

Includes custom
reading experience on



YouVersion
app.bible.com/jesusbible

NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

The Jesus Bible



sixty-six books.
one story.
all about
one name.

JESUS: OUR PROMISED KING

MATTHEW

MATTHEW

BIRTH OF JESUS
c. 5 BC

HEROD ANTIPAS
RULES GALILEE
AND PEREA
4 BC – AD 39

JESUS' MINISTRY,
DEATH,
RESURRECTION
c. AD 27 – 30

Kings came and went throughout the Old Testament. With each successive king, the hope of the people of God continued to fade. Israel longed for the promised king who would usher in God's peace and deliverance. With their own eyes, they witnessed the failure of even the best kings, the demise of the nation and the exile of God's people. Though the prophets spoke of a coming day when God would prove faithful, the lengthy silence after Malachi's writing left the fate of God's people seemingly in question.

Matthew's Gospel proclaims Jesus to be the long-awaited King of kings — the one to whom the entire Old Testament points. Matthew, a Jewish believer, began his summary of Jesus' life and ministry with a lengthy genealogy that served to connect the Lord's coming to the promises God made to David so long ago. He was a king like David, but one who would succeed where David failed and accomplish what David had been incapable of doing in his life. At the conclusion of the book, the sign that hung above Jesus' head on the cross ironically makes the same claim: "THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS" (27:37). Between these two bookends, Matthew makes a clear and compelling argument for the divine origin of Jesus and his kingly role among his people.

Though many Jews in Jesus' day were blind to his identity, Matthew anchors Jesus' life and mission in the Old Testament promises of God. Using more than 70 quotations or allusions from the Old Testament, Matthew demonstrates that Jesus is the promised king who came to fulfill the hope of his people. Matthew invites his

readers to embrace the rightful king through faith and repentance and submit to life in “the kingdom of heaven” or “the kingdom of God.”

Those who come under the rule and reign of the King find this king to be a righteous and loving ruler who humbly serves his beloved kingdom citizens. This king invites his people to participate in his mission to the world and the establishment of his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven (28:18 – 20). In his kingdom, Jews and Gentiles alike find forgiveness of sin, peace with God and hope for this life and the next.

SEEK FIRST HIS KINGDOM AND
HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS,
AND ALL THESE THINGS WILL BE GIVEN
TO YOU AS WELL.

Matthew 6:33

MATTHEW

MATTHEW 1:1–17

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS

Part of Matthew's goal in writing his Gospel was to show Jesus as the true Messiah for whom the Jews had been waiting. Because the Messiah had to come from the line of David, it was important for Matthew to show Jesus' legitimacy by connecting him not only to David, but all the way back to Abraham (v. 2; Ge 12:3). Another interesting point in Matthew's genealogy is the mention of five women, specifically Tamar (Mt 1:3), Rahab (v. 5) and Bathsheba (simply called "Uriah's wife" in v. 6). Tamar had deceitfully posed as a prostitute to bear her children (Ge 38), Rahab was a prostitute in the city of Jericho (Jos 2), and Bathsheba was the woman with whom David committed adultery (2Sa 11). Not only was it unusual for women to be mentioned in genealogies, but it was even stranger that Matthew decided to list three women of relatively low moral standing. The inclusion of Tamar, Rahab and Bathsheba shows that God is able to use anyone to accomplish his plan. God could have handpicked anyone to be in the genealogy of Jesus, but he included these and many other imperfect people to comprise the line that would eventually bring his Son into the world. These women are an incredible image of God's sovereign desire to take what is broken and make it new. Matthew begins his Gospel by showing the legitimacy of Jesus and the redemptive power of God.

The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah

1 This is the genealogy^a of Jesus the Messiah^b the son of David, the son of Abraham:

- ² Abraham was the father of Isaac,
Isaac the father of Jacob,
Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,
- ³ Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar,
Perez the father of Hezron,
Hezron the father of Ram,
- ⁴ Ram the father of Amminadab,
Amminadab the father of Nahshon,
Nahshon the father of Salmon,
- ⁵ Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,
Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,
Obed the father of Jesse,
- ⁶ and Jesse the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,

- ⁷ Solomon the father of Rehoboam,
Rehoboam the father of Abijah,
Abijah the father of Asa,
- ⁸ Asa the father of Jehoshaphat,
Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram,
Jehoram the father of Uzziah,
- ⁹ Uzziah the father of Jotham,
Jotham the father of Ahaz,
Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,
- ¹⁰ Hezekiah the father of Manasseh,
Manasseh the father of Amon,
Amon the father of Josiah,
- ¹¹ and Josiah the father of Jeconiah^c and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

¹² After the exile to Babylon:

- Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel,
Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,
- ¹³ Zerubbabel the father of Abihud,
Abihud the father of Eliakim,
Eliakim the father of Azor,
- ¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok,
Zadok the father of Akim,
Akim the father of Elihud,
- ¹⁵ Elihud the father of Eleazar,
Eleazar the father of Matthan,
Matthan the father of Jacob,
- ¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah.

^a 1 Or is an account of the origin ^b 1 Or Jesus Christ. Messiah (Hebrew) and Christ (Greek) both mean Anointed One; also in verse 18. ^c 11 That is, Jehoiachin; also in verse 12

Joseph Accepts Jesus as His Son

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about^a: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet^b did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,^c because he will save his people from their sins.”

²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”^d (which means “God with us”).

²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

The Magi Visit the Messiah

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi^e from the east came to Jerusalem ²and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

³When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.”^f”

⁷Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

The Escape to Egypt

¹³When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

¹⁴So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”^g

¹⁶When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who

^a 18 Or *The origin of Jesus the Messiah was like this* ^b 19 Or *was a righteous man and*

^c 21 Jesus is the Greek form of *Joshua*, which means *the LORD saves*. ^d 23 Isaiah 7:14

^e 1 Traditionally *wise men* ^f 6 Micah 5:2,4 ^g 15 Hosea 11:1

were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. ¹⁷Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸“A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more.”^a

MATTHEW 3:1–2

JOHN'S BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE

John the Baptist was the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth and was a cousin of Jesus (Lk 1). His birth was a signal of the coming of the Messiah, and Jesus himself said that there was none “greater than John the Baptist” (Mt 11:11). John called his followers to repent from their wrongdoing because of the nearness of the kingdom of heaven. In order for people to repent, they had to recognize and acknowledge the fact that they were not living lives that glorified God. In Matthew 4:17, Jesus echoes John's call as he preaches the same message of repentance. Believers are expected to live lives that honor and glorify God. Throughout Jesus' ministry, he explained what it means to live according to the standard that God has set—in a way that mirrors the Father's heart—and he also lived a life that believers are meant to imitate. Obviously it is impossible to be completely like Jesus; after all, he was perfect. But the first step for anyone to begin to live according to Scripture is to repent and turn away from that which is wrong or sinful.

The Return to Nazareth

¹⁹After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead.”

²¹So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

3 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ²and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

“A voice of one calling in the
wilderness,

‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.’”^b

⁴John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. ⁶Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

⁷But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹“I baptize you with^c water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with^c the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

The Baptism of Jesus

¹³Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”

¹⁵Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented.

¹⁶As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

^a 18 Jer. 31:15 ^b 3 Isaiah 40:3 ^c 11 Or in

MY BELOVED SON

The Father confirmed the identity of the Son at his baptism. Though Jesus had no sin, he willingly submitted to John's baptism. This action further identified him with those he came to save. As the author of Hebrews writes, "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity" (Heb 2:14). His association with frail humans allowed him to understand their pain, sympathize with their weakness and enter into their suffering.

It is fitting that God spoke from the heavens upon this significant event. Jesus knew his identity as the preexistent Son of God, who was the central agent of God's created handiwork at the dawn of creation (Col 1:15–20). Yet, God the Father publicly proclaimed that Jesus was his beloved Son before he fully inaugurated his earthly mission. This statement was certainly a source of encouragement to Jesus, but it was also a public testimony to all those who heard that Jesus was, in fact, God's Messiah — the One who was promised so long ago (Ge 3:15).

The same motive lies at the heart of the Gospel writers, who sought to demonstrate that Jesus was the Son of God. Matthew, writing to a Jewish audience, established that Jesus was the fulfillment of both the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants (Mt 1:17). Mark used Jesus' miracles and message to show that he was "the Son of God" (Mk 1:1). Luke compiled an orderly account of the life and ministry of Jesus — focused on his death, burial and resurrection — in order to prove the validity of the message concerning Jesus the Christ (Lk 1:1–4). John focuses on Christ as the *logos*. Jesus reveals the Father to God's people in a way that is reminiscent of, but much clearer than, the Word of God that had revealed him throughout the Old Testament (Jn 1:1–14). Though the contextual realities differed, each Gospel story sought to affirm Jesus' identity and convince the original hearers, and all subsequent humanity, "that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (Jn 20:31). The Father's pronouncement at Jesus' baptism is affirmed whenever a person repents of their sins and trusts in Christ.

