



The Book Of Luke

Luke Shows The
Humanity of
Jesus

Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

Luke

OVERVIEW:

EVERY birth is a miracle, and every child is a gift from God. But nearly 20 centuries ago, there was the miracle of miracles. A baby was born, but he was the Son of God. The Gospels tell of this birth, but Dr. Luke, as though he were the attending physician, provides most of the details surrounding this awesome occasion. With divine Father and human mother, Jesus entered history—God in the flesh.

Luke affirms Jesus' divinity, but the real emphasis of his book is to show Jesus' humanity—Jesus, the Son of God, is also the Son of Man. As a doctor, Luke was a man of science, and as a Greek, he was a man of detail. It is not surprising, then, that he begins by outlining his extensive research and explaining that he is reporting the facts (Luke 1:1-4). Luke also was a close friend and traveling companion of Paul, so he could interview the other disciples, had access to other historical accounts, and was an eyewitness to the birth and growth of the early church. His Gospel and book of Acts are reliable, historical documents.

Luke's story begins with angels appearing to Zechariah and then to Mary, telling them of the upcoming births of their sons. From Zechariah and Elizabeth would come John the Baptist, who would prepare the way for Christ. And Mary would conceive by the Holy Spirit and bear Jesus, the Son of God. Soon after John's birth, Caesar Augustus declared a census, and so Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem, the town of David, their ancient ancestor. There the child was born. Angels announced the joyous event to shepherds, who rushed to the manger. When the shepherds left, they were praising God and spreading the news. Eight days later, Jesus was circumcised and then dedicated to God in the temple, where Simeon and Anna confirmed Jesus' identity as the Savior, their Messiah.

Luke gives us a glimpse of Jesus at age 12—discussing theology with the teachers of the law at the temple (Luke 2:41-52). The next event occurred 18 years later, when we read of John the Baptist preaching in the desert. Jesus came to John to be baptized before beginning his public ministry (Luke 3:1-38). At this point, Luke

traces Jesus' genealogy on his stepfather Joseph's side, through David and Abraham back to Adam, underscoring Jesus' identity as the Son of Man.

After the temptation (Luke 4:1-13), Jesus returned to Galilee to preach, teach, and heal (Luke 4:14-21:38). During this time, he began gathering his group of 12 disciples (Luke 5:1-10, 27-29). Later Jesus commissioned the disciples and sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God. When they returned, Jesus revealed to them his mission, his true identity, and what it means to be his disciple (Luke 9:18-62). His mission would take him to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51-53), where he would be rejected, tried, and crucified.

While Jesus carried his own cross to Golgotha, some women in Jerusalem wept for him, but Jesus told them to weep for themselves and for their children (Luke 23:28). But Luke's Gospel does not end in sadness. It concludes with the thrilling account of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, his appearances to the disciples, and his promise to send the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:1-53). Read Luke's beautifully written and accurate account of the life of Jesus, Son of Man and Son of God. Then praise God for sending the Savior for all people—our risen and triumphant Lord.

THE BLUEPRINT

A. BIRTH AND PREPARATION OF JESUS, THE SAVIOR (Luke 1:1-4:13)

From an infant who could do nothing on his own, Jesus grew to become completely able to fulfill his mission on earth. He was fully human, developing in all ways like us. Yet he remained fully God. He took no shortcuts and was not isolated from the pressures and temptations of life. There are no shortcuts for us either as we prepare for a life of service to God.

Luke 1:1-4:13

Most honorable Theophilus:

Many people have written accounts about the events that took place among us. [2] They used as their source material the reports circulating among us from the early disciples and other eyewitnesses of what God has done in fulfillment of his promises. [3] Having carefully investigated all of these accounts from the beginning, I have decided to write a careful summary for you, [4] to reassure you of the truth of all you were taught.

[5] It all begins with a Jewish priest, Zechariah, who lived when Herod was king of Judea. Zechariah was a member of the priestly order of Abijah. His wife, Elizabeth, was also from the priestly line of Aaron. [6] Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations. [7] They had no children because Elizabeth was barren, and now they were both very old.

[8] One day Zechariah was serving God in the Temple, for his order was on duty that week. [9] As was the custom of the priests, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary and burn incense in the Lord's presence. [10] While the incense was being burned, a great crowd stood outside, praying.

[11] Zechariah was in the sanctuary when an angel of the Lord appeared, standing to the right of the incense altar. [12] Zechariah was overwhelmed with fear. [13] But the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah! For God has heard your prayer, and your wife, Elizabeth, will bear you a son! And you are to name him John. [14] You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice with you at his birth, [15] for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or hard liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. [16] And he will persuade many Israelites to turn to the Lord their God. [17] He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah, the prophet of old. He will precede the coming of the Lord, preparing the people for his arrival. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will change disobedient minds to accept godly wisdom."

[18] Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I know this will happen? I'm an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years."

[19] Then the angel said, "I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of God. It was he who sent me to bring you this good news! [20] And now, since you didn't believe what I said, you won't be able to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly come true at the proper time."

[21] Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah to come out, wondering why he was taking so long. [22] When he finally did come out, he couldn't speak to them. Then they realized from his gestures that he must have seen a vision in the Temple sanctuary.

[23] He stayed at the Temple until his term of service was over, and then he returned home. [24] Soon afterward his wife, Elizabeth, became pregnant and went into seclusion for five months. [25] "How kind the Lord is!" she exclaimed. "He has taken away my disgrace of having no children!"

[26] In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, [27] to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. [28] Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!"

[29] Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. [30] "Don't be frightened, Mary," the angel told her, "for God has decided to bless you! [31] You will become pregnant and have a son, and you are to name him Jesus. [32] He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. [33] And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"

[34] Mary asked the angel, "But how can I have a baby? I am a virgin."

[35] The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby born to you will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. [36] What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she's already in her sixth month. [37] For nothing is impossible with God."

[38] Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant, and I am willing to accept whatever he wants. May everything you have said come true." And then the angel left.

[39] A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town [40] where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth. [41] At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

[42] Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, "You are blessed by God above all other women, and your child is blessed. [43] What an honor this is, that the mother of my Lord should visit me! [44] When you came in and greeted me, my baby jumped for joy the instant I heard your voice! [45] You are blessed, because you believed that the Lord would do what he said."

[46] Mary responded,

"Oh, how I praise the Lord.

[47] How I rejoice in God my Savior!
[48] For he took notice of his lowly servant girl,
and now generation after generation
will call me blessed.
[49] For he, the Mighty One, is holy,
and he has done great things for me.
[50] His mercy goes on from generation to generation,
to all who fear him.
[51] His mighty arm does tremendous things!
How he scatters the proud and haughty ones!
[52] He has taken princes from their thrones
and exalted the lowly.
[53] He has satisfied the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away with empty hands.
[54] And how he has helped his servant Israel!
He has not forgotten his promise to be merciful.
[55] For he promised our ancestors—Abraham and his children—
to be merciful to them forever."

