up for yourself will belong to someone else, not to you!’”

²¹ Then Jesus ended this illustration by saying, “That is what will happen to those who store up things just for themselves, but who do not value the things that God considers valuable.”

²² Then Jesus said to his disciples, “So I want to tell you this: Do not worry about things you need in order to live. Do not worry about whether you will have enough food to eat or enough clothes to wear.”²³ Your life is more important than the food you eat and your body is more important than the clothes you put on it.²⁴ Think about the birds: They do not plant seeds, and they do not harvest crops. They do not have rooms or buildings in which to store crops. But God provides food for them. You are certainly much more valuable than birds.²⁵ None of you can add even a minute to his life by worrying about it!²⁶ So since you cannot even do that small thing, you certainly should not worry about anything else.²⁷ Think about the way that flowers grow. They do not work to earn money and they do not make their own clothes. But I tell you that even though King Solomon, who lived long ago, wore very beautiful clothes, he was never as well dressed as one of those flowers.²⁸ God makes the plants beautiful even though they grow for only a short time. Then they are cut and thrown into

the fire. But you are very precious to God, and he will care for you much more than he cares for the plants. Why do you trust him so little?²⁹ Do not wonder about what you will eat and drink, and do not keep worrying about those things.³⁰ The people who do not know God are always worried about such things. But your Father in heaven knows that you need them.³¹ Instead, make it the most important thing in your life to accept God when he rules over you. Then he will also give you everything you need.

³² So you should not be afraid, little flock. Your Father in heaven wants to give you all the benefits he plans to when he rules everything completely.³³ So now sell the things that you own. Give the money to those who do not have the food and clothing they need or a place to live. Get yourselves wallets that do not wear out, and you will store up treasure in heaven where it will always be safe. There, no thief can come near to steal it, and no moths can destroy your clothing.³⁴ Whatever it is that you treasure, that is what you will think about and spend your time on.

³⁵ Always be ready for doing God’s work, like people who have put on their work clothes and keep their lamps burning all night.³⁶ Be ready for me to return, like servants who are waiting for their master to return after being at a wedding feast. They are waiting to open the door for him as soon as he arrives and knocks at the door.³⁷ If those servants are awake when he returns, he will reward them. I will tell you this: He will get dressed to serve, tell them to sit down, and he will serve them a meal.³⁸ Even if he comes between midnight and sunrise, if he finds that his servants are awake and ready for him, he will be very pleased with them.³⁹ But you must also remember this: If the owner

of a house knew what time the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have allowed the thief to break into his house. ⁴⁰ So be ready, because I, the Son of Man, will come again at a time when you do not expect me.”

⁴¹ Peter asked, “Lord, are you giving this illustration only for us or for everyone else also?” ⁴² The Lord replied, “I am saying it for everyone who is like a faithful and wise servant who is a manager in his master’s house. His master puts him in charge of making sure the other servants get their food at the proper time. ⁴³ If the servant is doing that work when his master returns, his master will reward him. ⁴⁴ I tell you this: The master will put that servant in charge of all he owns. ⁴⁵ But if that servant manager says to himself, ‘My master has been away for a long time,’ then he might start to beat the other servants, both male and female ones. He might also start to eat a lot of food and get drunk. ⁴⁶ If he does that, his master might return at a time when the servant does not expect him. Then his master will punish him severely and assign him a place with those who do not serve him faithfully. ⁴⁷ The servant who knew what his master wanted but did not get ready and do it, will be severely punished. ⁴⁸ But every servant who did not know what his master wanted him to do, and then did something wrong, will only get a mild punishment. A lot is expected from those people who have been given a lot. Even more is expected from those who have been entrusted with a lot.”

⁴⁹ “I came to earth to purify you like fire purifies metal. I wish this had already begun. ⁵⁰ Soon I must go through a baptism of terrible suffering. I will continue to be distressed until my suffering is finished. ⁵¹ Do you think that as a result of my coming to earth people will live to-

gether peacefully? No! I must tell you, instead, people will be divided. ⁵² Because some people in one house will believe in me and some will not, they will be divided. Three people in one house who do not believe in me will oppose two who do believe. ⁵³ A man will oppose his son, or a son will oppose his father. A woman will oppose her daughter, or a woman will oppose her mother. A woman will oppose her daughter-in-law, or a woman will oppose her mother-in-law.”

⁵⁴ He also said to the crowds, “When you see a dark cloud forming in the west, you immediately say ‘It is going to rain!’ and that is what happens. ⁵⁵ When the wind blows from the south, you say, ‘It is going to be a very hot day!’ and you are right. ⁵⁶ You hypocrites! By observing the clouds and the wind, you are able to discern what is happening regarding the weather. Why are you not able to discern what God is doing at this present time?

⁵⁷ Each of you ought to decide what is the right thing for you to do, while you still have time to do that! ⁵⁸ You should try to settle things with someone who has accused you while you are still on the way to the court. If he forces you to go to the judge, the judge could decide that you are guilty and turn you over to the court officer. Then that officer will put you in prison. ⁵⁹ I tell you that if you go to prison, you will never get out, until you are able to pay every bit of what the judge says you owe.”

Chapter 13

¹ At that time, some people told Jesus about some Galileans whom soldiers had recently killed in Jerusalem. Pilate, the Roman governor, had ordered soldiers to kill them while they were offering sacrifices

in the temple. ² Jesus replied to them, "Do you think that this happened to those people from Galilee because they were more sinful than all the other Galileans? ³ I assure you, that was not the reason! But you need to remember that God will similarly punish you if you do not turn from your sinful behavior. ⁴ Or what about the eighteen people who died when the tower at Siloam outside Jerusalem fell on them? Do you think that this happened to them because they were worse sinners than everyone else in Jerusalem? ⁵ I assure you, that was not the reason! But instead, you need to realize that God will similarly punish you if you do not turn from your sinful behavior!"

⁶ Then Jesus told them this story: "A man planted a fig tree in his garden. Each year he came to pick the figs, but there were never any on it. ⁷ Then he said to the gardener, 'Look at this tree! I have been looking for fruit on it every year for the past three years, but there have been no figs. Cut it down! It is just using up the nutrients in the soil for nothing!' ⁸ But the gardener replied, 'Sir, leave it here for another year. I will dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹ If it has figs on it next year, we can allow it to keep growing! But if it does not bear any fruit by then, you can cut it down.'"

¹⁰ On one Jewish day of rest, Jesus was teaching people in one of the synagogues. ¹¹ There was a woman there whom an evil spirit had crippled for eighteen years. She was always bent over; she could not stand up straight. ¹² When Jesus saw her, he called her over to him. He said to her, "Woman, I have healed you of this illness!" ¹³ He put his hands on her. Immediately she stood up straight and began praising God! ¹⁴ But the leader of the synagogue was angry because Jesus had healed her on the Jewish rest day. So he said to the

people, "There are six days each week in which our laws permit people to work. If you need healing, those are the days to come to the synagogue and be healed." Do not come on our day of rest!" ¹⁵ Then the Lord replied to him, "You and your fellow religious leaders are hypocrites! Each of you also works on the day of rest sometimes! Would you not untie your ox or donkey to lead it from the food trough to where it can drink water? ¹⁶ This woman is a Jew, descended from Abraham! But Satan has kept her crippled for eighteen years, as though he had tied her up! Certainly you would agree that it is right that I free her from Satan, even if I do it on a day of rest! ¹⁷ After he said that, his enemies were ashamed of themselves. But all the other people were happy about all the wonderful things he was doing.

¹⁸ Then he said, "How can I explain what it will be like when God shows himself as king? I will tell you what it will be like. ¹⁹ It is like a tiny mustard seed that a man planted in his field. It grew until it became big, like a tree. It was so big that birds built nests in its branches."

²⁰ Then again he said, "I will tell you in another way what it will be like when God shows himself as king. ²¹ It is like a little bit of yeast that a woman mixed with about twenty-five kilograms of flour. That small amount of yeast made the whole batch of dough swell up."