MATTHEW 4:1–11

THE TEMPTATION
OF THE SON
OF GOD

As a human, Jesus experienced everything that any other human has experienced, including temptation. Matthew 4 describes Jesus' experience of being tempted by the devil for 40 days and 40 nights. Jesus was tempted by the opportunity to use his power to meet his own needs rather than relying on God (v. 3), to put God to the test in order to win a large following (v. 5) and to compromise with Satan to win the kingdoms of the world, thereby avoiding the cross (v. 9). Jesus' experience was no less real than any sort of temptation that other people experience. However, the difference is that Jesus did not give in to the temptation he faced (Heb 4:15). Jesus boldly and convincingly refuted with Scripture each of the temptations he faced. Jesus defeated Satan by using a weapon that every believer has at their disposal: "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph 6:17).

Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted^a by the devil. ²After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

⁴Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'^b"

⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶"If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

"'He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'^c"

⁷Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'^d"

⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹"All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

¹⁰Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'^e"

¹¹Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Jesus Begins to Preach

¹²When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali — ¹⁴to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁵"Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,
the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles —

¹⁶the people living in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of
death
a light has dawned."^f

¹⁷From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

¹⁸As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." ²⁰At once they left their nets and followed him.

²¹Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, ²²and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Jesus Heals the Sick

²³Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. ²⁴News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the

^a 1 The Greek for *tempted* can also mean *tested*. ^b 4 Deut. 8:3 ^c 6 Psalm 91:11,12

^d 7 Deut. 6:16 ^e 10 Deut. 6:13 ^f 16 Isaiah 9:1,2

demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them. ²⁵Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis,^a Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount

5 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ²and he began to teach them.

The Beatitudes

He said:

³"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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

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

⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

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

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

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

¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light

¹³"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

The Fulfillment of the Law

¹⁷"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Murder

²¹"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder,'^b and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' ²²But I tell

MATTHEW 5:2

JESUS AND THE LAW

The Sermon on the Mount includes Jesus' explanation of how he is the fulfillment of the law. This discourse was not meant to replace Old Testament law, but rather it points to the ultimate fulfillment of the spiritual intention of the law. Jesus explained the true meaning and purpose of the Old Testament law. The law was designed not to confine people to their own futile efforts but rather to show complete dependence on God.

Here in the book of Matthew, Jesus created a standard that no human can fully achieve. He did not preach such a high standard of law in order to discourage his followers from obeying it, but rather he taught it in such a way as to show how necessary is human dependence on the Spirit of God. Jesus expects his followers to give their fullest effort to obey his commandments, yet he knows they will fall short. He gives them his Spirit to empower them whenever they ask.

^a 25 That is, the Ten Cities ^b 21 Exodus 20:13

you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister^{a,b} will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,'^c is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

²³"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

²⁵"Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. ²⁶Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

Adultery

²⁷"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'^d ²⁸But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Divorce

³¹"It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.'^e ³²But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Oaths

³³"Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.'^f ³⁴But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; ³⁵or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. ³⁶And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. ³⁷All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.^g

Eye for Eye

³⁸"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'^h ³⁹But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. ⁴⁰And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. ⁴¹If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. ⁴²Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Love for Enemies

⁴³"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor'ⁱ and hate your enemy.'^j ⁴⁴But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your own people,

^a 22 The Greek word for *brother or sister* (*adelphos*) refers here to a fellow disciple, whether man or woman; also in verse 23. ^b 22 Some manuscripts *brother or sister without cause*

^c 22 An Aramaic term of contempt ^d 27 Exodus 20:14

^e 31 Deut. 24:1 ^f 37 Or *from evil* ^g 38 Exodus 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21

^h 43 Lev. 19:18

what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Giving to the Needy

6 “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²“So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Prayer

⁵“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹“This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
¹⁰your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
¹¹Give us today our daily bread.
¹²And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
¹³And lead us not into temptation,^a
but deliver us from the evil one.^b

¹⁴For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Fasting

¹⁶“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Treasures in Heaven

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²²“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy,^c your whole body will be full of light. ²³But if your eyes are unhealthy,^d your whole body

^a ¹³ The Greek for *temptation* can also mean *testing*. ^b ¹³ Or *from evil*; some late manuscripts *one, / for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

^c ²² The Greek for *healthy* here implies *generous*. ^d ²³ The Greek for *unhealthy* here implies *stingy*.

 MATTHEW 7:13–14

THE WIDE AND THE NARROW GATES

Jesus explained that the roads to life and destruction are roads guarded by narrow and wide gates, respectively. In doing so, he taught that many people walk down the road that leads to destruction, while few people choose to walk down the road that leads to life. The road that leads to destruction is easy to find (Pr 14:12). Anyone who chases after the cares of the world without the mind of the Spirit (Php 2:1–11) walks along the broad road that leads to destruction, and they do so with many other people. In contrast, the narrow road is smaller, and fewer people travel upon it. In John 14:6, Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” Jesus is the narrow gate, and by following him and living in his power, believers are able to walk upon the path of life.

will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

²⁴“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Do Not Worry

²⁵“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

²⁸“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³²For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Judging Others

7 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ²For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

³“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

⁶“Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

Ask, Seek, Knock

⁷“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

⁹“Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! ¹²So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

The Narrow and Wide Gates

¹³“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

True and False Prophets

¹⁵“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree

^a 27 Or *single cubit to your height*

cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

True and False Disciples

²¹"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' ²³Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

The Wise and Foolish Builders

²⁴"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

²⁸When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, ²⁹because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

Jesus Heals a Man With Leprosy

S When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. ²A man with leprosy^a came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

³Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. ⁴Then Jesus said to him, "See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

The Faith of the Centurion

⁵When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. ⁶"Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly."

⁷Jesus said to him, "Shall I come and heal him?"

⁸The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

¹⁰When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. ¹¹I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. ¹²But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

¹³Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that moment.

Jesus Heals Many

¹⁴When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. ¹⁵He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.

^a 2 The Greek word traditionally translated *leprosy* was used for various diseases affecting the skin.

JESUS' POWER OVER DISEASE

Matthew 8 begins with three stories of Jesus' healing miracles. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus healed many people; in doing so, he fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah 53:4: "He took up our pain and bore our suffering." Not only did Jesus heal physical infirmities while he was on earth, but he also healed all infirmities, physical and spiritual, through his death on the cross. The stories of Jesus' healing miracles are precursors to his ultimate healing miracle on the cross.

The key phrase worth noting in the story of the man with leprosy is "Lord, if you are willing" (Mt 8:2). As a leper, this man was a social outcast because leprosy was thought to be highly contagious. This man was incredibly bold even to approach Jesus in light of his disease, yet he did so confidently. He knew that having faith was no guarantee that Jesus *would* heal him, but he knew Jesus *could* heal him (Da 3:17 – 18).

The next story shows, for the first time in the Gospels, Jesus interacting with someone who was not Jewish. As a Gentile, the centurion had little reason to interact with, let alone believe in, Jesus. However, he showed faith similar to that of the leper in asking Jesus to heal his servant. The centurion, a man in charge of roughly 80 to 100 soldiers, rebuffed Jesus' offer to come into his home. He knew that if Jesus would only say the word, his servant would be healed, which even further showed his confidence in Jesus' power. Jesus was astonished at the faith of the centurion: "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith" (Mt 8:10).

These two stories are remarkable in Scripture specifically because they tell stories of two individuals' great faith despite the supposed odds against Jesus acting on their behalf. The social outcast and the Gentile showed more faith in Jesus than he had seen before, and they reaped the rewards of their faith and trust.

¹⁶When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. ¹⁷This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

“He took up our infirmities
and bore our diseases.”^a

The Cost of Following Jesus

¹⁸When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake. ¹⁹Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.”

²⁰Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”

²¹Another disciple said to him, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.”

²²But Jesus told him, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”

Jesus Calms the Storm

²³Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. ²⁴Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. ²⁵The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!”

²⁶He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

²⁷The men were amazed and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”

Jesus Restores Two Demon-Possessed Men

²⁸When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes,^b two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. ²⁹“What do you want with us, Son of God?” they shouted. “Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?”

³⁰Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding. ³¹The demons begged Jesus, “If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs.”

³²He said to them, “Go!” So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water.

³³Those tending the pigs ran off, went into the town and reported all this, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. ³⁴Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region.

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man

9 Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town. ²Some men brought to him a paralyzed man, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, “Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.”

³At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, “This fellow is blaspheming!”

⁴Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, “Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? ⁵Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk?’ ⁶But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “Get up, take your mat and go home.” ⁷Then the man got up and went home. ⁸When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to man.

The Calling of Matthew

⁹As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

^a 17 Isaiah 53:4 (see Septuagint) ^b 28 Some manuscripts *Gergesenes*; other manuscripts *Gerasenes*

THE SON OF MAN HAS AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE SINS

This story has been a favorite of children and adults over the centuries. The image of these concerned and loving friends breaking through every obstacle to get their friend to the Lord is endearing — a very physical, material story of faith and persistence. Yet in the midst of this story, Jesus redirects those who read this story as he redirected the men who believed that their friend would be healed. What must they have been thinking as they heard this great healer, who had performed many healing and other miracles in the region, declare that their friend's sins were forgiven?

Imagine their puzzlement. This is not what they were expecting. Yet Jesus decided to use this very public forum to demonstrate his power to forgive sins as well as his power to heal this man's body.