[56] Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back to her own home.

[57] Now it was time for Elizabeth's baby to be born, and it was a boy. [58] The word spread quickly to her neighbors and relatives that the Lord had been very kind to her, and everyone rejoiced with her.

[59] When the baby was eight days old, all the relatives and friends came for the circumcision ceremony. They wanted to name him Zechariah, after his father. [60] But Elizabeth said, "No! His name is John!"

[61] "What?" they exclaimed. "There is no one in all your family by that name." [62] So they asked the baby's father, communicating to him by making gestures. [63] He motioned for a writing tablet, and to everyone's surprise he wrote, "His name is John!" [64] Instantly Zechariah could speak again, and he began praising God.

[65] Wonder fell upon the whole neighborhood, and the news of what had happened spread throughout the Judean hills. [66] Everyone who heard about it reflected on these events and asked, "I wonder what this child will turn out to be? For the hand of the Lord is surely upon him in a special way."

[67] Then his father, Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave this prophecy:

[68] "Praise the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has visited his people and redeemed them.
[69] He has sent us a mighty Savior
from the royal line of his servant David,
[70] just as he promised

through his holy prophets long ago.

[71] Now we will be saved from our enemies
and from all who hate us.

[72] He has been merciful to our ancestors
by remembering his sacred covenant with them,
[73] the covenant he gave to our ancestor Abraham.

[74] We have been rescued from our enemies,
so we can serve God without fear,
[75] in holiness and righteousness forever.

[76] "And you, my little son,
will be called the prophet of the Most High,
because you will prepare the way for the Lord.

[77] You will tell his people how to find salvation
through forgiveness of their sins.

[78] Because of God's tender mercy,
the light from heaven is about to break upon us,

[79] to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
and to guide us to the path of peace."

[80] John grew up and became strong in spirit. Then he lived out in the wilderness until he began his public ministry to Israel.

[2:1] At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. [2] (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) [3] All returned to their own towns to register for this census. [4] And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. [5] He took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was obviously pregnant by this time.

[6] And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. [7] She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the village inn.

[8] That night some shepherds were in the fields outside the village, guarding their flocks of sheep. [9] Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terribly frightened, [10] but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news of great joy for everyone! [11] The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born tonight in Bethlehem, the city of David! [12] And this is how you will recognize him: You will find a baby lying in a manger, wrapped snugly in strips of cloth!"

[13] Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God:

[14] "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and peace on earth to all whom God favors."

[15] When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Come on, let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this wonderful thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

[16] They ran to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. [17] Then the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. [18] All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, [19] but Mary quietly treasured these things in her heart and thought about them often. [20] The shepherds went back to their fields and flocks, glorifying and praising God for what the angels had told them, and because they had seen the child, just as the angel had said.

[21] Eight days later, when the baby was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel even before he was conceived.

[22] Then it was time for the purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. [23] The law of the Lord says, "If a woman's first child is a boy, he must be dedicated to the Lord." [24] So they offered a sacrifice according to what was required in the law of the Lord—"either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

[25] Now there was a man named Simeon who lived in Jerusalem. He was a righteous man and very devout. He was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he eagerly expected the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. [26] The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. [27] That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, [28] Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying,

[29] "Lord, now I can die in peace!

As you promised me,

[30] I have seen the Savior

[31] you have given to all people.

[32] He is a light to reveal God to the nations,
and he is the glory of your people Israel!"

[33] Joseph and Mary were amazed at what was being said about Jesus. [34] Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, "This child will be rejected by many in Israel, and it will be their undoing. But he will be the greatest joy to many others. [35] Thus, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul."

[36] Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher, and was very old. She was a widow, for her husband had died when they had been married only seven years. [37] She was now eighty-four years old. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer. [38] She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about Jesus to everyone who had been waiting for the promised King to come and deliver Jerusalem.

[39] When Jesus' parents had fulfilled all the requirements of the law of the Lord, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee. [40] There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom beyond his years, and God placed his special favor upon him.

[41] Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. [42] When Jesus was twelve years old, they attended the festival as usual. [43] After the celebration was over, they started home to Nazareth, but Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents didn't miss him at first, [44] because they assumed he was with friends among the other travelers. But when he didn't show up that evening, they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. [45] When they couldn't find him, they went back to Jerusalem to search for him there. [46] Three days later they finally discovered him. He was in the Temple, sitting among the religious teachers, discussing deep questions with them. [47] And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

[48] His parents didn't know what to think. "Son!" his mother said to him. "Why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been frantic, searching for you everywhere."

[49] "But why did you need to search?" he asked. "You should have known that I would be in my Father's house." [50] But they didn't understand what he meant.

[51] Then he returned to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them; and his mother stored all these things in her heart. [52] So Jesus grew both in height and in wisdom, and he was loved by God and by all who knew him.

[3:1] It was now the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, the Roman emperor. Pilate was governor over Judea; Herod Antipas was ruler over Galilee; his brother Philip was ruler over Iturea and Traconitis; Lysanias was ruler over Abilene. [2] Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests. At this time a message from God came to John son of Zechariah, who was living out in the wilderness. [3] Then John went from place to place on both sides of the Jordan River, preaching that people should be baptized to show that they had turned from their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. [4] Isaiah had spoken of John when he said,

"He is a voice shouting in the wilderness:
'Prepare a pathway for the Lord's coming!

Make a straight road for him!

[5] Fill in the valleys,
and level the mountains and hills!

Straighten the curves,
and smooth out the rough places!

[6] And then all people will see
the salvation sent from God.' "

[7] Here is a sample of John's preaching to the crowds that came for baptism: "You brood of snakes! Who warned you to flee God's coming judgment? [8] Prove by the way you live that you have really turned from your sins and turned to God. Don't just say, 'We're safe—we're the descendants of Abraham.' That proves nothing. God can change these stones here into children of Abraham. [9] Even now the ax of God's judgment is poised, ready to sever your roots. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire."

[10] The crowd asked, "What should we do?"

[11] John replied, "If you have two coats, give one to the poor. If you have food, share it with those who are hungry."

[12] Even corrupt tax collectors came to be baptized and asked, "Teacher, what should we do?"

[13] "Show your honesty," he replied. "Make sure you collect no more taxes than the Roman government requires you to."

[14] "What should we do?" asked some soldiers.

John replied, "Don't extort money, and don't accuse people of things you know they didn't do. And be content with your pay."