²² Jesus continued traveling toward Jerusalem. He stopped in all the towns and villages along the way and taught the people. ²³ Someone asked him, "Lord, will God only save a few people?" Jesus replied, ²⁴ "You need to try hard to enter the narrow doorway. I tell you that many people will try some other way, but they will not be able to get in. ²⁵ After the owner of the house gets up and locks the door, you will stand outside and you

will knock on the door. And you will beg the owner and say to him, 'Lord, open the door for us!' But he will reply, 'No, I will not open it, because I do not know you, and I do not know where you are from!'²⁶ Then you will say, 'You must have forgotten that we ate meals with you, and you taught us in the streets of our towns!'²⁷ But he will say, 'I tell you again, I do not know you, and I do not know where you are from. You are wicked people! Get away from here!'"²⁸ Then Jesus continued by saying, "You will see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the distance. All the prophets who lived long ago will also be there, where God will rule everything as king. But you will be outside, crying and grinding your teeth in pain!"²⁹ Furthermore, many non-Jewish people will be inside. There will be ones who have come from lands to the north, east, south, and west. They will be feasting to celebrate that God is ruling everything.³⁰ Think about this: Some people who seem the least important now will be the most important then, and others who seem important now, will be the least important then."

³¹ That same day, some Pharisees came and said to Jesus, "Leave this area, because the ruler Herod Antipas wants to kill you!"³² He replied to them, "Tell that fox Herod this message from me: 'Listen! I am expelling demons and performing miracles today, and I will continue doing it for a short time. After that, I will finish my work.'³³ But I must continue my trip to Jerusalem during the coming days, since it is not appropriate to kill a prophet in a place other than Jerusalem."

³⁴ Oh, people of Jerusalem! You killed the prophets who lived long ago, and you killed others, whom God sent to you, by throwing stones at them. Many times I wanted to gather you together to protect

you like a hen gathers her young chicks under her wings. But you did not want me to do that.³⁵ Now look! God will no longer protect you, people of Jerusalem. I will also tell you this: I will enter your city only once more. After that, you will not see me until the time when I return, when you will say about me, 'May God bless this man who comes with God's authority!'"

Chapter 14

¹ One day, which was a day of rest, Jesus went to eat at the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees, and they were watching him carefully.² Right there in front of Jesus was a man who had a disease that caused his arms and legs to be very swollen.³ Jesus asked the experts in Jewish law and the Pharisees who were present, "Is it permitted in the law to heal people on the day of rest, or not?"⁴ They did not reply. So Jesus put his hands on the man and healed him. Then he told him he could go.⁵ And he said to the others there, "If you had a son or an ox that fell into a well on the day of rest, would you not immediately pull him out?"⁶ Again, they were not able to answer him.

⁷ Jesus noticed that the people who had been invited to the meal were choosing to sit in the places where important people usually sit. Then he gave this advice to them:⁸ "When one of you is invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit in a place where important people sit. It may be that a man more important than you has also been invited to the feast.⁹ When that man comes, the man who invited both of you will come say to you, 'Let this man take your seat!' Then you will have to take the least important seat, and you will be ashamed."¹⁰ Instead, when you are invited to a feast, go and sit in the

least important seat. Then when the man who invited everyone comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, come sit in a better seat!' Then all the people who are eating with you will see that he is honoring you. ¹¹ For God will humble those who exalt themselves, and he will exalt those who humble themselves."

¹² Jesus also said to the Pharisee who had invited him to the meal, "When you invite people to a midday or evening meal, do not only invite your friends, relatives or rich neighbors, since they will later repay you by inviting you for a meal. ¹³ Instead, when you give a feast, invite poor people, crippled people, lame people or blind people. ¹⁴ They will be unable to repay you. But God will bless you! He will repay you at the resurrection of the righteous."

¹⁵ One of those who were eating with him heard him say that. He said to Jesus, "God has truly blessed everyone who will eat the feast to celebrate that God has begun to rule everywhere!" ¹⁶ Jesus replied to him, "One time a man decided to prepare a large feast. He invited many people to come. ¹⁷ When it was the day for the feast, he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come now because everything is ready!' ¹⁸ But when the servant did that, all of the people whom he had invited began to say why they could not come. The first man that the servant went to said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go there and see it. Please ask your master to forgive me for not coming!' ¹⁹ Another person said, 'I have just bought five pairs of oxen, and I must go to examine them. Please ask your master to forgive me for not coming!' ²⁰ Another person said, 'I have just been married, so I cannot come.' ²¹ So the servant returned to his master and reported what everyone had said. The owner of the house was angry and said to his servant, 'Go out

quickly to the streets and alleys of the city and find poor and crippled and blind and lame people, and bring them here into my house!' ²² After the servant went out and did that, he came back and said, 'Sir, I have done what you told me to do, but there is still room for more people.' ²³ So his master said to him, 'Then go outside the city. Search for people along the highways. Search also along the narrow roads with hedges. Strongly urge the people in those places to come to my house. I want it to be full of people! ²⁴ Moreover I tell you this, the ones who were invited first will not get to enjoy my feast because they refused to come.'"

²⁵ A large crowd of people was traveling with Jesus. He turned toward the people and said to them, ²⁶ "If anyone comes to me who loves his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters more than he loves me, he cannot be my disciple. He must even love me more than he loves his own life! ²⁷ Whoever does not carry his own cross and whoever does not obey me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸ If one of you desired to build a tower, would you not first sit down and determine how much it would cost? Then you would be able to determine whether you had enough money to complete it. ²⁹ Otherwise, if you laid the foundation and were not able to finish the rest of the tower, everyone who saw it would make fun of you. ³⁰ They would say, 'This man started to build a tower, but he was not able to finish it!' ³¹ Or, if a king decided to send his army to war against another king, he would surely first sit down with those who advised him. They would determine whether his army, which had only ten thousand soldiers, could defeat the other king's army, which had twenty thousand soldiers. ³² If he decided his army could not defeat the other army, he would send a messenger to the other king

while the other army was still far away. He would tell the messenger to say to that king, 'What things must I do to have peace with you?' ³³ So, similarly, if any one of you does not first decide that you are willing to give up all that you have, you cannot be my disciple."

³⁴ Jesus also said, "You are like salt, which is very useful. But if salt were to lose its saltiness, could it ever be made to taste salty again? ³⁵ If salt does not taste salty anymore, it is no longer any good even for the soil or manure heap. People just throw it away. Every one of you should listen carefully to what I am telling you!"

Chapter 15

¹ Now, many tax collectors and other people who were considered to be habitual sinners kept coming to Jesus to listen to him teach. ² When the Pharisees and teachers of the Jewish laws saw this, they began to grumble, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and even eats with them." They thought Jesus was defiling himself by doing this. ³ So Jesus told them this parable: ⁴ "Suppose that one of you has a hundred sheep and you lose one of them. Certainly you will leave the ninety-nine other sheep in the wilderness and go search for the lost sheep until you have found it. ⁵ When you find it, you will joyfully put it on your shoulders to carry it home. ⁶ Then when you arrive home, you will call together your friends and neighbors and say to them: 'Be joyful with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost!' ⁷ I tell you that, in a similar way, there will be more joy in heaven because of one sinner who repents from his sins than many people who were already right with God and they do not need to repent.

⁸ Or, suppose that a woman has ten very

valuable silver coins and then she loses one of them. Certainly she will light a lamp and sweep the floor and search carefully until she finds it. ⁹ When she finds it, she will call together her friends and neighbors and say to them, "Be very happy with me, because I have found the coin that I lost!" ¹⁰ I tell you that, in a similar way, there is much joy among the angels of God because of one sinner who repents from his sins."

¹¹ Then Jesus continued and said, "There once was a man who had two sons. ¹² One day the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me now the share of your property that would normally be given to me when you die.' So the father divided his property between his two sons. ¹³ Only a few days later, the younger son gathered together all that he owned and traveled to a country far away. There in that country he spent all his money foolishly in wasteful, immoral living. ¹⁴ After he had spent all his money, there was a severe famine throughout that country. Soon he did not have anything left to live on. ¹⁵ So he went to a man who lived in that country and asked him to hire him. So the man sent him out to his fields to feed his pigs. ¹⁶ After awhile he became so hungry that he kept longing to eat the bean pods that the pigs ate, yet no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ Finally he began to think clearly about how foolish he had been and he said to himself: 'All of my father's hired servants have more than enough food to eat, but here I am dying because I do not have anything to eat! ¹⁸ So I will leave here and go back to my father. I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against God and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; please just employ me to work for you as one of your hired servants.'" ²⁰ So he left there and started traveling back to his father's house. But while he was still a great distance from the

house, his father saw him and felt deep compassion for him. He ran to his son and embraced him and kissed him on the cheek. ²¹ His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against God and against you. So I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But his father said to his servants; 'Go quickly and bring my best robe and put it on my son. Also put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet! ²³ And bring the calf that has been fattened for a special occasion and kill it, so that we can eat it and celebrate! ²⁴ We need to celebrate because this son of mine was like a dead man, but he is now alive again! He was like a lost person, but he has now been found!' So they all began to celebrate.