Jesus had performed other miracles before this one, yet this is the first instance in which he claimed to forgive someone's sins. Jesus wanted to prove that his ministry did not only involve healing people of their illnesses; his ministry was so much more than that, and in this instance he gave further notice of what he truly came to earth to accomplish. How easy would it have been to merely *say* that the man who was paralyzed was forgiven of his sins, yet Jesus showed that he was able to back up everything he claimed: that not only could he provide physical healing, but that he could provide spiritual healing as well. His words and this miracle point to the ultimate purpose of Jesus' ministry on earth: "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed" (Isa 53:5). Through Jesus' ministry in his life, death and resurrection, we are completely, and gloriously, healed.

¹⁰While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

¹²On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ¹³But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'^a For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Jesus Questioned About Fasting

¹⁴Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?"

¹⁵Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.

¹⁶"No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. ¹⁷Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

Jesus Raises a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman

¹⁸While he was saying this, a synagogue leader came and knelt before him and said, "My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live." ¹⁹Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples.

²⁰Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. ²¹She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed."

²²Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed at that moment.

²³When Jesus entered the synagogue leader's house and saw the noisy crowd and people playing pipes, ²⁴he said, "Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at him. ²⁵After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. ²⁶News of this spread through all that region.

Jesus Heals the Blind and the Mute

²⁷As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

²⁸When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?"

"Yes, Lord," they replied.

²⁹Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith let it be done to you"; ³⁰and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this." ³¹But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region.

³²While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus. ³³And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."

³⁴But the Pharisees said, "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons."

The Workers Are Few

³⁵Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are

^a 13 Hosea 6:6

few. ³⁸Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

10 Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

²These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; ³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

⁵These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. ⁷As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ ⁸Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy,^a drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

⁹“Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts — ¹⁰no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep. ¹¹Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave. ¹²As you enter the home, give it your greeting. ¹³If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

¹⁶“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. ¹⁷Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. ¹⁸On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. ¹⁹But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, ²⁰for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

²¹“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. ²²You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. ²³When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

²⁴“The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!

²⁶“So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. ²⁷What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. ²⁸Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care.^b ³⁰And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

³²“Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. ³³But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

³⁴“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵For I have come to turn

“a man against his father,
a daughter against her mother,

^a 8 The Greek word traditionally translated *leprosy* was used for various diseases affecting the skin. ^b 29 Or *will*; or *knowledge*

JESUS SENDS OUT THE TWELVE

Matthew 10 is the first place where Jesus referred to the twelve disciples as “apostles.” The word “apostle” is a derivative of the Greek word *apostello*, which means “to send.” Here Jesus gave the apostles the authority to drive out evil spirits and heal the sick, which up until this point only Jesus had been able to do. He then sent them to go into other towns and preach the message that “the kingdom of heaven has come near” (v. 7).

It is one thing that Jesus was able to heal and cast out demons himself, but the fact that he was able to give the same authority to his disciples only further shows the strength of his divine nature and power. To represent the fact that these apostles did not act in their own strength, but fully relied on God’s provision, Jesus told them not to take provisions for themselves (vv. 9 – 10). Jesus instructed them to rely solely on God. His power was enough to sustain their entire journey.

Jesus also warned them that they would face opposition. Verses 16 through 23 of this chapter have been both a warning and a comfort to believers in Jesus around the world for centuries. As the apostles found out, some will not accept the message that believers in Jesus have to bring to a broken and fallen world. Millions have faced the opposition that Jesus was describing in these verses and have faithfully withstood persecution of many types, even to the point of death, relying on the Holy Spirit to give them the words to say in the face of persecution. Jesus told the apostles not to worry when they were arrested, and notice he said “when” and not “if” (v. 19). Later each of the disciples, with the exception of Judas, experienced the opposition that Jesus described. They were called to a gritty, physical, desperate, minute-by-minute faith and reliance on the person and work of Jesus to be manifested in their lives.

The authority that Jesus gave to each disciple was enough to get them through any hardship that they might have faced upon their journey, and the same is true for believers today.

a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law —
³⁶ a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.^a

³⁷"Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

⁴⁰"Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. ⁴²And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward."

MATTHEW 11:2–3

THE CHRIST

Today, the title "Christ" naturally follows the name of Jesus. However, during the time that the Gospels were written, people sparingly and carefully used the word "Christ," the Greek form of the Hebrew word "Messiah," which literally means "Anointed One." In the Old Testament, the three types of people who were anointed were prophets (1Ki 19:16), priests (Ex 28:41) and kings (1Sa 16:13). In the New Testament, Jesus is God's preeminent Anointed One who was anointed by God to be the ultimate prophet, priest and king (Mt 27:11; Heb 6:20; cf. Isa 61:1). The Pharisees and religious leaders during that time viewed such a claim as blasphemous and punishable by death. However, the word "Christ" is used to refer to Jesus 470 times throughout the New Testament. When the word "Christ" was used anywhere in the New Testament, the author was very aware of the implications of his use of that word — what it meant for him as an author, and what it said about his Savior.

Jesus and John the Baptist

11 After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee.^b

²When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples ³to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

⁴Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy^c are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. ⁶Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."

⁷As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? ⁸If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. ⁹Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you,
 who will prepare your way before you."^d

¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹²From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence,^e and violent people have been raiding it. ¹³For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. ¹⁴And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. ¹⁵Whoever has ears, let them hear.

¹⁶"To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others:

¹⁷"We played the pipe for you,
 and you did not dance;
 we sang a dirge,
 and you did not mourn."

¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.'

¹⁹The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is proved right by her deeds."

Woe on Unrepentant Towns

²⁰Then Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. ²¹"Woe to you, Chorazin!

^a 36 Micah 7:6 ^b 1 Greek in their towns ^c 5 The Greek word traditionally translated leprosy was used for various diseases affecting the skin. ^d 10 Mal. 3:1 ^e 12 Or been forcefully advancing

Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. ²³And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades.^a For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.”

The Father Revealed in the Son

²⁵At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. ²⁶Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

²⁷“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

12 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. ²When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, “Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath.”

³He answered, “Haven’t you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread — which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. ⁵Or haven’t you read in the Law that the priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are innocent? ⁶I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. ⁷If you had known what these words mean, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice,’^b you would not have condemned the innocent. ⁸For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

⁹Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, ¹⁰and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to bring charges against Jesus, they asked him, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”

¹¹He said to them, “If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? ¹²How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”

¹³Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. ¹⁴But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.

God’s Chosen Servant

¹⁵Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. A large crowd followed him, and he healed all who were ill. ¹⁶He warned them not to tell others about him. ¹⁷This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁸“Here is my servant whom I have chosen,
the one I love, in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him,
and he will proclaim justice to the nations.
¹⁹He will not quarrel or cry out;
no one will hear his voice in the streets.
²⁰A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out,

^a 23 That is, the realm of the dead ^b 7 Hosea 6:6

 MATTHEW 12:38–42

JONAH AND THE RESURRECTION

Jesus referred to those who asked for a sign as proof of Jesus' identity as a "wicked and adulterous generation" (Mt 12:39), saying that the only sign they would receive was the sign of Jonah. But what did this mean? Jonah had spent three days and three nights in the belly of a fish; in the same way, Jesus said he would spend three days and three nights in "the heart of the earth" (v. 40). Jesus was clearly foreshadowing his death, burial and resurrection; yet it is doubtful that the Pharisees understood what he was saying. In John 20:29, Jesus said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed"; Jesus' frustration with the Pharisees stemmed from the fact that they saw and heard him and yet still did not believe. They were the opposite of the "blessed" he referred to in John 20:29. His purpose in referring to Jonah, however, was twofold: to give a picture of his death and resurrection and to call those who heard these words to repentance, in imitation of the people of Nineveh now that One greater than Jonah had come.

till he has brought justice through to victory.

²¹ In his name the nations will put their hope."^a

Jesus and Beelzebul

²²Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. ²³All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

²⁴But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons."

²⁵Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. ²⁶If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? ²⁷And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. ²⁸But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

²⁹"Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house.

³⁰"Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. ³¹And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. ³²Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

³³"Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. ³⁴You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. ³⁵A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. ³⁶But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. ³⁷For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

The Sign of Jonah

³⁸Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you."

³⁹He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here. ⁴²The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now something greater than Solomon is here.

⁴³"When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. ⁴⁴Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. ⁴⁵Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation."

Jesus' Mother and Brothers

⁴⁶While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. ⁴⁷Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you."

⁴⁸He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers."

^a 21 Isaiah 42:1-4

⁵⁰For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

The Parable of the Sower

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ²Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. ³Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop — a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

¹⁰The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?”

¹¹He replied, “Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. ¹²Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. ¹³This is why I speak to them in parables:

“Though seeing, they do not see;
though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

¹⁴In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

“You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

¹⁵For this people’s heart has become calloused;
they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts
and turn, and I would heal them.”^a

¹⁶But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.

¹⁷For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

¹⁸“Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²²The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

The Parable of the Weeds

²⁴Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

²⁷“The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’

^a 15 Isaiah 6:9,10 (see Septuagint)

²⁸“‘An enemy did this,’ he replied.

“The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’

²⁹“‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast

³¹He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. ³²Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

³³He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds^a of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

³⁴Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. ³⁵So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet:

“I will open my mouth in parables,
I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.”^b

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

³⁶Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”

³⁷He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, ³⁹and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

⁴⁰“As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁴²They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

⁴⁴“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

⁴⁵“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

The Parable of the Net

⁴⁷“Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹“Have you understood all these things?” Jesus asked.