[15] Everyone was expecting the Messiah to come soon, and they were eager to know whether John might be the Messiah. [16] John answered their questions by saying, "I baptize with water; but someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I am not even worthy to be his slave. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. [17] He is ready to separate the chaff from the grain with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, storing the grain in his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire." [18] John used many such warnings as he announced the Good News to the people.

[19] John also publicly criticized Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee, for marrying Herodias, his brother's wife, and for many other wrongs he had done. [20] So Herod put John in prison, adding this sin to his many others.

[21] One day when the crowds were being baptized, Jesus himself was baptized. As he was praying, the heavens opened, [22] and the Holy Spirit descended on him in the form of a dove. And a voice from heaven said, "You are my beloved Son, and I am fully pleased with you."

[23] Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his public ministry.

Jesus was known as the son of Joseph.

Joseph was the son of Heli.

[24] Heli was the son of Matthat.

Matthat was the son of Levi.

Levi was the son of Melki.

Melki was the son of Jannai.

Jannai was the son of Joseph.

[25] Joseph was the son of Mattathias.

Mattathias was the son of Amos.

Amos was the son of Nahum.

Nahum was the son of Esli.

Esli was the son of Naggai.

[26] Naggai was the son of Maath.

Maath was the son of Mattathias.

Mattathias was the son of Semein.

Semein was the son of Josech.

Josech was the son of Joda.

[27] Joda was the son of Joanan.
Joanan was the son of Rhesa.
Rhesa was the son of Zerubbabel.
Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel.
Shealtiel was the son of Neri.
[28] Neri was the son of Melki.
Melki was the son of Addi.
Addi was the son of Cosam.
Cosam was the son of Elmadam.
Elmadam was the son of Er.
[29] Er was the son of Joshua.
Joshua was the son of Eliezer.
Eliezer was the son of Jorim.
Jorim was the son of Matthat.
Matthat was the son of Levi.
[30] Levi was the son of Simeon.
Simeon was the son of Judah.
Judah was the son of Joseph.
Joseph was the son of Jonam.
Jonam was the son of Eliakim.
[31] Eliakim was the son of Melea.
Melea was the son of Menna.
Menna was the son of Mattatha.
Mattatha was the son of Nathan.
Nathan was the son of David.
[32] David was the son of Jesse.
Jesse was the son of Obed.
Obed was the son of Boaz.
Boaz was the son of Salmon.
Salmon was the son of Nahshon.
[33] Nahshon was the son of Amminadab.
Amminadab was the son of Admin.
Admin was the son of Arni.
Arni was the son of Hezron.
Hezron was the son of Perez.
Perez was the son of Judah.
[34] Judah was the son of Jacob.
Jacob was the son of Isaac.
Isaac was the son of Abraham.
Abraham was the son of Terah.
Terah was the son of Nahor.
[35] Nahor was the son of Serug.
Serug was the son of Reu.
Reu was the son of Peleg.
Peleg was the son of Eber.
Eber was the son of Shelah.

[36] Shelah was the son of Cainan.
Cainan was the son of Arphaxad.
Arphaxad was the son of Shem.
Shem was the son of Noah.
Noah was the son of Lamech.
[37] Lamech was the son of Methuselah.
Methuselah was the son of Enoch.
Enoch was the son of Jared.
Jared was the son of Mahalalel.
Mahalalel was the son of Kenan.
[38] Kenan was the son of Enosh.
Enosh was the son of Seth.
Seth was the son of Adam.
Adam was the son of God.

[4:1] Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit to go out into the wilderness, [2] where the Devil tempted him for forty days. He ate nothing all that time and was very hungry.

[3] Then the Devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, change this stone into a loaf of bread."

[4] But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People need more than bread for their life.' "

[5] Then the Devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. [6] The Devil told him, "I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them—because they are mine to give to anyone I please. [7] I will give it all to you if you will bow down and worship me."

[8] Jesus replied, "The Scriptures say,

'You must worship the Lord your God;
serve only him.' "

[9] Then the Devil took him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! [10] For the Scriptures say,

'He orders his angels to protect and guard you.

[11] And they will hold you with their hands
to keep you from striking your foot on a stone.' "

[12] Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'Do not test the Lord your God.' "

[13] When the Devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity came.

B. MESSAGE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS, THE SAVIOR (Luke 4:14-21:38)

Jesus taught great crowds of people, especially through parables, which are stories with great truths. But only those with ears to hear will understand. We should pray that God's Spirit would help us understand the implications of these truths for our lives so we can become more and more like Jesus.

1. Jesus' ministry in Galilee
2. Jesus' ministry on the way to Jerusalem
3. Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem

Luke 4:14-21:38

Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power. Soon he became well known throughout the surrounding country. [15] He taught in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

[16] When he came to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home, he went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures. [17] The scroll containing the messages of Isaiah the prophet was handed to him, and he unrolled the scroll to the place where it says:

[18] "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
for he has appointed me to preach Good News to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim
that captives will be released,
that the blind will see,
that the downtrodden will be freed from their oppressors,
[19] and that the time of the Lord's favor has come."

[20] He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. Everyone in the synagogue stared at him intently. [21] Then he said, "This Scripture has come true today before your very eyes!"

[22] All who were there spoke well of him and were amazed by the gracious words that fell from his lips. "How can this be?" they asked. "Isn't this Joseph's son?"

[23] Then he said, "Probably you will quote me that proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself'—meaning, 'Why don't you do miracles here in your hometown like those you did in Capernaum?'"
[24] But the truth is, no prophet is accepted in his own hometown.

[25] "Certainly there were many widows in Israel who needed help in Elijah's time, when there was no rain for three and a half years and hunger stalked the land.

[26] Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them. He was sent instead to a widow of Zarephath—a foreigner in the land of Sidon. [27] Or think of the prophet Elisha, who healed Naaman, a Syrian, rather than the many lepers in Israel who needed help."

[28] When they heard this, the people in the synagogue were furious. [29] Jumping up, they mobbed him and took him to the edge of the hill on which the city was built. They intended to push him over the cliff, [30] but he slipped away through the crowd and left them.

[31] Then Jesus went to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and taught there in the synagogue every Sabbath day. [32] There, too, the people were amazed at the things he said, because he spoke with authority.

[33] Once when he was in the synagogue, a man possessed by a demon began shouting at Jesus, [34] "Go away! Why are you bothering us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One sent from God."

[35] Jesus cut him short. "Be silent!" he told the demon. "Come out of the man!" The demon threw the man to the floor as the crowd watched; then it left him without hurting him further.

[36] Amazed, the people exclaimed, "What authority and power this man's words possess! Even evil spirits obey him and flee at his command!" [37] The story of what he had done spread like wildfire throughout the whole region.