²⁵ While all that was happening, the father's older son was out working in the fields. After he finished working and was getting close to the house, he heard people playing music and dancing. ²⁶ He called for one of the servants and asked what was happening. ²⁷ The servant said to him, 'Your brother has come home. Your father has told us to kill the fattened calf to celebrate because your brother has returned safe and healthy.' ²⁸ But the older brother was angry and did not want to go into the house. So his father came out and pleaded with him to come in. ²⁹ But he replied to his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have worked for you as hard as a slave. I always obeyed everything you told me to do. But you never gave me even a young goat to eat so that I could give a feast with my friends. ³⁰ But now that this son of yours has come back home, after wasting all your money on prostitutes, you have told your servants to kill the fattened calf for a celebration!' ³¹ But his father said to him, 'My son, you are always with me, and all that I own is yours. ³² But it is right for us to rejoice and celebrate, because it is as though your brother was dead and is alive again! It is as though he was lost and

has now been found!'"

Chapter 16

¹ Jesus also said to his disciples, "Once there was a rich man who had a household manager. One day the rich man was told that the manager was managing his property so badly that he was causing the rich man to lose his possessions. ² So he called the manager to come to him and said to him, 'What you have been doing is terrible! Give me a final written report of what you have been managing, because you may no longer be my household manager!' ³ Then the manager said to himself, 'My master is going to dismiss me from being his manager, so I have to think of what to do. I am not strong enough to work by digging ditches, and I am ashamed to beg for money. ⁴ I know what I will do, so that people will take me into their houses and provide for me after I am dismissed from my management work!' ⁵ So one by one he asked everyone who owed his master money to come to him. He asked the first one, 'How much do you owe my master?' ⁶ The man replied, '3,000 liters of olive oil.' The manager said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down, and quickly change it to 1,500 liters!' ⁷ He said to another man, 'How much do you owe?' The man replied, 'A thousand baskets of wheat.' The manager said to him, 'Take your bill and change it to eight hundred baskets!' ⁸ When the master heard what his manager had done, he admired the dishonest manager for the way he prepared for the fact that he was about to lose his job. The truth is, the ungodly people in this world, who act dishonestly and use deceit, look ahead and prepare for their future more than the godly, who shine like lights in this world. ⁹ I tell you, use the money you made dishonestly to help others. When you do, they will be-

come your friends, and when the money is gone, you will have friends who will welcome you into your eternal home. ¹⁰ People who faithfully manage only small amounts of money, can also be trusted with much more. People who are dishonest in the way they handle unimportant duties will be dishonest in the way they handle important matters. ¹¹ You have money in your care that was made dishonestly, but if you have not been honest in the way you have managed that money, no one will give you property of your own. ¹² You have been managing other people's money, but if you were dishonest you should not expect anyone to give you money you could invest for yourself. ¹³ No servant is able to serve two different masters at the same time. If he tried to do that, he would hate one of them and love the other one, or he would be loyal to one of them and despise the other one. You cannot devote your life to serving God if you are also devoting your life to acquiring money and other material possessions."

¹⁴ When the Pharisees who were there heard Jesus say that, they made fun of him because they loved to acquire money. ¹⁵ But Jesus said to them, "You try to make other people think that you are righteous, but God knows your hearts. Keep in mind that many things that people praise as being very important, God considers to be detestable.

¹⁶ The laws that God gave Moses and what the prophets wrote were proclaimed until John the Baptizer came. Since then I have been preaching that God will soon show himself as king. Many people are accepting that message and are very eagerly asking God to rule their lives. ¹⁷ All of God's laws, even those that seem insignificant, are more permanent than heaven and earth.

¹⁸ Any man who divorces his wife and marries another woman is committing adultery, and any man who marries a woman who is divorced from her husband is also committing adultery."

¹⁹ Jesus also said, "Once there was a rich man who wore fine purple and linen clothes. Every day he gave expensive feasts. ²⁰ And every day a poor man whose name was Lazarus was laid at the gate of the rich man's house. Lazarus' body was covered with sores. ²¹ He was so hungry that he wanted to eat the scraps of food that fell from the table where the rich man ate. Furthermore, to make things worse, dogs came and licked his sores. ²² Eventually the poor man died. Then he was taken by the angels to his ancestor Abraham. The rich man also died, and his body was buried. ²³ In the place of the dead, the rich man was suffering great pain. He looked up and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus sitting very close to Abraham. ²⁴ So the rich man shouted, 'Father Abraham, I am suffering very much in this fire! So please pity me, and send Lazarus here so that he can dip his finger in water and touch my tongue to cool it!' ²⁵ But Abraham replied, 'Child, remember that while you were alive on earth you enjoyed many good things. But Lazarus was miserable. Now he is happy here, and you are suffering. ²⁶ Besides that, God has placed a huge ravine between you and us. So those who want to go from here to where you are, are not able to. Furthermore, no one can cross from there to where we are, either.' ²⁷ Then the rich man said, 'If that is so, Father Abraham, I ask you to send Lazarus to my father's house. ²⁸ I have five brothers who live there. Tell him to warn them so that they do not also come to this place, where we suffer great pain!' ²⁹ But Abraham replied, 'No, I will not do that, because your brothers have what Moses and the prophets wrote long ago. They should

obey what they wrote!’³⁰ But the rich man replied, ‘No, Father Abraham, that will not be enough! But if someone from those who have died goes back to them and warns them, they will turn from their sinful behavior.’³¹ Abraham said to him, ‘No! If they do not listen to what Moses and the prophets wrote, even if someone would rise from among the dead and go warn them, they would still not be convinced that they should turn from their sinful behavior.’”

Chapter 17

¹ Jesus said to his disciples, “Things that tempt people to sin will certainly happen, but how terrible it will be for anyone who causes those things to happen!”² It would be better for that person if someone fastened a huge stone around his neck and threw him into the sea, than if he were to cause to sin someone who is weak in his faith.³ Be careful how you act. If one of your brothers sins, you should rebuke him. If he says that he is sorry for having sinned and asks you to forgive him, then you should forgive him.⁴ Even if he sins against you seven times in one day, if he comes to you each time and says, ‘I am sorry for what I did,’ you must continue forgiving him.”

⁵ Then the apostles said to the Lord, “Give us more faith!”⁶ The Lord replied, “Even if you had faith that was no bigger than this tiny mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Pull yourself with your roots out of the ground and plant yourself in the sea’ and it would obey you!”

⁷ Jesus also said, “Suppose that one of you had a servant who was plowing your fields or taking care of your sheep. After he comes into the house from the field,

you would not say, ‘Come sit down immediately and eat!’⁸ Instead, you would say to him, ‘Prepare a meal for me! Then put on your serving clothes and serve it to me so that I can eat and drink! Afterwards you can eat and drink.’⁹ You will not thank your servant for doing the work that he had been told to do!¹⁰ Similarly, when you have done everything that God has told you to do, you should say, ‘We are only God’s servants and do not deserve for him to thank us. We have only done the things that he told us to do.’”

¹¹ As Jesus and his disciples were walking along the road to Jerusalem, they were going through the area between the regions of Samaria and Galilee.¹² As Jesus entered a village, ten lepers came toward him, but stood at some distance away.¹³ They called out, “Jesus, Master, please have pity on us!”¹⁴ When he saw them, he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” So they went, and as they were going, they were healed.¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God loudly.¹⁶ He came to Jesus and laid down with his face at Jesus’ feet, and he thanked him. This man was a Samaritan.¹⁷ Then Jesus said, “I healed ten lepers! Why did the other nine not come back?”¹⁸ This foreign man was the only one who returned to thank God; none of the others came back!”¹⁹ Then he said to the man, “Get up and go on your way. God has healed you because you trusted in me.”

²⁰ One day Jesus was asked by some Pharisees “When will God begin to rule everyone?” He replied, “That is not about signs that people can see with their own eyes.²¹ People will not be able to say, ‘Look! He is ruling here!’ Or ‘He is ruling there!’ because, contrary to what you think, God has already begun to rule within you.”