“Yes,” they replied.

⁵²He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

^a 33 Or about 27 kilograms ^b 35 Psalm 78:2

JESUS AND HIS PARABLES

Jesus commonly taught the crowds and his followers through parables, which are stories that illustrate a moral or spiritual truth. In Matthew 13, Jesus told parables relating to soil, weeds, a mustard seed, yeast, hidden treasure, a pearl and a fishing net. Jesus' parables cover a spectrum of topics and truths, and they also represent the confirmation of a Messianic prophecy from Isaiah 6:9 – 10: "Go and tell this people: 'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.' Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."

Jesus told parables to teach God's truth to those who were ready and willing to hear it, but he also knew there were people in his audience who would not understand his words because their hearts were calloused. At times, parables were Jesus' tools to reveal truth to the faithful and to conceal it from those who would object to it and seek to stop his ministry and mission.

Jesus used six of the seven parables in this chapter to describe the nature of the kingdom of heaven. The people who rejected Jesus' teaching because of their inability to understand it, including the Jewish religious leaders, only further blinded themselves to the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God. On the other hand, those who had ears to hear received a great blessing in knowing and understanding Jesus' truth — as do believers who read these stories today.

As to the parables themselves, notice that even Jesus' disciples, the men who had left their jobs, businesses and families for the sake of this amazing teacher, misunderstood some of Jesus' parables (Mt 13:36). Jesus carefully and patiently explained to the disciples who sought to learn more. They asked for wisdom, and Jesus provided it (Jas 1:5) along with meaningful word pictures of the coming kingdom loaded with meaning and nuance. For believers today, these parables and teachings provide a rich picture of the kingdom as it exists and also as it is to come.

MATTHEW 14:13–21

FEEDING THE
FIVE THOUSAND

Jesus' feeding of the five thousand is the only pre-crucifixion miracle recorded in all four Gospels, and it is significant for a multitude of reasons. Through this miracle, Jesus fulfilled the expectation of those looking forward to a new prophet after Moses (Jn 1:21; Ac 3:22; 7:37). While Moses was their prophet-leader, the Israelites received manna from heaven. Jesus' provision of bread parallels the miracle that the Israelites experienced under Moses and thus fulfills Deuteronomy 18:15 (quoted twice in Acts, referred to above). Also, Jesus showed that he could supply both the physical and the spiritual "daily bread" requested in the prayer in Matthew 6:11. Finally, Jesus showed that he is the Messiah who will provide the coming Messianic banquet (Ps 132:15; Isa 25:6; Mt 22:1–14; 26:29). Not only does the feeding of the five thousand preview that kingdom banquet, but it also provides a wholesome contrast to the degenerate banquet held by Herod in Matthew 14:1–12. In giving the people physical bread, Jesus showed that he was the compassionate provider that his people needed.

A Prophet Without Honor

⁵³When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. ⁵⁴Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. ⁵⁵"Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas?" ⁵⁶Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" ⁵⁷And they took offense at him.

But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home."

⁵⁸And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

John the Baptist Beheaded

14 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the reports about Jesus, ²and he said to his attendants, "This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead! That is why miraculous powers are at work in him."

³Now Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, ⁴for John had been saying to him: "It is not lawful for you to have her." ⁵Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the people, because they considered John a prophet.

⁶On Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced for the guests and pleased Herod so much ⁷that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. ⁸Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist." ⁹The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he ordered that her request be granted ¹⁰and had John beheaded in the prison. ¹¹His head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl, who carried it to her mother. ¹²John's disciples came and took his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus.

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

¹³When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

¹⁵As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

¹⁶Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

¹⁷"We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

¹⁸"Bring them here to me," he said. ¹⁹And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Jesus Walks on the Water

²²Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, ²⁴and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

²⁵Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

²⁷But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

²⁸“Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”

²⁹“Come,” he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”

³¹Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

³²And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

³⁴When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret. ³⁵And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him ³⁶and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

That Which Defiles

15 Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, ²“Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!”

³Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother’^a and ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’^b ⁵But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is ‘devoted to God,’ ⁶they are not to ‘honor their father or mother’ with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. ⁷You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

⁸“These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.

⁹They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.’^c”

¹⁰Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. ¹¹What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.”

¹²Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?”

¹³He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. ¹⁴Leave them; they are blind guides.^d If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”

¹⁵Peter said, “Explain the parable to us.”

¹⁶“Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them. ¹⁷“Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? ¹⁸But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil thoughts — murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. ²⁰These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.”

The Faith of a Canaanite Woman

²¹Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²²A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.”

²³Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.”

²⁴He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”

²⁵The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said.

²⁶He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.”

MATTHEW 15:1–9

TRADITIONS OF THE ELDERS

The tradition of the elders referred to in verse 2 was not the Law of Moses. It was the oral tradition that had been built up over the centuries and was based on human interpretations of the law. But these rules were not of God; rather they were simply traditions invented by humans. Jesus used this opportunity to expose these men and the hypocritical way in which they lived their lives. They cared more about the ceremonial washing of hands than they did about faithfully obeying God’s commands. God cares more about the hearts of his followers than any human tradition (1Sa 16:7).

^a 4 Exodus 20:12; Deut. 5:16 ^b 4 Exodus 21:17; Lev. 20:9 ^c 9 Isaiah 29:13 ^d 14 Some manuscripts *blind guides of the blind*

²⁷“Yes it is, Lord,” she said. “Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.”

²⁸Then Jesus said to her, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed at that moment.

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

²⁹Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down. ³⁰Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them. ³¹The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

³²Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way.”

³³His disciples answered, “Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?”

³⁴“How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked.

“Seven,” they replied, “and a few small fish.”

³⁵He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. ³⁶Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people. ³⁷They all ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ³⁸The number of those who ate was four thousand men, besides women and children. ³⁹After Jesus had sent the crowd away, he got into the boat and went to the vicinity of Magadan.

The Demand for a Sign

16 The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven.

²He replied, “When evening comes, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,’ ³and in the morning, ‘Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.” ^a ⁴A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah.” Jesus then left them and went away.

The Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

⁵When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread. ⁶“Be careful,” Jesus said to them. “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

⁷They discussed this among themselves and said, “It is because we didn’t bring any bread.”

⁸Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, “You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? ⁹Do you still not understand? Don’t you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? ¹⁰Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? ¹¹How is it you don’t understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” ¹²Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah

¹³When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

¹⁴They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

^a 2,3 Some early manuscripts do not have *When evening comes . . . of the times.*

¹⁵“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

¹⁶Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you that you are Peter,^a and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades^b will not overcome it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be^c bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be^c loosed in heaven.” ²⁰Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Jesus Predicts His Death

²¹From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²²Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

²³Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

²⁴Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵For whoever wants to save their life^d will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ²⁷For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

²⁸“Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

The Transfiguration

17 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ²There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. ³Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

⁴Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters — one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

⁵While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.” ⁸When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

⁹As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

¹⁰The disciples asked him, “Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?”

¹¹Jesus replied, “To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. ¹²But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.” ¹³Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist.

Jesus Heals a Demon-Possessed Boy

¹⁴When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. ¹⁵“Lord, have mercy on my son,” he said. “He has seizures and is suffering

^a 18 The Greek word for *Peter* means *rock*. ^b 18 That is, the realm of the dead ^c 19 Or will have been ^d 25 The Greek word means either *life* or *soul*; also in verse 26.

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

A critically important question Jesus asks his followers is: “Who do you say I am?” (Mt 16:15). Jesus knew that a proper understanding of who he is would lead to a right relationship with God. He first asked the disciples to tell him who other people thought he was, then who they thought he was. Peter answered by professing what millions have come to acknowledge throughout the centuries: “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (v. 16). This answer could not be a more accurate description of who Jesus is. And Peter was only beginning to find out what his statement of belief would mean not only to his life, but to the life of the church that Jesus would establish on the basis of his testimony (v. 18).

The faith of any believer today can be determined by their answer to this question. True believers are those who say that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God, and anyone who says otherwise does not fully understand the character and nature of Jesus. Some say that Jesus was simply a great moral teacher or a prophet, but Jesus never claimed to be anything other than the Son of God. When theories abounded about who he might be, he acknowledged that Peter alone had a correct understanding of who he was.

For believers today, it is crucial that they understand the power and truth of Peter’s proclamation of Jesus as the Son of God. To say that Jesus was, and is, the Son of God is to say that he is the truth and the one way to enter into a right relationship with God. Through Jesus, believers are able to experience everything that comes with knowing God and having a relationship with his Son — grace, peace, mercy in this life, and eternity with him in the next.

greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. ¹⁶I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him.”

¹⁷“You unbelieving and perverse generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me.” ¹⁸Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed at that moment.

¹⁹Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?”

²⁰He replied, “Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.” ^[21]^a

Jesus Predicts His Death a Second Time

²²When they came together in Galilee, he said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. ²³They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life.” And the disciples were filled with grief.

The Temple Tax

²⁴After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma temple tax came to Peter and asked, “Doesn’t your teacher pay the temple tax?”

²⁵“Yes, he does,” he replied.

When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. “What do you think, Simon?” he asked. “From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—from their own children or from others?”