[38] After leaving the synagogue that day, Jesus went to Simon's home, where he found Simon's mother-in-law very sick with a high fever. "Please heal her," everyone begged. [39] Standing at her bedside, he spoke to the fever, rebuking it, and immediately her temperature returned to normal. She got up at once and prepared a meal for them.

[40] As the sun went down that evening, people throughout the village brought sick family members to Jesus. No matter what their diseases were, the touch of his hand healed every one. [41] Some were possessed by demons; and the demons came out at his command, shouting, "You are the Son of God." But because they knew he was the Messiah, he stopped them and told them to be silent.

[42] Early the next morning Jesus went out into the wilderness. The crowds searched everywhere for him, and when they finally found him, they begged him not to leave them. [43] But he replied, "I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God in other places, too, because that is why I was sent." [44] So he continued to travel around, preaching in synagogues throughout Judea.

[5:1] One day as Jesus was preaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, great crowds pressed in on him to listen to the word of God. [2] He noticed two empty boats at the water's edge, for the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. [3] Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked Simon, its owner, to push it out into the water. So he sat in the boat and taught the crowds from there.

[4] When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Now go out where it is deeper and let down your nets, and you will catch many fish."

[5] "Master," Simon replied, "we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, we'll try again." [6] And this time their nets were so full they began to tear! [7] A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking.

[8] When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, "Oh, Lord, please leave me—I'm too much of a sinner to be around you." [9] For he was awestruck by the size of their catch, as were the others with him. [10] His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also amazed.

Jesus replied to Simon, "Don't be afraid! From now on you'll be fishing for people!" [11] And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.

[12] In one of the villages, Jesus met a man with an advanced case of leprosy. When the man saw Jesus, he fell to the ground, face down in the dust, begging to be healed. "Lord," he said, "if you want to, you can make me well again."

[13] Jesus reached out and touched the man. "I want to," he said. "Be healed!" And instantly the leprosy disappeared. [14] Then Jesus instructed him not to tell anyone what had happened. He said, "Go right to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy, so everyone will have proof of your healing." [15] Yet despite Jesus' instructions, the report of his power spread even faster, and vast crowds came to hear him preach and to be healed of their diseases. [16] But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer.

[17] One day while Jesus was teaching, some Pharisees and teachers of religious law were sitting nearby. (It seemed that these men showed up from every village in all Galilee and Judea, as well as from Jerusalem.) And the Lord's healing power was strongly with Jesus. [18] Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a sleeping mat. They tried to push through the crowd to Jesus, [19] but they couldn't reach him. So they went up to the roof, took off some tiles, and lowered the sick man down into the crowd, still on his mat, right in front of Jesus. [20] Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

[21] "Who does this man think he is?" the Pharisees and teachers of religious law said to each other. "This is blasphemy! Who but God can forgive sins?"

[22] Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he asked them, "Why do you think this is blasphemy? [23] Is it easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven' or 'Get up and walk'? [24] I will prove that I, the Son of Man, have the authority on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, "Stand up, take your mat, and go on home, because you are healed!"

[25] And immediately, as everyone watched, the man jumped to his feet, picked up his mat, and went home praising God. [26] Everyone was gripped with great wonder and awe. And they praised God, saying over and over again, "We have seen amazing things today."

[27] Later, as Jesus left the town, he saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at his tax-collection booth. "Come, be my disciple!" Jesus said to him. [28] So Levi got up, left everything, and followed him.

[29] Soon Levi held a banquet in his home with Jesus as the guest of honor. Many of Levi's fellow tax collectors and other guests were there. [30] But the Pharisees and their teachers of religious law complained bitterly to Jesus' disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with such scum?"

[31] Jesus answered them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. [32] I have come to call sinners to turn from their sins, not to spend my time with those who think they are already good enough."

[33] The religious leaders complained that Jesus' disciples were feasting instead of fasting. "John the Baptist's disciples always fast and pray," they declared, "and so do the disciples of the Pharisees. Why are yours always feasting?"

[34] Jesus asked, "Do wedding guests fast while celebrating with the groom? [35] Someday he will be taken away from them, and then they will fast."

[36] Then Jesus gave them this illustration: "No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and uses it to patch an old garment. For then the new garment would be torn, and the patch wouldn't even match the old garment. [37] And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. The new wine would burst the old skins, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. [38] New wine must be put into new wineskins. [39] But no one who drinks the old wine seems to want the fresh and the new. 'The old is better,' they say."

[6:1] One Sabbath day as Jesus was walking through some grain fields, his disciples broke off heads of wheat, rubbed off the husks in their hands, and ate the grains. [2] But some Pharisees said, "You shouldn't be doing that! It's against the law to work by harvesting grain on the Sabbath."

[3] Jesus replied, "Haven't you ever read in the Scriptures what King David did when he and his companions were hungry? [4] He went into the house of God, ate the special bread reserved for the priests alone, and then gave some to his friends. That was breaking the law, too." [5] And Jesus added, "I, the Son of Man, am master even of the Sabbath."

[6] On another Sabbath day, a man with a deformed right hand was in the synagogue while Jesus was teaching. [7] The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees watched closely to see whether Jesus would heal the man on the Sabbath, because they were eager to find some legal charge to bring against him. [8] But Jesus knew their thoughts. He said to the man with the deformed hand, "Come and stand here where everyone can see." So the man came forward. [9] Then Jesus said to his critics, "I have a question for you. Is it legal to do good deeds on the Sabbath, or is it a day for doing harm? Is this a day to save life or to destroy it?" [10] He looked around at them one by one and then said to the man, "Reach out your hand." The man reached out his hand, and it became normal again! [11] At this, the enemies of Jesus were wild with rage and began to discuss what to do with him.

[12] One day soon afterward Jesus went to a mountain to pray, and he prayed to God all night.
[13] At daybreak he called together all of his disciples and chose twelve of them to be apostles.
Here are their names:

[14] Simon (he also called him Peter),
Andrew (Peter's brother),
James,
John,
Philip,
Bartholomew,
[15] Matthew,
Thomas,
James (son of Alphaeus),
Simon (the Zealot),
[16] Judas (son of James),
Judas Iscariot (who later betrayed him).

[17] When they came down the slopes of the mountain, the disciples stood with Jesus on a large, level area, surrounded by many of his followers and by the crowds. There were people from all over Judea and from Jerusalem and from as far north as the seacoasts of Tyre and Sidon.
[18] They had come to hear him and to be healed, and Jesus cast out many evil spirits. [19] Everyone was trying to touch him, because healing power went out from him, and they were all cured.

[20] Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said,

"God blesses you who are poor,
for the Kingdom of God is given to you.