²² Jesus said to his disciples, “There will be

a time when you will want to see me, the Son of Man, ruling powerfully. But you will not see that. ²³ People will say to you, 'Look, the Messiah is over there!' or they will say 'Look, he is here!' When they say that, do not follow them. ²⁴ Because when the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, everyone can see it. Similarly when I, the Son of Man, come back again, everyone will see me. ²⁵ But before that happens, I must suffer in many ways, and I will be rejected by people. ²⁶ But when I, the Son of Man, come again, people will be doing things just like people were doing at the time when Noah lived. ²⁷ At that time people ate and drank as usual, and they got married as usual, up until the day when Noah and his family entered the big boat. But then the flood came and destroyed all those who were not in the boat. ²⁸ Similarly, when Lot lived in the city of Sodom, people there ate and drank as usual. They bought things and they sold things. They planted crops and they built houses as usual. ²⁹ But on the day that Lot left Sodom, fire and burning sulfur came down from the sky and destroyed all those who stayed in the city. ³⁰ Similarly, when I, the Son of Man, return to earth, people will be unprepared. ³¹ On that day, those who are outside their houses, with all the things that they own inside the houses, must not take time to go inside to take them away. Similarly, those who are working in a field must not turn back to get anything; they must flee quickly. ³² Remember what happened to Lot's wife! ³³ Anyone who continues in his own way of living will die. But anyone who leaves his way for my sake will live forever. ³⁴ I tell you this: On the night when I return, there will be two people sleeping in one bed. The one who believes in me will be taken and the other one will be left behind. ³⁵⁻³⁶ Two women will be grinding grain together; one will

be taken and the other left behind." ³⁷ His disciples said to him, "Lord, where will this happen?" He replied to them, "Wherever there is a dead body, the vultures will gather to eat it."

Chapter 18

¹ Jesus told his disciples another story to teach them that they ought to pray continually and not become discouraged if God does not immediately answer their prayers. ² He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who did not revere God and did not care about people. ³ There was a widow in that city who kept coming to that judge, saying, 'Please get justice for me from the man who is opposing me in court. ⁴ For a long time the judge refused to help her. But later, he said to himself, 'I do not revere God and I do not care about people, ⁵ but this widow keeps bothering me! So I will judge her case and make sure she is treated fairly, because if I do not do that, she will exhaust me by continually coming to me!'" ⁶ Then the Lord Jesus said, "Think carefully about what the unjust judge said. ⁷ Even more certainly will God, who is just, bring about justice for his chosen people, who pray earnestly to him night and day! And he is always patient with them. ⁸ I tell you, God will quickly do justice for his chosen ones! Nevertheless when I, the Son of Man, come back to earth, there will still be many people who do not believe in me."

⁹ Then Jesus also told the following story to some people who thought they were righteous and who looked down on other people. ¹⁰ He said, "Two men went up to the temple in Jerusalem to pray. One of the men was a Pharisee. The other was someone who collected taxes from the people for the Roman government. ¹¹

The Pharisee stood and prayed about himself in this way, 'O God, I thank you that I am not like other people. Some steal money from others, some treat others unjustly, and some commit adultery. I do not do any of those things. And I am certainly not like this sinful tax collector who cheats people! ¹² I fast two days every week and I give to the temple ten percent of all that I earn!' ¹³ But the tax collector stood far away from the other people in the temple courtyard. He would not even look up toward heaven. Instead, he beat on his chest and said, 'O God, please be merciful to me and forgive me, because I am a terrible sinner!'" ¹⁴ Then Jesus said, "I tell you that the tax collector was forgiven as they left to go home, but not the Pharisee. This is because everyone who exalts himself will be made humble, and everyone who humbles himself will be exalted."

¹⁵ One day people were bringing even their babies to Jesus so that he would put his hands on them and bless them. When the disciples saw this, they told them not to do that. ¹⁶ But Jesus called for the children to be brought to him. He said, "Let the little children come to me! Do not stop them! It is humble and trusting people like these children over whom God will agree to rule. ¹⁷ Indeed I say to you that whoever does not accept with humility like a child for God to rule over them, God will not accept that person at all."

¹⁸ Once a Jewish leader asked Jesus, "Good teacher, what must I do in order to have eternal life?" ¹⁹ Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? God is the only one who is truly good!"

²⁰ In answer to your question, certainly you know the commandments that God gave to Moses for us to obey: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder anyone, do not steal, do not give a false report, honor your father and mother.'" ²¹ The man said,

"I have obeyed all those commandments ever since I was young." ²² When Jesus heard him say that, he replied to him, "You still need to do one more thing. Sell all that you own. Then give the money to people who have very little to live on. The result will be that you will have spiritual riches in heaven. Then come and be my disciple!" ²³ The man became very sad when he heard that, because he was extremely rich. ²⁴ When Jesus saw how sad the man was, he too became very sorrowful. He said, "It is very difficult for those who are wealthy to agree for God to rule over them." ²⁵ In fact, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for rich people to let God rule their lives." ²⁶ Those who heard Jesus say that replied, "Then it seems that no one can be saved!" ²⁷ But Jesus said, "What is impossible for people is possible for God." ²⁸ Then Peter said, "Look, we have left everything we had in order to become your disciples. ²⁹ Jesus said to them, "Yes, and I also tell you that those who have left their homes, their wives, their brothers, their parents, or their children in order to submit to God's will for them ³⁰ will receive in this life many times as much as they left behind, and in the coming age they will receive eternal life."

³¹ Jesus took the twelve disciples to a place by themselves and said to them, "Listen carefully! We are now going up to Jerusalem. While we are there, everything that the prophets wrote long ago about me, the Son of Man, will be accomplished. ³² My enemies will put me into the power of the non-Jews. They will mock me, treat me with disdain and spit on me. ³³ They will whip me, and then they will kill me. But, on the third day after that I will become alive again." ³⁴ But the disciples did not understand any of those things that he said. God prevented them from understanding the meaning of

what he was telling them.

³⁵ As Jesus and his disciples came near to the city of Jericho, a blind man was sitting beside the road. He was begging for money. ³⁶ When he heard the crowd of people passing by, he asked someone, "What is happening?" ³⁷ They told him, "Jesus, the man from the town of Nazareth, is passing by." ³⁸ He shouted, "Jesus, you who are descended from King David, have pity on me!" ³⁹ Those who were walking at the front of the crowd scolded him and told him to be quiet. But he shouted even more loudly, "You who are descended from King David, have pity on me!" ⁴⁰ Jesus stopped walking and commanded the people to bring the man to him. When the blind man came near, Jesus asked him, ⁴¹ "What do you want me to do for you?" He replied, "Lord, I want you to enable me to see!" ⁴² Jesus said to him, "Then see! Because you have trusted in me, I have healed you!" ⁴³ Immediately he was able to see. And he went with Jesus, praising God. And when all the people there saw this, they also praised God.

Chapter 19

¹ Jesus entered Jericho and was going through the city. ² There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was in charge of collecting taxes and was very rich. ³ He wanted to see Jesus but he could not see him over the crowd. He was a very short man and there were many people around Jesus. ⁴ So he ran further down the road. He climbed a sycamore fig tree so he could see Jesus when he came by. ⁵ When Jesus got there, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly, I have to stay at your house tonight!" ⁶ So he came down quickly. He was glad to welcome Jesus into his home. ⁷ But the people

who saw Jesus go there grumbled saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a real sinner!" ⁸ Then Zacchaeus stood up while they were eating and said to Jesus, "Lord, I want you to know that I am going to give half of what I own to poor people. And as for the people whom I have cheated, I will pay them back four times the amount I have gotten from them." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Today God has saved this household, because this man has shown that he is a true descendant of Abraham. ¹⁰ Remember this: I, the Son of Man, came to find and save people like you who have gone astray from God."