²⁶“From others,” Peter answered.

“Then the children are exempt,” Jesus said to him. ²⁷“But so that we may not cause offense, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours.”

The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven

18 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

²He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. ³And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

Causing to Stumble

⁶“If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. ⁷Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come! ⁸If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. ⁹And if your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

The Parable of the Wandering Sheep

¹⁰“See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven. ^[11]^b

¹²“What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for

MATTHEW 17:24–27

PAYING THE TEMPLE TAX

The temple tax was paid annually by every adult Jewish male over 20 years old to fund maintenance of the temple. This tax was based on Exodus 30:13 and amounted to two days’ wages for a common laborer. Evidently, Jesus had not yet paid the tax, and the temple tax collector was following up. However, instead of speaking to Jesus, the tax collector spoke to Peter regarding his teacher’s payment. Through the resulting conversation, Jesus showed that he (and his followers) are a part of a different kingdom, a heavenly kingdom. He does not live by the rules set by mankind but by the will of God the Father. However, not wanting to “cause offense,” Jesus paid the temple tax, but he delivered it in a way that showed that he was the Son of God.

^a 21 Some manuscripts include here words similar to Mark 9:29. ^b 11 Some manuscripts include here the words of Luke 19:10.

the one that wandered off? ¹³And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. ¹⁴In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.

Dealing With Sin in the Church

¹⁵“If your brother or sister^a sins,^b go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. ¹⁶But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’^c ¹⁷If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

¹⁸“Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be^d bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be^d loosed in heaven.

¹⁹“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

²¹Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

²²Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.^e

²³“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold^f was brought to him. ²⁵Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

²⁶“At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ ²⁷The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

²⁸“But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.^g He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

²⁹“His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

³⁰“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

³²“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ ³⁴In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

³⁵“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Divorce

19 When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went into the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan. ²Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

³Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?”

^a 15 The Greek word for brother or sister (*adelphos*) refers here to a fellow disciple, whether man or woman; also in verses 21 and 35. ^b 15 Some manuscripts *sins against you*

^c 16 Deut. 19:15

^d 18 Or *will have been*

^e 22 Or *seventy times seven*

^f 24 Greek *ten thousand talents*; a talent was worth about 20 years of a day laborer’s wages. ^g 28 Greek *a hundred denarii*; a denarius was the usual daily wage of a day laborer (see 20:2).

⁴“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’^a and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’^b?⁶ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

⁷“Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?”

⁸Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. ⁹I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

¹⁰The disciples said to him, “If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.”

¹¹Jesus replied, “Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. ¹²For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others — and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.”

The Little Children and Jesus

¹³Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them.

¹⁴Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” ¹⁵When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

The Rich and the Kingdom of God

¹⁶Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?”

¹⁷“Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.”

¹⁸“Which ones?” he inquired.

Jesus replied, “‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, ¹⁹honor your father and mother,’^c and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’^d”

²⁰“All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?”

²¹Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

²²When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

²³Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

²⁵When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, “Who then can be saved?”

²⁶Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

²⁷Peter answered him, “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?”

²⁸Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife^e or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

MATTHEW 19:16–26

WEALTH AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

This story’s application is not to imply that believers need to give away all of their possessions in order to get into heaven. Rather, it is intended to show that Jesus cared about the hearts of those who were following him. Knowing all things, he knew that this rich young man’s heart was preoccupied with his wealth. So when he asked about eternal life, Jesus showed him that right standing with God flows from a pure heart. It is not enough merely to follow external standards. That sort of life tends to foster a spirit of self-righteousness. Followers of Jesus are expected to rely on Jesus alone as the one and only way to heaven, and to have a heart for God and his kingdom before all else (Mt 6:33).

^a 4 Gen. 1:27 ^b 5 Gen. 2:24 ^c 19 Exodus 20:12-16; Deut. 5:16-20 ^d 19 Lev. 19:18

^e 29 Some manuscripts do not have *or wife*.

MATTHEW 20:20–28

SERVANTHOOD

This exchange provides an interesting view on Jesus' perception of what it takes to be able to sit in the seat of power. Here, two disciples were seeking to advance their own status. James and John were the ones asking, but the other ten were indignant as well, so all of the disciples' attitudes are on display in this story. Each of the twelve wanted to occupy seats of authority and power in heaven. However, they did not understand that those seats required partnership in suffering (v. 22). Jesus' "cup" was not only that he, as God, allowed himself to become human, but also that he was to be crucified on the cross as the perfect, sinless sacrifice for the sins of humankind (Php 2:6–9). The "cup" for James and John would be one of suffering for the kingdom. As Jesus often did, he was emphasizing that one must be willing to sacrifice their own comfort and livelihood in order to follow him.

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

20 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ²He agreed to pay them a denarius^a for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

³About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. ⁴He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' ⁵So they went.

"He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. ⁶About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?'

⁷"'Because no one has hired us,' they answered.

"He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.'

⁸"When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.'

⁹"The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. ¹⁰So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. ¹¹When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ¹²'These who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.'

¹³"But he answered one of them, 'I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? ¹⁴Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. ¹⁵Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

¹⁶"So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Jesus Predicts His Death a Third Time

¹⁷Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, he took the Twelve aside and said to them, ¹⁸"We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death ¹⁹and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!"

A Mother's Request

²⁰Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.

²¹"What is it you want?" he asked.

She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom."

²²"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?"

"We can," they answered.

²³Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father."

²⁴When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. ²⁵Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Two Blind Men Receive Sight

²⁹As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. ³⁰Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard

^a 2 A denarius was the usual daily wage of a day laborer.

that Jesus was going by, they shouted, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

³¹The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

³²Jesus stopped and called them. “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

³³“Lord,” they answered, “we want our sight.”

³⁴Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

21 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

⁴This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

⁵“Say to Daughter Zion,
‘See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”^a

⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. ⁸A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna^b to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”^c

“Hosanna^b in the highest heaven!”

¹⁰When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?”

¹¹The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Jesus at the Temple

¹²Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. ¹³“It is written,” he said to them, “‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’^d but you are making it ‘a den of robbers.’^e”

¹⁴The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they were indignant.

¹⁶“Do you hear what these children are saying?” they asked him.

“Yes,” replied Jesus, “have you never read,

“‘From the lips of children and infants
you, Lord, have called forth your praise’^f?”

¹⁷And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

Jesus Curses a Fig Tree

¹⁸Early in the morning, as Jesus was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. ¹⁹Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on

^a 5 Zech. 9:9 ^b 9 A Hebrew expression meaning “Save!” which became an exclamation of praise; also in verse 15 ^c 9 Psalm 118:25,26 ^d 13 Isaiah 56:7 ^e 13 Jer. 7:11

^f 16 Psalm 8:2 (see Septuagint)

JESUS COMES TO JERUSALEM AS KING

Jesus' coming to Jerusalem riding on a donkey, to the accolades and praise of the gathered crowd, fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies of Jesus as King. Isaiah 62:11 calls for "Daughter Zion" to watch for this King, and Zechariah 9:9 depicts the King "lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." While most royal processions feature incredible extravagance, Jesus humbly entered town on a simple donkey. While horses were ridden during times of war, rulers rode donkeys during times of peace as a sign of humility toward the people (1Ki 1:38 – 40). Here, Jesus exemplified the peaceful return of a king to Jerusalem. By riding on a donkey, he showed that he came to bring grace and not judgment. Also, it is significant that Jesus rode a colt, which is a young and untrained donkey. Normally, it would be incredibly difficult for someone to ride an unbroken animal through a crowded and chaotic scene with an unfamiliar burden on its back. But this was Jesus, Creator of the world!

This scene was nothing less than a royal procession (2Ki 9:13), yet up until this point, Jesus had consistently avoided such displays (Mt 8:4; 9:30; 12:16). However, he was now ready to present himself publicly as the Messiah and King. This was Jesus' last trip to Jerusalem, and he chose to enter in such a way as to leave no doubt that he was the promised Messiah who had come to save the nation. No one in the city could possibly miss the procession or the prophecy-fulfilling reference Jesus' entry conveyed.

it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered.

²⁰When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" they asked.

²¹Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. ²²If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

²³Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you this authority?"

²⁴Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ²⁵John's baptism — where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?"

They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' ²⁶But if we say, 'Of human origin' — we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet."

²⁷So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."

Then he said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

²⁸"What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'

²⁹"'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

³⁰"Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.

³¹"Which of the two did what his father wanted?"

"The first," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³²For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

The Parable of the Tenants

³³"Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. ³⁴When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

³⁵"The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. ³⁶Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. ³⁷Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said.

³⁸"But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' ³⁹So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

⁴⁰"Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

⁴¹"He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."

⁴²Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:

"'The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;

the Lord has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes^a?

⁴³“Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. ⁴⁴Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”^b

⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew he was talking about them. ⁴⁶They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

MATTHEW 22:1–14

THE WEDDING FEAST

When families planned Jewish weddings, they sent out two invitations (similar to our “save-the-date” mailings that sometimes come before the actual invitation). In this instance, the first invitation portrays the ministry of John the Baptist. He told people to repent and prepare, for the kingdom of God was coming (Mt 3:2). The indifferent response describes Israel—specifically, the religious authorities—at the time of Jesus’ earthly ministry. They ignored John’s call to repent, and they opposed the arrival of the second invitation as well in the ministry of Jesus. But God is in the business of drawing people to himself, so the king in the story still instructs his servants to invite others to attend his wedding. Those who accept these gracious invitations and are truly prepared to engage in this banquet as citizens of the kingdom (which the religious leaders were not, 22:11–13) are welcomed in. The point of this parable is to portray how God shows grace in extending invitations to his kingdom while at the same time mandating requirements for entrance.