[21] God blesses you who are hungry now,
for you will be satisfied.

God blesses you who weep now,
for the time will come when you will laugh with joy.

[22] God blesses you who are hated and excluded and mocked and cursed
because you are identified with me, the Son of Man.

[23] "When that happens, rejoice! Yes, leap for joy! For a great reward awaits you in heaven.
And remember, the ancient prophets were also treated that way by your ancestors.

[24] "What sorrows await you who are rich,
for you have your only happiness now.

[25] What sorrows await you who are satisfied and prosperous now,
for a time of awful hunger is before you.

What sorrows await you who laugh carelessly,
for your laughing will turn to mourning and sorrow.

[26] What sorrows await you who are praised by the crowds,
for their ancestors also praised false prophets.

[27] "But if you are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. [28] Pray for the happiness of those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. [29] If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn the other cheek. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also. [30] Give what you have to anyone who asks you for it; and when things are taken away from you, don't try to get them back. [31] Do for others as you would like them to do for you.

[32] "Do you think you deserve credit merely for loving those who love you? Even the sinners do that! [33] And if you do good only to those who do good to you, is that so wonderful? Even sinners do that much! [34] And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, what good is that? Even sinners will lend to their own kind for a full return.

[35] "Love your enemies! Do good to them! Lend to them! And don't be concerned that they might not repay. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to the unthankful and to those who are wicked. [36] You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.

[37] "Stop judging others, and you will not be judged. Stop criticizing others, or it will all come back on you. If you forgive others, you will be forgiven. [38] If you give, you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use in giving—large or small—it will be used to measure what is given back to you."

[39] Then Jesus gave the following illustration: "What good is it for one blind person to lead another? The first one will fall into a ditch and pull the other down also. [40] A student is not greater than the teacher. But the student who works hard will become like the teacher.

[41] "And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? [42] How can you think of saying, 'Friend, let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log from your own eye; then perhaps you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.

[43] "A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. [44] A tree is identified by the kind of fruit it produces. Figs never grow on thorn bushes or grapes on bramble bushes. [45] A good person produces good deeds from a good heart, and an evil person produces evil deeds from an evil heart. Whatever is in your heart determines what you say.

[46] "So why do you call me 'Lord,' when you won't obey me? [47] I will show you what it's like when someone comes to me, listens to my teaching, and then obeys me. [48] It is like a person who builds a house on a strong foundation laid upon the underlying rock. When the floodwaters rise and break against the house, it stands firm because it is well built. [49] But anyone who listens and doesn't obey is like a person who builds a house without a foundation. When the floods sweep down against that house, it will crumble into a heap of ruins."

[7:1] When Jesus had finished saying all this, he went back to Capernaum. [2] Now the highly valued slave of a Roman officer was sick and near death. [3] When the officer heard about Jesus, he sent some respected Jewish leaders to ask him to come and heal his slave. [4] So they earnestly begged Jesus to come with them and help the man. "If anyone deserves your help, it is he," they said, [5] "for he loves the Jews and even built a synagogue for us."

[6] So Jesus went with them. But just before they arrived at the house, the officer sent some friends to say, "Lord, don't trouble yourself by coming to my home, for I am not worthy of such an honor. [7] I am not even worthy to come and meet you. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed. [8] I know because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, 'Go,' and they go, or 'Come,' and they come. And if I say to my slaves, 'Do this or that,' they do it."

[9] When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Turning to the crowd, he said, "I tell you, I haven't seen faith like this in all the land of Israel!" [10] And when the officer's friends returned to his house, they found the slave completely healed.

[11] Soon afterward Jesus went with his disciples to the village of Nain, with a great crowd following him. [12] A funeral procession was coming out as he approached the village gate. The boy who had died was the only son of a widow, and many mourners from the village were with her. [13] When the Lord saw her, his heart overflowed with compassion. "Don't cry!" he said. [14] Then he walked over to the coffin and touched it, and the bearers stopped. "Young man," he said, "get up." [15] Then the dead boy sat up and began to talk to those around him! And Jesus gave him back to his mother.

[16] Great fear swept the crowd, and they praised God, saying, "A mighty prophet has risen among us," and "We have seen the hand of God at work today." [17] The report of what Jesus had done that day spread all over Judea and even out across its borders.

[18] The disciples of John the Baptist told John about everything Jesus was doing. So John called for two of his disciples, [19] and he sent them to the Lord to ask him, "Are you the Messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?"

[20] John's two disciples found Jesus and said to him, "John the Baptist sent us to ask, 'Are you the Messiah we've been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?'"

[21] At that very time, he cured many people of their various diseases, and he cast out evil spirits and restored sight to the blind. [22] Then he told John's disciples, "Go back to John and tell him what you have seen and heard—the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor. [23] And tell him, 'God blesses those who are not offended by me.'"

[24] After they left, Jesus talked to the crowd about John. "Who is this man in the wilderness that you went out to see? Did you find him weak as a reed, moved by every breath of wind? [25] Or were you expecting to see a man dressed in expensive clothes? No, people who wear beautiful clothes and live in luxury are found in palaces, not in the wilderness. [26] Were you looking for a prophet? Yes, and he is more than a prophet. [27] John is the man to whom the Scriptures refer when they say,

'Look, I am sending my messenger before you,
and he will prepare your way before you.'

[28] I tell you, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John. Yet even the most insignificant person in the Kingdom of God is greater than he is!"

[29] When they heard this, all the people, including the unjust tax collectors, agreed that God's plan was right, for they had been baptized by John. [30] But the Pharisees and experts in religious law had rejected God's plan for them, for they had refused John's baptism.

[31] "How shall I describe this generation?" Jesus asked. "With what will I compare them? [32] They are like a group of children playing a game in the public square. They complain to their friends, 'We played wedding songs, and you weren't happy, so we played funeral songs, but you weren't sad.' [33] For John the Baptist didn't drink wine and he often fasted, and you say, 'He's demon possessed.' [34] And I, the Son of Man, feast and drink, and you say, 'He's a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of the worst sort of sinners!' [35] But wisdom is shown to be right by the lives of those who follow it."

[36] One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to come to his home for a meal, so Jesus accepted the invitation and sat down to eat. [37] A certain immoral woman heard he was there and brought a beautiful jar filled with expensive perfume. [38] Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing his feet and putting perfume on them.

[39] When the Pharisee who was the host saw what was happening and who the woman was, he said to himself, "This proves that Jesus is no prophet. If God had really sent him, he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She's a sinner!"

[40] Then Jesus spoke up and answered his thoughts. "Simon," he said to the Pharisee, "I have something to say to you."

"All right, Teacher," Simon replied, "go ahead."