¹¹ The people were listening to everything Jesus said. Since he was getting close to Jerusalem, Jesus decided to tell them another story. He wanted to correct their idea that as soon as he got to Jerusalem he would begin to rule as king over God's people. ¹² He said, "A prince prepared to go to a distant country in order to receive from a higher king the right to become king over the country where he lived. After he received the right of being king, he would return to rule his people. ¹³ Before he left, he summoned ten of his servants. He gave each of them an equal amount of money. He said to them, 'Do business with this money until I return!' Then he left. ¹⁴ But many people of his country hated him. So they sent some messengers to follow him and say to the higher king, 'We do not want this man to be our king!' ¹⁵ But he was made king anyway. Later he returned as the new king. Then he called in the servants to whom he had given the money. He wanted to know how much they had gained by doing business with the money he had given them. ¹⁶ The first man came to him and said, 'Sir, with your money I have earned ten times as much!' ¹⁷ He said to this man, 'You are a good servant! You have done very well! Because you have faithfully taken care of a small

amount of money, I will give you ten cities to rule over.’¹⁸ Then the second servant came and said, ‘Sir, the money you gave me is now worth five times as much!’¹⁹ He also said to that servant, ‘Well done! I will put you over five cities.’²⁰ Then another servant came. He said, ‘Sir, here is your money. I wrapped it up in a cloth and hid it to keep it safe.’²¹ I was afraid of what you would do to me if the business failed. I know you are a hard man who takes from others that which does not really belong to you. You are like a farmer who harvests grain that another man planted.’²² He said to that servant, ‘You wicked servant! I will condemn you by the words you just said. You knew I was a hard man, because I take what does not belong to me and harvest what I did not plant.’²³ So you should at least have given my money to money lenders! Then when I returned I could have collected that amount plus the interest it would have earned!’²⁴ Then the king said to those who were standing near, ‘Take the money from him and give it to the servant who made ten times as much!’²⁵ They protested, ‘But sir, he already has a lot of money!’²⁶ But the king said, ‘I tell you this: To the people who use well what they have received, I will give even more. But from the people who do not use well what they have received, I will take away even what they already have.’²⁷ Now, as for those enemies of mine who did not want me to rule over them, bring them here and execute them while I am watching!’”

²⁸ After Jesus said those things, he continued on the road up to Jerusalem, going ahead of the disciples.²⁹ When they got close to the villages of Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives,³⁰ he said to two of his disciples, “Go to the village just ahead of you. As you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied up there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and

bring it to me.”³¹ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying the donkey?’ say to him, ‘The Lord needs it.’”³² So the two disciples went to the village and found the donkey, just like Jesus had told them.³³ As they were untying it, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying our donkey?”³⁴ They replied, “The Lord needs it.”³⁵ Then the disciples brought the donkey to Jesus. They threw their cloaks on the donkey’s back for him to sit on and helped Jesus get on it.³⁶ Then as he rode along, others spread their cloaks on the road in front of him to honor him.³⁷ As they came along the road that goes down from the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God loudly for all the great miracles that they had seen Jesus do.³⁸ They were saying things like, “May God bless our king who comes with God’s authority!” “May there be peace between God in heaven and us his people!” “May everyone praise God!”³⁹ Some of the Pharisees who were in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell your disciples to stop saying those things!”⁴⁰ He replied, “I tell you this: if these people were silent, the stones themselves would shout to praise me!”

⁴¹ When Jesus came near to Jerusalem and saw the city, he cried about its people.⁴² He said, “I wish that today you people knew how to have God’s peace. But now you are unable to know it.”⁴³ I want you to know this: Soon your enemies will come and will set up a barricade around your city. They will surround the city and attack it on all sides.⁴⁴ They will break through the walls and destroy everything. They will destroy it and you and all your children. When they finish destroying everything, there will not be one stone left on top of another. All this will happen because you did not recognize the time when God came to save you!”

⁴⁵ Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courtyard. He saw in that place the people who were selling things, ⁴⁶ and he began to chase them out. He said to them, "It has been written in the scriptures, 'I want my house to be a place where people pray,' but you have made it a hideout for thieves!"

⁴⁷ Each day during that week Jesus was teaching people in the temple courtyard. The chief priests, the teachers of religious laws, and other Jewish leaders were trying to find a way to kill him. ⁴⁸ But they did not find any way to do it, because all the people were eager to hear him.

Chapter 20

¹ One day during that week Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courtyard and telling them God's good message. As he was doing that, the chief priests, the teachers of the Jewish laws, and other elders came to him. ² They said to him, "Tell us, what right do you have to do these things? And who gave you this right?" ³ He replied, "I will also ask you a question. Tell me, ⁴ about John baptizing people: Did God command him to baptize or did humans command him?" ⁵ They discussed this among themselves. They said, "If we answer, 'God commanded him,' then he will say, 'So why did you not believe him?'" ⁶ But if we say, 'It was only humans who told him to baptize,' the people will stone us to death, because they all believe that John was a prophet that God sent." ⁷ So they replied that they did not know who told John to baptize. ⁸ Then Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you who sent me to do those things."

⁹ Then Jesus told the people this parable, "A man planted a vineyard. He rented the vineyard to some men to care for it. Then

he went to another country and stayed there for a long time. ¹⁰ When it was time to harvest the grapes, he sent a servant to the men who were taking care of the vineyard, so they would give him his share of the grapes that the vineyard had produced. But after the servant arrived, they beat him and sent him away without any grapes. ¹¹ Later, the owner sent another servant. But they beat and shamed him also. They sent him away without any grapes. ¹² Still later, the owner sent another servant. This third servant they wounded and threw out of the vineyard. ¹³ So the owner of the vineyard said to himself, 'What should I do now? I will send my son, whom I love very much. They will probably respect him.' ¹⁴ So he sent his son, but when the men who were caring for the vineyard saw him coming, they said to each other, 'Here comes the man who will some day inherit the vineyard! Let us kill him so that this vineyard might become ours!' ¹⁵ So they dragged him outside the vineyard and they killed him. So I will tell you what the owner of the vineyard will do to them! ¹⁶ He will come and kill those men who were taking care of the vineyard. Then he will arrange for other people to take care of it." When the people listening to Jesus heard this, they said, "May a situation like this never happen!" ¹⁷ But Jesus looked directly at them and said, "You can say that, but think about the meaning of these words that are written in the scriptures,

'The stone which the builders rejected has become the most important stone in the building.

¹⁸ Everyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone on whom it falls."

¹⁹ The chief priests and the teachers of the Jewish laws realized that he was accusing them when he told the story about those

wicked men. So they immediately tried to find a way to arrest him, but they did not arrest him, because they were afraid of what the people would do if they did so. ²⁰ So they watched him carefully. They also sent spies who pretended to be sincere. But they really wanted to get Jesus to say something wrong for which they could accuse him. They wanted to be able to turn him over to the governor of the province. ²¹ So one of the spies asked him, "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right. You tell the truth even if important people do not like it. You teach truthfully what God wants us to do. ²² So tell us what you think about this matter: Is it right that we pay taxes to the Roman government, or not?" ²³ But he knew that they were trying to trick him to get him into trouble, either with the Jews, who hated to pay those taxes, or with the Roman government. So he said to them, ²⁴ "Show me a Roman coin. Then tell me whose picture is on it. And tell me whose name is on it." So they showed him a coin and said, "It has the picture and name of Caesar, the head of the Roman government." ²⁵ He said to them, "In that case, give to the government what belongs to them, and give to God what belongs to him." ²⁶ The spies were amazed at his answer, so much that they could not answer him. There was nothing that Jesus said before the people standing around him that the spies could find anything wrong with.

²⁷ After that, some Sadducees came to Jesus. They are a group of Jews who say that no one will rise from the dead. ²⁸ They also wanted to ask Jesus a question. One of them said to him, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us Jews that if a man who has a wife but no children dies, his brother should marry the widow so that she can have a child by him. In this way, people will consider that the child is the descendant of the man who died. ²⁹ Well, there

were seven brothers in one family. The oldest one married a woman, but he and his wife did not bear any children. Later he died. ³⁰ The second brother followed this law and married the widow, but the same thing happened to him. ³¹ Then the third brother married her, but the same thing happened again. All seven brothers, one by one, married that woman, but they had no children, and one by one they died. ³² Afterwards, the woman died, too. ³³ Therefore, if it is true that there will be a time when dead people will become alive again, whose wife do you think that woman will be then? Keep in mind that she was married to all seven brothers!" ³⁴ Jesus replied to them, "In this world, men take wives, and people give their daughters in marriage to men. ³⁵ But the people whom God considers worthy of being in heaven after they rise from the dead will not marry. ³⁶ Also, they cannot die anymore, because they will be immortal like angels. The fact that God has caused them to rise again will show that they are his children. ³⁷ But about people rising from the dead, Moses wrote something about that. In the place where he wrote about the burning bush, he mentions the Lord as being the God whom Abraham worships, whom Isaac worships and whom Jacob worships. It is not dead people who worship God, but rather living people who worship him. ³⁸ All people whose spirits are alive again after they die continue to honor him!"

³⁹ Some of the teachers of the Jewish law replied, "Teacher, you have answered very well!" ⁴⁰ After that, no one dared to ask him any more questions like that to trap him.

⁴¹ Later Jesus said to them, "I will show you that when people say that the Messiah is only a descendant of King David, they are wrong! ⁴² David himself wrote in the

Book of Psalms about the Messiah,
 God said to my Lord,

'Sit here beside me at my right, where I will highly honor you.