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

22 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: ²“The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. ³He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

⁴“Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’

⁵“But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. ⁶The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. ⁷The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

⁸“Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. ⁹So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ ¹⁰So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ¹²He asked, ‘How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?’ The man was speechless.

¹³“Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

¹⁴“For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

Paying the Imperial Tax to Caesar

¹⁵Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. ¹⁶They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. ¹⁷Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax^c to Caesar or not?”

¹⁸But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, “You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? ¹⁹Show me the coin used for paying the tax.” They brought him a denarius, ²⁰and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”

²¹“Caesar’s,” they replied.

Then he said to them, “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

²²When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

Marriage at the Resurrection

²³That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. ²⁴“Teacher,” they said, “Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for him. ²⁵Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. ²⁶The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to

^a 42 Psalm 118:22,23 ^b 44 Some manuscripts do not have verse 44. ^c 17 A special tax levied on subject peoples, not on Roman citizens

the seventh.²⁷ Finally, the woman died.²⁸ Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?"

²⁹ Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.³⁰ At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.³¹ But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you, ³²'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'^a? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."

³³ When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.

The Greatest Commandment

³⁴ Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.³⁵ One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:

³⁶ "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

³⁷ Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'^b ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'^c ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Whose Son Is the Messiah?

⁴¹ While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴² "What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?"

"The son of David," they replied.

⁴³ He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says,

⁴⁴ "The Lord said to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your feet."^d

⁴⁵ If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?" ⁴⁶ No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

A Warning Against Hypocrisy

23 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: ² "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. ³ So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. ⁴ They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

⁵ "Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries^e wide and the tassels on their garments long; ⁶ they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; ⁷ they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called 'Rabbi' by others.

⁸ "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. ⁹ And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. ¹⁰ Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah. ¹¹ The greatest among you will be your servant. ¹² For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Seven Woes on the Teachers of the Law and the Pharisees

¹³ "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. ¹⁴

MATTHEW 23:1–39

HYPOCRISY

Throughout his ministry, Jesus consistently confronted hypocrisy, especially in the Jewish religious leaders of his day. Chapter 23 includes Jesus' angry condemnation of those who were much more concerned about securing their power base than they were about bringing their followers closer to God. The rules that they forced on others were man-made responses to their study of the law, and while they required strict adherence to those rules, they themselves did not practice what they preached (v. 4). Notice the language with which the perfect, sinless Son of God addressed them: lazy (v. 4), prideful (v. 6), hypocrites (vv. 25, 27, 29), blind (v. 26), "full of hypocrisy and wickedness" (v. 28), deluded (v. 30), self-incriminating (v. 31), hell-bound vipers (v. 33), murderers (v. 34), and condemned because of their blood-guilt (v. 35). Jesus' righteous indignation burned against these self-important men who were leading others astray. Their devotion was not to God but to a set of rules they held over the people beneath them, and Jesus was not shy to point out the contradiction that manifested itself in their daily lives. In contrast, Jesus lived without any misalignment between his heart and his actions. He lived with perfect integrity in service to God, and believers are called to desire to be like him and share his mindset (1Co 2:16).

^a 32 Exodus 3:6 ^b 37 Deut. 6:5 ^c 39 Lev. 19:18 ^d 44 Psalm 110:1 ^e 5 That is, boxes containing Scripture verses, worn on forehead and arm ^f 14 Some manuscripts include here words similar to Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47.

MATTHEW
24:1 – 14, 36 – 42

THE SECOND COMING (PART 1)

Here Jesus described the second coming by using symbolic language. While these words and various proposed timelines have been interpreted differently by committed Christians over the centuries, we do know that Jesus' second coming will be preceded by persecution and opposition (vv. 9–10), marked by false prophets claiming to be the Messiah (v. 5), and will include a time of testing for believers whose persistence and commitment will be rewarded (v. 14). Above all, the second coming of Christ will be sudden (v. 36). Altogether, Jesus made it clear that there will be no mistaking the second coming when it happens, and it is important for his followers to be prepared, each and every day, for that day.

¹⁵“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are.

¹⁶“Woe to you, blind guides! You say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gold of the temple is bound by that oath.’ ¹⁷You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? ¹⁸You also say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gift on the altar is bound by that oath.’ ¹⁹You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? ²⁰Therefore, anyone who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. ²¹And anyone who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. ²²And anyone who swears by heaven swears by God’s throne and by the one who sits on it.

²³“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices — mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law — justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. ²⁴You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

²⁵“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

²⁷“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. ²⁸In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

²⁹“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. ³⁰And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ ³¹So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. ³²Go ahead, then, and complete what your ancestors started!

³³“You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? ³⁴Therefore I am sending you prophets and sages and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. ³⁵And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. ³⁶Truly I tell you, all this will come on this generation.

³⁷“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. ³⁸Look, your house is left to you desolate. ³⁹For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’^a”

The Destruction of the Temple and Signs of the End Times

24 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. ²“Do you see all these things?” he asked. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

³As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

⁴Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many. ⁶You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷Nation will rise against

^a 39 Psalm 118:26

nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸All these are the beginning of birth pains.

⁹"Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹²Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

¹⁵"So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,'^a spoken of through the prophet Daniel — let the reader understand — ¹⁶then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house. ¹⁸Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. ¹⁹How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! ²⁰Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now — and never to be equaled again.

²²"If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. ²³At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Messiah!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. ²⁴For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵See, I have told you ahead of time.

²⁶"So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the wilderness,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. ²⁷For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.

²⁹"Immediately after the distress of those days

"the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."^b

³⁰"Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth^c will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.^d ³¹And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

³²"Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. ³³Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it^e is near, right at the door. ³⁴Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³⁵Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

The Day and Hour Unknown

³⁶"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son,^f but only the Father. ³⁷As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; ³⁹and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

⁴²"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. ⁴³But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at

^a 15 Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11 ^b 29 Isaiah 13:10; 34:4 ^c 30 Or *the tribes of the land*

^d 30 See Daniel 7:13-14. ^e 33 Or *he* ^f 36 Some manuscripts do not have *nor the Son*.

 MATTHEW 25:1–46

THE SECOND COMING (PART 2)

The final section of this discourse involves judgment, which is not a new theme in the Gospel of Matthew (3:12; 6:2; 13:30; 18:23–35; 21:33–43; 22:1–14). Because Matthew spent a significant portion of his Gospel focusing on the coming of the kingdom, he also needed to discuss the judgment that comes with it. In the first two parables in this chapter, Jesus spoke about the judgment that will come upon those who are not prepared for his return, and in the last parable he focuses on all of the nations of the earth. To fully understand Jesus, it is important to see not only his love but also the reality that his coming will be accompanied by judgment. With the opportunity for people to accept his sacrifice and the grace and forgiveness that come with it, there also is an opportunity for people to reject that same sacrifice. Jesus came so that those who love God may devote their lives to following him, but his offer has another side: judgment on those who willfully choose to turn their backs on God.

what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

⁴⁵“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. ⁴⁷Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ ⁴⁹and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. ⁵⁰The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. ⁵¹He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

25 “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. ⁴The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. ⁵The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

⁶“At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

⁷“Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’

⁹“‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

¹⁰“But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

¹¹“Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’

¹²“But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’

¹³“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

The Parable of the Bags of Gold

¹⁴“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. ¹⁵To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag,^a each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. ¹⁷So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. ¹⁸But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

¹⁹“After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’

²¹“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

²²“The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’

²³“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

²⁴“Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and

^a 15 Greek *five talents . . . two talents . . . one talent*; also throughout this parable; a talent was worth about 20 years of a day laborer’s wage.

gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

²⁶"His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ²⁷Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.'

²⁸"So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. ²⁹For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. ³⁰And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The Sheep and the Goats

³¹"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

⁴⁰"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

⁴¹"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴²For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

⁴⁴"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

⁴⁵"He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

⁴⁶"Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

The Plot Against Jesus

26 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, ²"As you know, the Passover is two days away — and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

³Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, ⁴and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. ⁵"But not during the festival," they said, "or there may be a riot among the people."

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

⁶While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper, ⁷a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

⁸When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. ⁹"This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor."

¹⁰Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman?

She has done a beautiful thing to me. ¹¹The poor you will always have with you,^a but you will not always have me. ¹²When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. ¹³Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

¹⁴Then one of the Twelve — the one called Judas Iscariot — went to the chief priests ¹⁵and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?” So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

The Last Supper

¹⁷On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?”

¹⁸He replied, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’” ¹⁹So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

²⁰When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. ²¹And while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.”

²²They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, “Surely you don’t mean me, Lord?”

²³Jesus replied, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.”

²⁵Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, “Surely you don’t mean me, Rabbi?”

Jesus answered, “You have said so.”

²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.”

²⁷Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸This is my blood of the^b covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

³⁰When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Predicts Peter’s Denial

³¹Then Jesus told them, “This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written:

“‘I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’”^c

³²But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”

³³Peter replied, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.”