[41] Then Jesus told him this story: "A man loaned money to two people—five hundred pieces of silver to one and fifty pieces to the other. [42] But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, canceling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more after that?"

[43] Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the larger debt."

"That's right," Jesus said. [44] Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your home, you didn't offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. [45] You didn't give me a kiss of greeting, but she has kissed my feet again and again from the time I first came in. [46] You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint my head, but she has anointed my feet with rare perfume. [47] I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love." [48] Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."

[49] The men at the table said among themselves, "Who does this man think he is, going around forgiving sins?"

[50] And Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

[8:1] Not long afterward Jesus began a tour of the nearby cities and villages to announce the Good News concerning the Kingdom of God. He took his twelve disciples with him, [2] along with some women he had healed and from whom he had cast out evil spirits. Among them were Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons; [3] Joanna, the wife of Chuza,

Herod's business manager; Susanna; and many others who were contributing from their own resources to support Jesus and his disciples.

[4] One day Jesus told this story to a large crowd that had gathered from many towns to hear him: [5] "A farmer went out to plant some seed. As he scattered it across his field, some seed fell on a footpath, where it was stepped on, and the birds came and ate it. [6] Other seed fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. This seed began to grow, but soon it withered and died for lack of moisture. [7] Other seed fell among thorns that shot up and choked out the tender blades. [8] Still other seed fell on fertile soil. This seed grew and produced a crop one hundred times as much as had been planted." When he had said this, he called out, "Anyone who is willing to hear should listen and understand!"

[9] His disciples asked him what the story meant. [10] He replied, "You have been permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of God. But I am using these stories to conceal everything about it from outsiders, so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled:

'They see what I do,
but they don't really see;
they hear what I say,
but they don't understand.'

[11] "This is the meaning of the story: The seed is God's message. [12] The seed that fell on the hard path represents those who hear the message, but then the Devil comes and steals it away and prevents them from believing and being saved. [13] The rocky soil represents those who hear the message with joy. But like young plants in such soil, their roots don't go very deep. They believe for a while, but they wilt when the hot winds of testing blow. [14] The thorny ground represents those who hear and accept the message, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. And so they never grow into maturity. [15] But the good soil represents honest, good-hearted people who hear God's message, cling to it, and steadily produce a huge harvest.

[16] "No one would light a lamp and then cover it up or put it under a bed. No, lamps are mounted in the open, where they can be seen by those entering the house. [17] For everything that is hidden or secret will eventually be brought to light and made plain to all. [18] So be sure to pay attention to what you hear. To those who are open to my teaching, more understanding will be given. But to those who are not listening, even what they think they have will be taken away from them."

[19] Once when Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him, they couldn't get to him because of the crowds. [20] Someone told Jesus, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, and they want to see you."

[21] Jesus replied, "My mother and my brothers are all those who hear the message of God and obey it."

[22] One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's cross over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and started out. [23] On the way across, Jesus lay down for a nap, and while he

was sleeping the wind began to rise. A fierce storm developed that threatened to swamp them, and they were in real danger.

[24] The disciples woke him up, shouting, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!"

So Jesus rebuked the wind and the raging waves. The storm stopped and all was calm! [25] Then he asked them, "Where is your faith?"

And they were filled with awe and amazement. They said to one another, "Who is this man, that even the winds and waves obey him?"

[26] So they arrived in the land of the Gerasenes, across the lake from Galilee. [27] As Jesus was climbing out of the boat, a man who was possessed by demons came out to meet him. Homeless and naked, he had lived in a cemetery for a long time. [28] As soon as he saw Jesus, he shrieked and fell to the ground before him, screaming, "Why are you bothering me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Please, I beg you, don't torture me!" [29] For Jesus had already commanded the evil spirit to come out of him. This spirit had often taken control of the man. Even when he was shackled with chains, he simply broke them and rushed out into the wilderness, completely under the demon's power.

[30] "What is your name?" Jesus asked.

"Legion," he replied—for the man was filled with many demons. [31] The demons kept begging Jesus not to send them into the Bottomless Pit. [32] A large herd of pigs was feeding on the hillside nearby, and the demons pleaded with him to let them enter into the pigs. Jesus gave them permission. [33] So the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the whole herd plunged down the steep hillside into the lake, where they drowned.

[34] When the herdsmen saw it, they fled to the nearby city and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. [35] A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, for they wanted to see for themselves what had happened. And they saw the man who had been possessed by demons sitting quietly at Jesus' feet, clothed and sane. And the whole crowd was afraid. [36] Then those who had seen what happened told the others how the demon-possessed man had been healed. [37] And all the people in that region begged Jesus to go away and leave them alone, for a great wave of fear swept over them.

So Jesus returned to the boat and left, crossing back to the other side of the lake. [38] The man who had been demon possessed begged to go, too, but Jesus said, [39] "No, go back to your family and tell them all the wonderful things God has done for you." So he went all through the city telling about the great thing Jesus had done for him.

[40] On the other side of the lake the crowds received Jesus with open arms because they had been waiting for him. [41] And now a man named Jairus, a leader of the local synagogue, came and fell down at Jesus' feet, begging him to come home with him. [42] His only child was dying, a little girl twelve years old.

As Jesus went with him, he was surrounded by the crowds. [43] And there was a woman in the crowd who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years. She had spent everything she had on doctors and still could find no cure. [44] She came up behind Jesus and touched the fringe of his robe. Immediately, the bleeding stopped.

[45] "Who touched me?" Jesus asked.

Everyone denied it, and Peter said, "Master, this whole crowd is pressing up against you."

[46] But Jesus told him, "No, someone deliberately touched me, for I felt healing power go out from me." [47] When the woman realized that Jesus knew, she began to tremble and fell to her knees before him. The whole crowd heard her explain why she had touched him and that she had been immediately healed. [48] "Daughter," he said to her, "your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

[49] While he was still speaking to her, a messenger arrived from Jairus's home with the message, "Your little girl is dead. There's no use troubling the Teacher now."

[50] But when Jesus heard what had happened, he said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid. Just trust me, and she will be all right."

[51] When they arrived at the house, Jesus wouldn't let anyone go in with him except Peter, James, John, and the little girl's father and mother. [52] The house was filled with people weeping and wailing, but he said, "Stop the weeping! She isn't dead; she is only asleep."

[53] But the crowd laughed at him because they all knew she had died. [54] Then Jesus took her by the hand and said in a loud voice, "Get up, my child!" [55] And at that moment her life returned, and she immediately stood up! Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. [56] Her parents were overwhelmed, but Jesus insisted that they not tell anyone what had happened.