⁴³ Sit here while I completely defeat your enemies.'

⁴⁴ King David calls the Messiah 'my Lord'! So the Messiah cannot be just someone descended from King David! What I just said proves that he is much greater than David, right?"

⁴⁵ While all the other people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples, ⁴⁶ "Beware that you do not act like the men who teach our Jewish laws. They like to put on long robes and walk around to make people think that they are very important. They also like people to greet them respectfully in the marketplaces. They like to sit in the most important places in the synagogues. At dinner parties they like to sit in the seats where the most honored people sit.

⁴⁷ They also steal all the property of widows. Then they pray for a long time in public. God will certainly punish them very severely."

Chapter 21

¹ Jesus looked up from where he was sitting and saw rich people putting their gifts into the temple offering box. ² He also saw a poor widow put in two small coins of very little value. ³ And he said to his disciples, "The truth is that this poor widow has put into the offering box more money than all these rich people. ⁴ For they all have a lot of money, but they gave only a small part of it. But this widow, who is very poor, has given all the money that she had to buy what she needed.

⁵ Some of Jesus' disciples were talking about how the temple was adorned with

beautiful stones and decorations that people had given. But Jesus said, ⁶ "These things you are looking at will be destroyed completely. Yes, the time is coming when not one of these stones will be left on top of another."

⁷ Then they asked him, "Teacher, when will these things happen? And what will happen to show that these things are about to take place?" ⁸ Jesus replied, "Be careful that no one deceives you. For many people will come and each will claim to be me. Each will say about himself, 'I am the Messiah!' They will also say, 'The time is almost here, when God will rule as king!' Do not follow after them to become their disciples! ⁹ Also, whenever you hear about wars and people fighting each other, do not be terrified. For these things must happen before the end of the world comes."

¹⁰ "Various people groups will attack each other, and various kings will fight each other. ¹¹ And in various places there will be great earthquakes, as well as famines and terrible diseases. Many things will happen that will cause people to be very afraid, and people will see strange things in the sky that will show that something very important is going to happen. ¹²

But before all these things happen, they will arrest you, treat you badly and hand you over to the synagogues for trial and hand you over to the prisons. They will put you on trial in the presence of kings and high government authorities because you follow me. ¹³ That will be a time for you to tell them the truth about me. ¹⁴ So be determined not to worry ahead of time about what you will say to defend yourselves, ¹⁵ because I will give you the right words and wisdom so that you will know what to say. As a result, none of the people accusing you will be able to say you are wrong. ¹⁶ And even your par-

ents and brothers and other relatives and friends will betray you, and they will kill some of you. ¹⁷ In general, everybody will hate you because you believe in me. ¹⁸ But not even one hair from your head shall be destroyed. ¹⁹ If you go through difficult times and prove your trust in God, you will save yourselves.”

²⁰ ”When you see armies surround Jerusalem, then you will know that they will soon destroy this city. ²¹ At that time those of you who are in the region of Judea must flee to the mountains. And those of you who are in this city must leave. Those of you who are in the nearby countryside must not come into the city. ²² For this will be the time when God will punish this city; when he does, the words in the scriptures will come true. ²³ How terrible it will be for the pregnant women and those nursing their babies in those days, because there will be great suffering in the land, and its people will suffer enormously because God will be angry with them. ²⁴ Many of them will die because the soldiers attacked them with weapons. Others will become prisoners and they will be sent to many places around the world. The Gentiles will keep marching their troops through the streets of Jerusalem for as long as God allows.”

²⁵ ”At this time, strange things will happen to the sun, the moon, and the stars. And on earth, people groups will become very frightened, and they will become confused because of the roaring ocean and its huge waves. ²⁶ People will be so afraid that they will faint, because they are waiting for what will happen next in the world. The stars in the sky will have to leave from their usual places. ²⁷ Then all people will see me, the Son of Man, coming in the clouds with power and brilliant light. ²⁸ So when those terrible things begin to happen, stand up straight and look upward,

because God will soon rescue you.”

²⁹ Then Jesus told them a parable: ”Think about the fig trees, and even all the trees. ³⁰ Whenever you see that their leaves are sprouting, you know that summer is near. ³¹ In the same way, when you see these things that I have just described happening, you will know then that God will soon show himself as king. ³² I am telling you the truth: This generation of people will not come to an end before all these things that I have just now described happen. ³³ The sky and the earth will come to an end, but what I tell you will never come to an end.

³⁴ ”Be very careful to control yourselves. Do not go to parties where people are acting immorally, or getting drunk. And do not carry the cares of this life with you. If you live this way, you will stop waiting for me to return. And then, at that moment, I will surprise you when I come. I will come so suddenly it will be like when a animal trap springs closed without warning. ³⁵ Indeed, I will return without warning, and that day will come when you are not ready to see me. ³⁶ So you must be always ready for my coming. And always pray that you may be able to go through all these hard things in safety, and that I, the Son of Man, declare you innocent when I come to judge the world.”

³⁷ Each day Jesus was teaching people in the temple. But every evening he went out of the city and stayed all night on the Mount of Olives. ³⁸ And early every morning all the people came to the temple to listen to him.

Chapter 22

¹ It was now almost time for the Celebration of Unleavened Bread, which people also call the Passover. ² Now the

chief priests and the teachers of the Jewish laws were looking for a way to kill Jesus because they feared the people who followed him.

³ Then Satan entered into Judas, the one called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve disciples. ⁴ He went and talked with the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard about how he might turn Jesus over to them. ⁵ They were very pleased that he wanted to do that. They offered to pay him money for doing this. ⁶ So Judas agreed, and then he started looking for a way to help them arrest Jesus when there was no crowd around him.

⁷ Then the Day of Unleavened Bread came, the day when the lambs for the Passover Celebration had to be killed. ⁸ So Jesus said to Peter and John, "Go and prepare the meal for the Passover Celebration for us so we can eat it together." ⁹ They replied to him, "Where do you want us to prepare to eat it?" ¹⁰ He answered, "Listen carefully. When you go into the city, a man carrying a large jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house that he enters. ¹¹ Say to the owner of the house, 'Our teacher says to show us the room where he can eat the Passover meal together with us, his disciples?' ¹² He will show you a large room that is on the upper floor of the house. It will be all set up, with everything ready for guests. Prepare the meal for us there." ¹³ So the two disciples went into the city. They found everything to be just like Jesus had told them. So they prepared the meal for the Passover Celebration there.

¹⁴ When it was time to eat the meal, Jesus came and sat down with the apostles. ¹⁵ He said to them, "I have wanted very much to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer and die. ¹⁶ I tell you, I will not eat it again until I do so when God rules everyone everywhere, when

he finishes what he started to do in the Passover." ¹⁷ Then he took a cup of wine and thanked God for it. He said, "Take this, and share it among yourselves. ¹⁸ For I tell you that I will not drink any of this wine again until God rules everyone everywhere." ¹⁹ Then he took some bread and thanked God for it. He broke it into pieces and gave it to them to eat. As he did so, he said, "This bread is my body, which I am about to sacrifice for you. Do this later to honor me." ²⁰ In the same way, after they had eaten the meal, he took the cup of wine and said, "This is the new covenant I will make using my own blood, which will pour out for you. ²¹ But, look! The person who will hand me over to my enemies is here eating with me. ²² Indeed, I, the Son of Man, will die, because that is what God has planned. But how terrible it will be for the man who hands me over to my enemies!" ²³ Then the apostles began to ask one another, "Which one of us is planning to do this thing?"

²⁴ After that, the apostles began to argue among themselves; they said, "Which one of us will have the most honor when Jesus becomes king?" ²⁵ Jesus answered them, "The kings of the Gentile nations like to show people that they are powerful. Yet they give themselves the title, 'ones who help the people.' ²⁶ But you should not be like those rulers! Instead, the most honored persons among you should act as if they were the youngest, and the one who leads must act like a servant. ²⁷ For you know that the important person is the one who eats at the table, not the servant who brings the food. But I am your servant.

²⁸ You are the persons who have stayed with me during all the hard things I have suffered. ²⁹ So now, I will make you powerful officials when God rules everyone, just as my Father appointed me to rule as a king. ³⁰ You will sit and eat and drink

with me when I become king. In fact, you will sit on thrones to judge the people of the twelve tribes of Israel.”