³⁴“Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.”

³⁵But Peter declared, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the other disciples said the same.

Gethsemane

³⁶Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷He took Peter and

^a 11 See Deut. 15:11. ^b 28 Some manuscripts *the new* ^c 31 Zech. 13:7

OLD TESTAMENT FULFILLMENTS

The events that led up to the crucifixion of Jesus directly parallel what was prophesied about the Messiah as the Suffering Servant in the Old Testament. But not only did Jesus fulfill Old Testament prophecy; others around Jesus did as well.

Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (v. 14), which was the equivalent to the price of a slave (Ex 21:32). Zechariah wrote about this exact price in his Messianic foreshadowing (Zec 11:12–13). Thirty pieces of silver was not a very large sum of money in that era, and in Matthew, Judas' story provides a stark contrast to the verses preceding his betrayal (Mt 26:6–13). While Mary went to great expense to anoint Jesus with precious oil, giving to Jesus what was probably her entire dowry (and therefore her entire future), Judas turned against Jesus for a relatively small price. Great is the cost of devotion, but cheap is the price of betrayal.

After the description of Judas' betrayal, Matthew transitioned to the preparations of the Passover meal. The Passover was celebrated in remembrance of God freeing his people from Egypt (Nu 9:2). However, for believers, Jesus completely transformed the way the meal was celebrated. It is now in remembrance of God freeing his people from sin and death through Jesus. In honoring old traditions, Jesus also created new traditions for believers to follow today. During this Passover celebration, Jesus represented the very fulfillment of the Passover's promise of deliverance from sin, ushering in a new covenant to replace the old covenant. This new covenant had been promised in the Old Testament multiple times (Jer 31:31–34; Eze 34:25–31; 37:26–28), and Jesus finally fulfilled it.

In addition to Judas and Jesus, Peter and the rest of the disciples also fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. While Peter's denial was a blatant betrayal of Jesus, it is important to remember that Peter was not the only disciple to avoid being associated with Jesus after his arrest. None of the other disciples had the courage to follow Jesus on that night; they all hid, which Jesus referred to by quoting Zechariah 13:7 (Mt 26:31). After Jesus' resurrection, ever the Good Shepherd, Jesus brought his flock back together (28:16–20), as he will again in the last days (Ac 2:17–21).

the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

³⁹Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

⁴⁰Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. ⁴¹"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

⁴²He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

⁴³When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

⁴⁵Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

Jesus Arrested

⁴⁷While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." ⁴⁹Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.

⁵⁰Jesus replied, "Do what you came for, friend."^a

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. ⁵¹With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

⁵²"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

⁵⁵In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Jesus Before the Sanhedrin

⁵⁷Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. ⁵⁸But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome.

⁵⁹The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. ⁶⁰But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward ⁶¹and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'"

⁶²Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" ⁶³But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

⁶⁴"You have said so," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."^b

^a 50 Or "Why have you come, friend?" ^b 64 See Psalm 110:1; Daniel 7:13.

⁶⁵Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. ⁶⁶What do you think?"

"He is worthy of death," they answered.

⁶⁷Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him ⁶⁸and said, "Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?"

Peter Disowns Jesus

⁶⁹Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said.

⁷⁰But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

⁷¹Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth."

⁷²He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!"

⁷³After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away."

⁷⁴Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!"

Immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Judas Hangs Himself

27 Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people made their plans how to have Jesus executed. ²So they bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

³When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. ⁴"I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood."

"What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility."

⁵So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

⁶The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money." ⁷So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. ⁸That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. ⁹Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price set on him by the people of Israel, ¹⁰and they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."^a

Jesus Before Pilate

¹¹Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"You have said so," Jesus replied.

¹²When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. ¹³Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" ¹⁴But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge — to the great amazement of the governor.

¹⁵Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. ¹⁶At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus^b Barabbas. ¹⁷So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" ¹⁸For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.

¹⁹While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this

^a 10 See Zech. 11:12,13; Jer. 19:1-13; 32:6-9. ^b 16 Many manuscripts do not have *Jesus*; also in verse 17.

SAVIOR

SEEING IS BELIEVING

GOSPELS TO ACTS 1

From the time my four children were very young, the legend of Disney World ran wild in their heads. Through the magic of cinema, they were transported to the magical world of Arendelle, where they dreamed of climbing the North Mountain. Through storybooks they have been “Under the Sea” with Ariel and Flounder. They each could see it all in their mind’s eye. However, the reality was, they had not been there. They had only seen Disney through the eyes of others, but they had not seen it for themselves.

Then one Christmas, everything changed. We surprised them with a trip to Disney. We loaded the minivan and off we went. The ten-hour drive from our home felt like a thousand. The anticipation and excitement were on a whole other level. When we arrived, we went straight to meet the princesses. What had been only fairytales became real when Elsa, Anna, Snow White, Belle, and Tiana were standing in front of them.

The stories had been great. The movies were phenomenal, but when their faith had become sight, everything changed. Because seeing is believing.

The ancient Greeks believed that all the deep questions in the world could be explained in the *Logos*. Heraclitus and Aristotle used the *Logos* as a foundation in their philosophical works. By the time of John’s Gospel the *Logos* had become the pre-

vailing way of understanding the “higher power” that exists. However, John, under the inspiration of God, used the opening stanzas of his account to shed more light on this *Logos*. He began by acknowledging the eternality of the *Logos* by saying that it had been from the beginning. Thus, he was validating what his audience had understood for centuries. However, he then took it further by helping them understand that the *Logos* (word) is connected to the *Theos* (God). In fact, the *Logos* (word) is *Theos* (God). He was clarifying that the *Logos* is more than a “higher power.” He is more than an “all knowing” spirit. The *Logos* is God.

John was not finished providing clarity. He takes his readers into a deeper understanding of who the *Logos* is by saying, “He was with God in the beginning” (see Jn 1:1).

Who is this he? Where did *he* come from? John tells us that “in him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind” (1:4). In using the personal pronoun, the Gospel writer helps us understand that God is not some far-off “being,” unable to identify with humanity. No, he has definition and is knowable. The *Logos* has substance and character and is not a mysterious force. However, John had one more significant qualifier to add to help his readers understand the identity of the *Logos*. The *Logos* (Word) became flesh and dwelt among us!

The God of the universe who had, up to this point in history resided in his celestial home, had now taken up residence with humanity on earth. What was mystery is now reality. What was spirit is now flesh and blood. What had been experienced only by faith had now become sight. Seeing is believing.

The fact that sets the Christian gospel apart from all other belief systems is that “God sent his only Son” to earth (see Jn 3:16). Jesus “did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness” (Php 2:6–7). God, in his grace, sent Jesus to earth so that we could see him and therefore believe him.

God knew that humanity would need to tangibly see him, to experience him, so that we could identify with him. He stepped out of cosmic glory for 33 years. He walked the earth, living in a physical place and time. He had human emotion and was able to identify with humanity’s struggles. He modeled what living in the kingdom of God should look like. Ultimately, he stood in humanity’s place. The place where all of humankind, because of our sin, deserved to be.

We have a Savior who was seen and therefore can be believed.

Jesus Lived in a Real Time and Place

Our Savior was born in Bethlehem, lived in Nazareth, worked in Galilee, died and then rose from the grave in Jerusalem. These are real places in the Near East Mediterranean region of earth. Anyone today can visit these exact sites. You can walk the grounds, touch the dirt, and smell the aromas.

A few years ago I had the opportunity to be in the Holy Land. While driving along the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, we came to the town of Magdala. Magdala was the home of Mary *Magdalene*, who played an integral role in Jesus’ earthly ministry.

Modern-day Magdala is a small resort community north of the town of Tiberias referenced in John 6:23 and east of Mount Arbel. In recent years, a major archaeological discovery was made here. As the ancient ruins of the city were uncovered, among the discoveries were many homes, a marketplace, and a synagogue. In the synagogue a remnant of the mosaic tile floor was discovered. The archaeological experts date the floor to the time of Jesus, making it highly likely that the floor I saw was the same one he walked on 2,000 years ago. My faith was bolstered by knowing that the stories I read in the Bible about Jesus’ encounters with Mary Magdalene happened in a real place, a place I could visit.

SAVIOR

(CONTINUED)

GOSPELS TO ACTS 1

For Christians, throughout the centuries, being able to see the places of Jesus' ministry has provided a foundation to our beliefs.

Jesus Fulfilled the Old Testament Prophecies about Himself

Not only did Jesus live in a real time and place, but also the most significant aspects of his ministry had been prophesied about in the Old Testament, thousands of years prior. Many of the movements during his 33-year life were foretold by the prophets Micah, Zechariah, Isaiah, Malachi, and many others.

The prophet Micah described that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Mic 5:2). The book of Malachi tells us that a "messenger," who ended up being John the Baptist, would prepare the way for Jesus and announce the coming of his ministry (Mal 3:1). Zechariah foretells that Jesus would be sold out for 30 pieces of silver (Zec 11:13). Psalm 22:16–18 tells us that not only would Jesus be crucified, but also that his robe would be divided.