[9:1] One day Jesus called together his twelve apostles and gave them power and authority to cast out demons and to heal all diseases. [2] Then he sent them out to tell everyone about the coming of the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick. [3] "Don't even take along a walking stick," he instructed them, "nor a traveler's bag, nor food, nor money. Not even an extra coat. [4] When you enter each village, be a guest in only one home. [5] If the people of the village won't receive your message when you enter it, shake off its dust from your feet as you leave. It is a sign that you have abandoned that village to its fate."

[6] So they began their circuit of the villages, preaching the Good News and healing the sick.

[7] When reports of Jesus' miracles reached Herod Antipas, he was worried and puzzled because some were saying, "This is John the Baptist come back to life again." [8] Others were saying, "It is Elijah or some other ancient prophet risen from the dead."

[9] "I beheaded John," Herod said, "so who is this man about whom I hear such strange stories?" And he tried to see him.

[10] When the apostles returned, they told Jesus everything they had done. Then he slipped quietly away with them toward the town of Bethsaida. [11] But the crowds found out where he was going, and they followed him. And he welcomed them, teaching them about the Kingdom of God and curing those who were ill. [12] Late in the afternoon the twelve disciples came to him and said, "Send the crowds away to the nearby villages and farms, so they can find food and lodging for the night. There is nothing to eat here in this deserted place."

[13] But Jesus said, "You feed them."

"Impossible!" they protested. "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish. Or are you expecting us to go and buy enough food for this whole crowd?" [14] For there were about five thousand men there.

"Just tell them to sit down on the ground in groups of about fifty each," Jesus replied. [15] So the people all sat down. [16] Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and asked God's blessing on the food. Breaking the loaves into pieces, he kept giving the bread and fish to the disciples to give to the people. [17] They all ate as much as they wanted, and they picked up twelve baskets of leftovers!

[18] One day as Jesus was alone, praying, he came over to his disciples and asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

[19] "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other ancient prophets risen from the dead."

[20] Then he asked them, "Who do you say I am?"

Peter replied, "You are the Messiah sent from God!"

[21] Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about this. [22] "For I, the Son of Man, must suffer many terrible things," he said. "I will be rejected by the leaders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. I will be killed, but three days later I will be raised from the dead."

[23] Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross daily, and follow me. [24] If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for me, you will find true life. [25] And how do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose or forfeit your own soul in the process? [26] If a person is ashamed of me and my message, I, the Son of Man, will be ashamed of that person when I return in my glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels. [27] And I assure you that some of you standing here right now will not die before you see the Kingdom of God."

[28] About eight days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John to a mountain to pray. [29] And as he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothing became dazzling white. [30] Then two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared and began talking with Jesus. [31] They were glorious to see. And they were speaking of how he was about to fulfill God's plan by dying in Jerusalem.

[32] Peter and the others were very drowsy and had fallen asleep. Now they woke up and saw Jesus' glory and the two men standing with him. [33] As Moses and Elijah were starting to leave, Peter, not even knowing what he was saying, blurted out, "Master, this is wonderful! We will make three shrines—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." [34] But even as he was saying this, a cloud came over them; and terror gripped them as it covered them.

[35] Then a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, my Chosen One. Listen to him." [36] When the voice died away, Jesus was there alone. They didn't tell anyone what they had seen until long after this happened.

[37] The next day, after they had come down the mountain, a huge crowd met Jesus. [38] A man in the crowd called out to him, "Teacher, look at my boy, who is my only son. [39] An evil spirit keeps seizing him, making him scream. It throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It is always hitting and injuring him. It hardly ever leaves him alone. [40] I begged your disciples to cast the spirit out, but they couldn't do it."

[41] "You stubborn, faithless people," Jesus said, "how long must I be with you and put up with you? Bring him here." [42] As the boy came forward, the demon knocked him to the ground and threw him into a violent convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit and healed the boy. Then he gave him back to his father. [43] Awe gripped the people as they saw this display of God's power.

While everyone was marveling over all the wonderful things he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, [44] "Listen to me and remember what I say. The Son of Man is going to be betrayed." [45] But they didn't know what he meant. Its significance was hidden from them, so they could not understand it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.

[46] Then there was an argument among them as to which of them would be the greatest. [47] But Jesus knew their thoughts, so he brought a little child to his side. [48] Then he said to them, "Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes my Father who sent me. Whoever is the least among you is the greatest."

[49] John said to Jesus, "Master, we saw someone using your name to cast out demons. We tried to stop him because he isn't in our group."

[50] But Jesus said, "Don't stop him! Anyone who is not against you is for you."

[51] As the time drew near for his return to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. [52] He sent messengers ahead to a Samaritan village to prepare for his arrival. [53] But they were turned away. The people of the village refused to have anything to do with Jesus because he had resolved to go to Jerusalem. [54] When James and John heard about it, they said to Jesus, "Lord, should we order down fire from heaven to burn them up?" [55] But Jesus turned and rebuked them. [56] So they went on to another village.

[57] As they were walking along someone said to Jesus, "I will follow you no matter where you go."

[58] But Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but I, the Son of Man, have no home of my own, not even a place to lay my head."

[59] He said to another person, "Come, be my disciple."

The man agreed, but he said, "Lord, first let me return home and bury my father."

[60] Jesus replied, "Let those who are spiritually dead care for their own dead. Your duty is to go and preach the coming of the Kingdom of God."

[61] Another said, "Yes, Lord, I will follow you, but first let me say good-bye to my family."

[62] But Jesus told him, "Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God."

[10:1] The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them on ahead in pairs to all the towns and villages he planned to visit. [2] These were his instructions to them: "The harvest is so great, but the workers are so few. Pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest, and ask him to send out more workers for his fields. [3] Go now, and remember that I am sending you out as lambs among wolves. [4] Don't take along any money, or a traveler's bag, or even an extra pair of sandals. And don't stop to greet anyone on the road.

[5] "Whenever you enter a home, give it your blessing. [6] If those who live there are worthy, the blessing will stand; if they are not, the blessing will return to you. [7] When you enter a town, don't move around from home to home. Stay in one place, eating and drinking what they provide you. Don't hesitate to accept hospitality, because those who work deserve their pay.

[8] "If a town welcomes you, eat whatever is set before you [9] and heal the sick. As you heal them, say, 'The Kingdom of God is near you now.' [10] But if a town refuses to welcome you, go out into its streets and say, [11] 'We wipe the dust of your town from our feet as a public announcement of your doom. And don't forget the Kingdom of God is near!' [12] The truth is, even wicked Sodom will be better off than such a town on the judgment day.

[13] "What horrors await you, Korazin and Bethsaida! For if the miracles I did in you had been done in wicked Tyre and Sidon, their people would have sat in deep repentance long ago, clothed in sackcloth and throwing ashes on their heads to show their remorse. [14] Yes, Tyre and Sidon will be better off on the judgment day than you. [15] And you people of Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to the place of the dead."