³¹ ”Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has asked God to let him test you, like someone shakes grain in a sieve, and God has permitted him to do it. ³² But I have prayed for you, Simon, that you will not completely stop believing in me. So when you come back to me, give courage again to these men, your brothers. ³³ Peter said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison; I am willing to die with you!” ³⁴ Jesus replied, “Peter, I want you to know that this night, before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you do not know me!”

³⁵ Then Jesus asked the disciples, “When I sent you out to the villages, and you went without any money, food, or sandals, was there anything you needed but could not get?” They replied, “Nothing!” ³⁶ And he said, “But, now, if anyone among you has some money, he should take it with him. Also, whoever has food should take it with him, and whoever does not have a sword should sell his coat and buy one!” ³⁷ I tell you this because what a prophet wrote about me in the scriptures must happen: ‘People considered him to be a criminal.’ Everything that is written about me in the scriptures is happening. ³⁸ The disciples said, “Lord, look! We have two swords!” He replied, “Enough. Do not talk like this any longer.”

³⁹ Jesus left the city and went to the Mount of Olives, as he usually did; his disciples went with him. ⁴⁰ When he came to the place where he wanted to go, he said to them, “Pray that God will help you not to be tempted to sin.” ⁴¹ Then he went about thirty meters from them, knelt down and prayed. He said, ⁴² “Father, the terrible things that are about to happen to me: If you are willing to keep from happening,

do it. But do not do what I want, but what you want.” ⁴³ Then an angel from heaven came and gave him courage. ⁴⁴ He was suffering greatly. So he prayed more intensely. His sweat was falling to the ground like large drops of blood. ⁴⁵ When he got up from praying, he returned to his disciples. He found that they were so tired out because of their sorrow, they were sleeping. ⁴⁶ He woke them up and said to them, “You should not be sleeping! Get up! Pray that God will help you so that nothing will persuade you to sin.”

⁴⁷ While Jesus was still speaking, a crowd of people came to him. Judas, one of the twelve disciples, was leading them. He came up to Jesus to kiss him. ⁴⁸ But Jesus said to him, “Judas, will you really kiss me, the Son of Man, in order to hand me over to my enemies?” ⁴⁹ When the disciples realized what was happening, they said, “Lord, shall we strike them with our swords?” ⁵⁰ One of them struck the servant of the high priest, but only cut off his right ear. ⁵¹ But Jesus said, “Do not do any more of that.” Then he touched the servant’s ear and healed him. ⁵²⁻⁵³ Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guards, and the Jewish elders who had come to arrest him, “It is surprising that you have come here with swords and clubs to arrest me, as if I were a robber. For many days I was with you in the temple, but you did not try to arrest me at all! But this is the time you are doing what you want. It is also the time when Satan is doing the evil things as he wants to do.

⁵⁴ They seized Jesus and led him away. They brought him to the high priest’s house. Peter followed them far behind. ⁵⁵ The people lit a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together. Peter sat among them. ⁵⁶ A female servant saw Peter sitting there as the fire shone upon him. She looked at him carefully

and said, "This man was also with the one whom they have arrested!"⁵⁷ But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him!"⁵⁸ A little later someone else saw Peter and said, "You also are one of those who were with the man they arrested!" But Peter said, "Man, I am not one of them!"⁵⁹ About an hour later someone else said loudly, "The way that this man speaks shows that he is from the region of Galilee. Certainly this man was also with the man whom they arrested!"⁶⁰ But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about!" Immediately a rooster crowed, while he was still speaking.⁶¹ The Lord Jesus turned around and looked right at Peter. Then Peter remembered what the Lord had said to him, "This night, before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you know me."⁶² And he went out of the courtyard and cried with great sorrow.

⁶³ The men who were guarding Jesus made fun of him and beat him.⁶⁴ They put a blindfold on him and said to him, "Show us that you are a prophet! Tell us who it was that struck you!"⁶⁵ They said many other evil things about him, insulting him.

⁶⁶ At dawn the next morning, many of the Jewish leaders gathered together. In this group were the chief priests and the men who taught the Jewish laws. They took Jesus to the Jewish council chamber. There they said to him,⁶⁷ "If you are the Messiah, tell us!" But he replied, "If I say that I am he, you will not believe me."⁶⁸ If I ask you what you think about the Messiah, you will not answer me.⁶⁹ But from now on, I, the Son of Man, will be sitting next to almighty God and ruling!"⁷⁰ Then they all asked, "If that is so, are you saying that you are the Son of God?" He answered, "Yes, it is just like you say."⁷¹ Then they said to each other, "We certainly do not

need any more people to testify against him! We ourselves have heard him say that he is equal to God!"

Chapter 23

¹ Then the whole group got up and took him to Pilate, the Roman governor.² They accused him in front of Pilate: "We have seen this fellow causing trouble by telling lies to our people. He has been telling them to not pay taxes to Caesar, the Roman emperor. Also, he has been saying that he is the Messiah, a king!"³ Pilate then asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus replied, "Yes, it is just as you have asked me."⁴ Then Pilate said to the chief priests and to the crowd, "This man is not guilty of any crime."⁵ But they kept on accusing Jesus; they said, "He is trying to get the people to riot! He has been teaching his ideas throughout all of the region of Judea. He started doing this in the region of Galilee and now he is doing it here, also!"

⁶ When Pilate heard their words, he asked, "Does this man come from the district of Galilee?"⁷ Because Pilate learned that Jesus was from Galilee, where Herod Antipas ruled, he sent Jesus to him, because Herod was in Jerusalem at that time.⁸ When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad. He had been wanting for a long time to see Jesus, because he was hearing many things about him and wanted to see him perform a miracle.⁹ So he asked Jesus many questions, but Jesus did not reply to any of them.¹⁰ And the chief priests and some experts in the Jewish laws stood near him, accusing him very of all kinds of crimes.¹¹ Then Herod and his soldiers made fun of Jesus. They put expensive clothes on him to pretend that he was a king. Then Herod sent him back to Pilate.¹² Until that time Herod and Pilate

had been very hostile to each other, but that very day they became friends.

¹³ Pilate then gathered together the chief priests and other Jewish leaders and the crowd that was still there. ¹⁴ He said to them, "You brought this man to me, saying that he has been leading the people to revolt. But I want you to know that after having examined him while you were listening, I do not think that he is guilty of any of the things you have told me about. ¹⁵ Even Herod does not think he is guilty. I know this, because he sent him back to us without punishing him. So it is clear that this man does not deserve to die. ¹⁶ So I will tell my soldiers to whip him and then set him free." ¹⁷ (Pilate said this because he had to set free one prisoner at the Passover Celebration.) ¹⁸ But the whole crowd shouted together saying, "Put this man to death! Set Barabbas free for us!" ¹⁹ Now Barabbas was a man who had led some people in the city to rebel against the Roman government. He was also a murderer. He was in prison because of these crimes, and he was waiting for them to put him to death. ²⁰ But Pilate wanted very much to set Jesus free, so he tried to speak to the crowd again. ²¹ But they kept on shouting, saying, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" ²² Pilate spoke to them a third time and asked them, "Why? What crime has he committed? He has done nothing for which he deserves to die. So I will have my soldiers whip him and then set him free." ²³ But they kept insisting with loud voices that Jesus should be die on a cross. Finally, because they continued to shout so loudly, they persuaded Pilate ²⁴ to do what they requested. ²⁵ So he set free the man who was in prison because he had fought against the government and murdered people! He then commanded the soldiers to take Jesus and do what the crowd wanted.

²⁶ Now there was a man named Simon, who was from the city of Cyrene in Africa. He was coming into Jerusalem from the countryside. As the soldiers were leading Jesus away, they grabbed hold of Simon. They took from Jesus the cross that they had made him carry, and they they put it on Simon's shoulders. They told him to carry it and follow behind Jesus. ²⁷ Now a large crowd was following Jesus. It had many women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. ²⁸ Jesus turned to them and said, "You women of Jerusalem, do not weep for me! Instead, weep because of what is going to happen to yourselves and your children! ²⁹ For I want you to know that there will soon be a time when people will say, 'How fortunate are the women who have never given birth to children or nursed babies!' ³⁰ Then the people in this city will say, 'We wish that the mountains would fall on top of us and that the hills would cover us up!' ³¹ If I have to die, even though I have nothing wrong, terrible things will certainly happen to people who deserve to die.