Imagine, if before you were born, your parents wrote a book predicting whom you would marry, where you would live, and how many children you would have. You would be blown away at their ability to correctly guess those handful of milestones about your life. However, the reality is, even for the people who know you best, it is not

very likely that they would even get a few things right about how your life was going to turn out.

In Jesus' case, scholars point to the fact that Jesus fulfilled over 400 Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah. Thousands of years before he walked the earth, people were foretelling intimate details of his life and ministry. To get a few details right might be chalked up to coincidence, but to get hundreds right makes it a miraculous revelation about the Son of God.

Seeing the prophecies of the Old Testament come to fruition gave the early Christians, and gives Christians today, the confidence to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior.

Jesus Identifies with Us

Our Savior, because he walked the earth as God in human flesh, can relate to the joys and struggles that humankind faces. He was not a God who only knew about human weakness in theoretical terms. He knew about them in practical terms because he lived through them. The writer of Hebrews says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin" (Heb 4:15). In Jesus, God came near to his people, so he could relate to them in a tangible way.

Jesus Celebrated

All throughout the New Testament we see instances where Jesus displays the humanity in his divinity. At the wedding feast at Cana, Jesus celebrated. In his divinity, the wedding at Cana was Jesus' first recorded miracle. It is where he turned water into choice wine (see Jn 2:10). However, in his humanity, Jesus was at this wedding as an invited guest.

It is not hard to imagine that Jesus had the same emotion that anyone has when attending a wedding—joy for the couple. Jesus identifies with human celebration.

Jesus Wept

Conversely, Jesus mourned with those who were mourning. After Mary and Martha's brother (and Jesus' friend) died, Jesus was there. He was brokenhearted for their agony. He saw their pain, and he "wept" (Jn 11:35) with them. He did not rush to fix the problem. (He would get to that later.) No, he met Mary and Martha where they were. He identified with them in their suffering.

Jesus is not a cosmic overlord who is unable to understand the plight of humans. Quite the opposite. He can identify with humanity because he was human and knows our exact emotions. Seeing Jesus put his emotions on display helps us believe that empathy for others is possible.

Jesus Modeled Kingdom Living

Kings do not willingly give up power. They hold onto it with everything they have. However, Jesus modeled the upside-down nature of God's kingdom by living out the reality that the most powerful people are the ones who hold their position loosely. He showed that kingdom living is contrary to the way humans are inclined to live.

Jesus, though divine, did not wield the power of his divinity over humanity. He did the exact opposite. He became a servant to humanity by taking on its likeness. He literally was willing to do anything to serve other humans. He was even willing to die for them (see Php 2:6–8).

Jesus modeled kingdom thinking by showing that if a person was willing to lose their life for another person, then they would be willing to do anything for them. On the surface when Scripture instructs us, "Bless those who persecute you," it sounds radical. But it is not radical if you were willing to give your life for them.

Seeing Jesus model the upside nature of the kingdom makes us believe that the radical serving of others is possible.

Jesus Stood in Our Place

Jesus had to come to earth because, ultimately, he would have to physically stand in our place through his death on the cross.

SAVIOR

(CONTINUED)

GOSPELS TO ACTS 1

In the Old Testament, the way that the people of God restored their relationship to him was through a physical sacrifice. The system required a blood sacrifice. Saying “I am sorry” would not do the trick. No, a living creature without blemish had to stand in for the guilty party. Blood was the currency of forgiveness.

This is why Jesus had to be both divine and human. In his divinity, he would lead a perfect life without sin. In his humanity, he would physically stand in for sinful humanity. “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2Co 5:21). One of the Protestant Reformers said, “The Son of God, though spotlessly pure, took upon him the disgrace and ignominy of our iniquities, and in return clothes us with his purity.”

Jesus was our substitute. Theologians use the word *propitiation* to describe what Jesus has done on our behalf. However, that is just a big word that means Jesus took the place where we were meant to stand. Because of our sin, we deserved death. We deserved wrath. We deserved judgment, but Jesus physically took that upon himself.

Seeing Jesus stand in our place helps us to believe that he is our Savior.

Today, when my kids talk about Disney World, they are talking from firsthand experience. They are no longer trying to describe something in the abstract. They can describe it in concrete detail that only firsthand experience can provide. They are confident Disney exists because they have seen Disney.

Jesus did not live in the realm of the abstract. He came to earth. He embraced our messiness all the way to death, and in the end overcame death by rising from the grave. This would all sound like a fairytale if not for the fact that it all happened in a real time and place—a place we can visit today—and happened among real people who provided their eyewitness accounts.

We can see the places where Jesus lived. We can read firsthand accounts of the miraculous nature of his 33 years on earth, and, therefore, we can believe that everything about him is true, because seeing is believing.

BEGINNINGS

GENESIS
1–2
(pg. 8)

REVOLT

GENESIS
3–11
(pg. 24)

PEOPLE

GENESIS 12 to
MALACHI
(pg. 262)

INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD

(pg. 1478)

SAVIOR

GOSPELS to
ACTS 1
(pg. 1530)

CHURCH

ACTS 2 to
REVELATION 20
(pg. 1702)

FOREVER

REVELATION
21–22
(pg. 1960)

message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."

²⁰But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

²¹"Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor. "Barabbas," they answered.

²²"What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!"

²³"Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

²⁴When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"

²⁵All the people answered, "His blood is on us and on our children!"

²⁶Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

²⁷Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. ²⁸They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. ³⁰They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. ³¹After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

³²As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. ³³They came to a place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull"). ³⁴There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. ³⁵When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. ³⁶And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. ³⁷Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

³⁸Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" ⁴¹In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. ⁴²"He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

The Death of Jesus

⁴⁵From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land.

⁴⁶About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eli, Eli,^a lema sabachthani?*" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").^b

⁴⁷When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah."

⁴⁸Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. ⁴⁹The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

⁵⁰And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

⁵¹At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split ⁵²and the tombs broke open. The bodies

^a 46 Some manuscripts *Eloi, Eloi* ^b 46 Psalm 22:1

MATTHEW 27:62–66

WORRIED ABOUT
A RESURRECTION

Matthew made sure to emphasize the fact that the tomb was sealed in order to show that there was no possible way for the disciples to steal the body. The Jewish leaders and the guard were instructed to “make the tomb as secure as you know how” (v. 65), and they did so by placing a seal on the stone that was rolled in front of the tomb and also by placing a guard there. After the grave was reported empty and the disciples began telling others about the resurrection, those who opposed Jesus attempted to spread the rumor that the disciples had stolen the body (Mt 28:11–15). However, Matthew made it clear in his Gospel that the religious leaders had sealed the tomb specifically for the purpose of preventing anyone from stealing the body and faking a resurrection, which directly contradicts the false narrative they attempted to spread. There is no way the disciples could have stolen the body of Christ, and Matthew did well to show that despite the chief priests and Pharisees’ attempts to guard the tomb, there was nothing they could do to prevent Jesus’ actual, physical resurrection from the dead.

of many holy people who had died were raised to life. ⁵³They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and^a went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

⁵⁴When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

⁵⁵Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. ⁵⁶Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph,^b and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.

The Burial of Jesus

⁵⁷As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. ⁵⁹Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. ⁶¹Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.

The Guard at the Tomb

⁶²The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. ⁶³“Sir,” they said, “we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ ⁶⁴So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.”

⁶⁵“Take a guard,” Pilate answered. “Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.” ⁶⁶So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

Jesus Has Risen

28 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

²There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

⁵The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”

⁸So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

The Guards’ Report

¹¹While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. ¹²When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, ¹³telling them, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ ¹⁴If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” ¹⁵So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

^a 53 Or tombs, and after Jesus’ resurrection they

^b 56 Greek *Joses*, a variant of *Joseph*

JESUS' ASSIGNMENT TO HIS DISCIPLES

The Great Commission (vv. 19–20) is a command that rests on the authority of Christ described in the preceding verse. The phrase “Go and make disciples” is commonly spoken among believers, but it is important to note the word “therefore” that comes before. Followers of Jesus are expected to *go and make disciples* solely because of who Jesus is and with the power and authority that he has been given (v. 18). Jesus has all authority on heaven and earth, and he doesn’t give this command without empowering his followers to go and tell others about who he is.

The Great Commission is not the first call for world evangelism in the Bible. In fact, Genesis 12:1–3 describes God’s promise that Abraham and his descendants would be a blessing to all nations. Jesus was simply building on what God had already told his people long before. Believers are expected to share the true and life-giving story of Jesus to every nation far and wide; this command has always been true for people who follow Jesus.

Jesus’ command involves a simple three-step process; go, baptize and teach. Within this phrase, Jesus clarified exactly what he expects of his followers. They are to first go and tell others about him so that others can know and understand his story. Then they are to baptize those who have heard the story so that they can publicly declare their belief in who he is. Finally, believers need to teach and encourage one another (Col 3:16). Believers will never stop teaching each other and learning about the nature of God. The command to go, baptize and teach was Jesus’ last command in the book of Matthew, and it is of the utmost importance for followers of Christ.

However, Jesus did not ask his disciples to do so alone. He promised that although he was leaving them physically he would always be with them through his Spirit. As long as believers hold fast to Jesus and rely on the Holy Spirit, the pathway is open for his followers to do what they have been called to do (Php 4:13).

The Great Commission

¹⁶Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."