³² Two other men who were criminals were also walking to the place where they would die with Jesus. ³³ When they came to the place named 'The Skull', there they crucified Jesus by nailing him to a cross. They did the same thing to the two criminals. They put one at the right side of Jesus and one at his left side. ³⁴ But Jesus said, "Father, forgive these people who did this, because they do not really know whom they are doing this to." Then the soldiers divided his clothes by gambling with something like dice, to decide which piece of clothing each one would get. ³⁵ Many people stood nearby, watching. Even the Jewish leaders were mocking Jesus: "He saved other people! If God has really chosen him to be the Messiah, he should save himself!" ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him. They came up to him and offered

him some sour wine. ³⁷ They kept saying to him, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" ³⁸ They also fastened on the cross above his head a sign that stated, 'This is the King of the Jews.'

³⁹ One of the criminals who was hanging on a cross also insulted Jesus; he said, "You are the Messiah, are you not? So save yourself, and save us too!" ⁴⁰ But the other criminal stopped him from speaking; he said, "You should be afraid of God punishing you! They are punishing him and us in the same way. ⁴¹ We two deserve to die. They are punishing us as we deserve for the evil things that we did. But this man has done nothing wrong!" ⁴² Then he said to Jesus, "Jesus, please remember to save me when you begin to rule as king!" ⁴³ Jesus replied, "I want you to know that today you will be with me in paradise!"

⁴⁴ Then it was about noontime. But it became dark over all the land until three o'clock in the afternoon. ⁴⁵ There was no light from the sun. And the thick curtain that closed off the most holy place in the temple split into two pieces. ⁴⁶ When that happened, Jesus shouted loudly, "Father, I put my spirit into your care!" After he said that, he stopped breathing and died.

⁴⁷ When the centurion who was over the soldiers saw what happened, he said, "Indeed, this man has done nothing wrong!" What he said honored God. ⁴⁸ When the crowd of people who had gathered to see these men die saw what actually happened, they returned to their homes, hitting their own chests to show that they were sorrowful. ⁴⁹ All of Jesus' acquaintances, including the women who had come with him from the region of Galilee, stood at a little distance away and watched everything happen.

⁵⁰⁻⁵¹ Now there was a man named Joseph from Arimathea, a Jewish town. He was a good and a righteous man, and he was

a member of the Jewish council. He saw everything happen, but he had not agreed with the other Council members when they decided to kill Jesus and when they did it. He was waiting eagerly for the time when God would send his king to begin to rule. ⁵² Joseph went to Pilate and asked Pilate to permit him to take Jesus' body to bury it. Pilate gave him permission, ⁵³ so he took Jesus' body down from the cross. He wrapped it in a linen cloth. Then he put his body in a burial chamber that someone had cut in a rock cliff. No one had ever put a body in it before. ⁵⁴ It was the day when people got ready for the Jewish day of rest called the Sabbath. It was soon going to be sunset, the start of the Sabbath. ⁵⁵ The women who had come with Jesus from the district of Galilee followed Joseph and the men who were with him. They saw the burial chamber, and they saw how the men laid Jesus' body inside it. ⁵⁶ Then the women went back to where they were staying in order to get spices and ointments to put on Jesus' body. However, they did no work on the Sabbath, just as the Jewish law required.

Chapter 24

¹ Before dawn on Sunday those women went to the burial chamber. They took with them the spices that they had prepared to put on the body of Jesus. ² When they arrived, they discovered that somebody had rolled the stone away from the entrance to the burial chamber. ³ They went into the burial chamber, but the body of the Lord Jesus was not there! ⁴ They did not know what to think about that. Then suddenly two men stood by them wearing bright, shining clothes! ⁵ The women were frightened. As they bowed down low to the ground, the two men said to them, "You should not be look-

ing for someone who is alive in a place where they bury dead people! ⁶ He is not here; he has been made alive again! Remember that while he was still with you in Galilee, he said to you, ⁷ “They will have to hand me, the Son of Man, over to sinful men. They will kill me by nailing me to a cross. But on the third day after that, I will become alive again.” ⁸ The women remembered what Jesus had said to them. ⁹ So they left the burial chamber and went to the eleven apostles and his other disciples and told them what happened. ¹⁰ The women who told these things to the apostles were Mary from Magdala village, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women who were with them. ¹¹ But the apostles dismissed their words as nonsense. ¹² However, Peter got up and ran to the burial chamber anyway. He stooped down and looked inside. He saw the linen cloths in which Jesus’ body had been wrapped, but Jesus was not there. So, wondering what had happened, he went home.

¹³ That same day two of Jesus’ disciples were walking to a village named Emmaus. It was ten kilometers from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking with each other about all the things that had happened to Jesus. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing those things, Jesus himself approached them and started walking with them. ¹⁶ But God did not allow them to recognize him. ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, “What have you two been talking about while you were walking?” They stopped, and their faces looked very sad. ¹⁸ One of them, whose name was Cleopas, said, “You must be the only person who is visiting Jerusalem who does not know the events that have happened there in recent days!” ¹⁹ He said to them, “What events?” They replied, “The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth, who was a prophet. God enabled him to per-

form great miracles and to teach wonderful messages. The people thought he was wonderful.” ²⁰ But our chief priests and leaders handed him over to the Roman authorities. The authorities sentenced him to die, and they killed him by nailing him to a cross. ²¹ We were hoping that he was the one who would free us Israelites from our enemies! But this does not seem possible now, because three days have already passed since he was killed. ²² In spite of this, some women from our group amazed us. Early this morning they went to the burial chamber, ²³ but the body of Jesus was not there! They came back and said that they had seen some angels in a vision. The angels said that he was alive! ²⁴ Then some of those who were with us went to the burial chamber. They saw that things were exactly as the women had reported. But they did not see Jesus.” ²⁵ He said to them, “You two foolish men! You are so slow to believe all that the prophets have written about the Messiah! ²⁶ You should certainly have known that it was necessary that the Messiah should suffer all those things and die, and then enter his glorious home in heaven!” ²⁷ Then he explained to them all the things that the prophets had written in the scriptures about himself. He started with what Moses wrote and then explained to them what all the other prophets wrote.

²⁸ They came near to the village to which the two men were going. He indicated that he would go further, ²⁹ but they urged him not to do that. They said, “Stay with us tonight, because it is late in the afternoon and it will soon be dark.” So he went in the house to stay with them. ³⁰ When they sat down to eat, he took some bread and thanked God for it. He broke it and gave some pieces to them. ³¹ And then God enabled them to recognize him. But immediately he disappeared! ³² They said to each other, “While we were walking along the

road and he talked with us and enabled us to understand the scriptures, we started thinking that something very, very good was going to happen, although we did not know what. We should not stay here; we should go tell others what happened!" ³³ So they left immediately and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven apostles and others who had gathered together with them. ³⁴ They told those two men, "It is true that the Lord has become alive again, and he has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ Then those two men told the others what had happened as they were walking along the road. They also told them how they both recognized him as he broke some bread for them.

³⁶ As they were saying that, Jesus himself suddenly appeared among them. He said to them, "May God give you peace!" ³⁷ They were startled and afraid, because they thought that they were seeing a ghost! ³⁸ He said to them, "You should not be alarmed! And you should not doubt that I am alive. ³⁹ Look at the wounds in my hands and my feet! You can touch me and see my body. Then you can see that it is really I myself. You can tell that I am really alive because ghosts do not have bodies, as you see that I have!" ⁴⁰ After he said that, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his feet. ⁴¹ They were joyful and amazed, but they still could hardly believe that he was really alive. So he said to them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" ⁴² So they gave him a piece of broiled fish. ⁴³ While they were watching, he took

it and ate it.

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, "I will repeat what I told you while I was with you: Everything that was written about me by Moses and the other prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled!" ⁴⁵ Then he enabled them to understand the things that had been written about him in the scriptures. ⁴⁶ He said to them, "This is what you can read in the scriptures: That Jesus the Messiah would suffer and die, but on the third day after that he would become alive again. ⁴⁷ They also wrote that those who believed in him must preach everywhere that people should turn from committing sin to God, for him to forgive their sins. The followers of Messiah should preach that message because God sent them to do so. They wrote that they should start preaching it in Jerusalem and then go and preach it to all people groups. ⁴⁸ You must tell people that you know that those things that happened to me are true. ⁴⁹ And I want you to know that I will send the Holy Spirit to you, as my Father promised that he would do. But you must stay in this city until God fills you with the power of the Holy Spirit."

⁵⁰ Then Jesus led them outside the city until they came near the village of Bethany. There he lifted up his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ As he was doing that, he left them and went up to heaven. ⁵² After they worshiped him, they returned to Jerusalem very joyfully. ⁵³ Each day they went into the temple courtyard, and spent a lot of time praising God.