[16] Then he said to the disciples, "Anyone who accepts your message is also accepting me. And anyone who rejects you is rejecting me. And anyone who rejects me is rejecting God who sent me."

[17] When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to him, "Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name!"

[18] "Yes," he told them, "I saw Satan falling from heaven as a flash of lightning! [19] And I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you. [20] But don't rejoice just because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered as citizens of heaven."

[21] Then Jesus was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit and said, "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding the truth from those who think themselves so wise and clever, and for revealing it to the childlike. Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way.

[22] "My Father has given me authority over everything. No one really knows the Son except the Father, and no one really knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

[23] Then when they were alone, he turned to the disciples and said, "How privileged you are to see what you have seen. [24] I tell you, many prophets and kings have longed to see and hear what you have seen and heard, but they could not."

[25] One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: "Teacher, what must I do to receive eternal life?"

[26] Jesus replied, "What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?"

[27] The man answered, "'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' "

[28] "Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!"

[29] The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

[30] Jesus replied with an illustration: "A Jewish man was traveling on a trip from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes and money, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.

[31] "By chance a Jewish priest came along; but when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. [32] A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

[33] "Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt deep pity. [34] Kneeling beside him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with medicine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. [35] The next day he handed the innkeeper two pieces of silver and told him to take care of the man. 'If his bill runs higher than that,' he said, 'I'll pay the difference the next time I am here.'

[36] "Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked.

[37] The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy."

Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same."

[38] As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a village where a woman named Martha welcomed them into her home. [39] Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. [40] But Martha was worrying over the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

[41] But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are so upset over all these details! [42] There is really only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it—and I won't take it away from her."

[11:1] Once when Jesus had been out praying, one of his disciples came to him as he finished and said, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

[2] He said, "This is how you should pray:

"Father, may your name be honored.

May your Kingdom come soon.

[3] Give us our food day by day.

[4] And forgive us our sins—

just as we forgive those who have sinned against us.

And don't let us yield to temptation."

[5] Then, teaching them more about prayer, he used this illustration: "Suppose you went to a friend's house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You would say to him, [6] 'A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.'

[7] He would call out from his bedroom, 'Don't bother me. The door is locked for the night, and we are all in bed. I can't help you this time.' [8] But I tell you this—though he won't do it as a friend, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you what you want so his reputation won't be damaged.

[9] "And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will be given what you ask for. Keep on looking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened. [10] For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And the door is opened to everyone who knocks.

[11] "You fathers—if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? [12] Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! [13] If you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him."

[14] One day Jesus cast a demon out of a man who couldn't speak, and the man's voice returned to him. The crowd was amazed, [15] but some said, "No wonder he can cast out demons. He gets his power from Satan, the prince of demons!" [16] Trying to test Jesus, others asked for a miraculous sign from heaven to see if he was from God.

[17] He knew their thoughts, so he said, "Any kingdom at war with itself is doomed. A divided home is also doomed. [18] You say I am empowered by the prince of demons. But if Satan is fighting against himself by empowering me to cast out his demons, how can his kingdom survive? [19] And if I am empowered by the prince of demons, what about your own followers? They cast out demons, too, so they will judge you for what you have said. [20] But if I am casting out demons by the power of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you. [21] For when Satan, who is completely armed, guards his palace, it is safe— [22] until someone who is stronger attacks and overpowers him, strips him of his weapons, and carries off his belongings.

[23] "Anyone who isn't helping me opposes me, and anyone who isn't working with me is actually working against me.

[24] "When an evil spirit leaves a person, it goes into the desert, searching for rest. But when it finds none, it says, 'I will return to the person I came from.' [25] So it returns and finds that its former home is all swept and clean. [26] Then the spirit finds seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they all enter the person and live there. And so that person is worse off than before."

[27] As he was speaking, a woman in the crowd called out, "God bless your mother—the womb from which you came, and the breasts that nursed you!"

[28] He replied, "But even more blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice."

[29] As the crowd pressed in on Jesus, he said, "These are evil times, and this evil generation keeps asking me to show them a miraculous sign. But the only sign I will give them is the sign of the prophet Jonah. [30] What happened to him was a sign to the people of Nineveh that God had sent him. What happens to me will be a sign that God has sent me, the Son of Man, to these people.

[31] "The queen of Sheba will rise up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, because she came from a distant land to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And now someone greater than Solomon is here—and you refuse to listen to him. [32] The people of Nineveh, too, will rise up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah. And now someone greater than Jonah is here—and you refuse to repent.

[33] "No one lights a lamp and then hides it or puts it under a basket. Instead, it is put on a lampstand to give light to all who enter the room. [34] Your eye is a lamp for your body. A pure eye lets sunshine into your soul. But an evil eye shuts out the light and plunges you into darkness. [35] Make sure that the light you think you have is not really darkness. [36] If you are filled with light, with no dark corners, then your whole life will be radiant, as though a floodlight is shining on you."

[37] As Jesus was speaking, one of the Pharisees invited him home for a meal. So he went in and took his place at the table. [38] His host was amazed to see that he sat down to eat without first performing the ceremonial washing required by Jewish custom. [39] Then the Lord said to him, "You Pharisees are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are still filthy—full of greed and wickedness! [40] Fools! Didn't God make the inside as well as the outside? [41] So give to the needy what you greedily possess, and you will be clean all over.

[42] "But how terrible it will be for you Pharisees! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest part of your income, but you completely forget about justice and the love of God. You should tithe, yes, but you should not leave undone the more important things.

[43] "How terrible it will be for you Pharisees! For how you love the seats of honor in the synagogues and the respectful greetings from everyone as you walk through the markets! [44] Yes, how terrible it will be for you. For you are like hidden graves in a field. People walk over them without knowing the corruption they are stepping on."

[45] "Teacher," said an expert in religious law, "you have insulted us, too, in what you just said."

[46] "Yes," said Jesus, "how terrible it will be for you experts in religious law! For you crush people beneath impossible religious demands, and you never lift a finger to help ease the burden. [47] How terrible it will be for you! For you build tombs for the very prophets your ancestors killed long ago. [48] Murderers! You agree with your ancestors that what they did was right. You would have done the same yourselves. [49] This is what God in his wisdom said about you: 'I will send prophets and apostles to them, and they will kill some and persecute the others.'

[50] "And you of this generation will be held responsible for the murder of all God's prophets from the creation of the world— [51] from the murder of Abel to the murder of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, it will surely be charged against you.

[52] "How terrible it will be for you experts in religious law! For you hide the key to knowledge from the people. You don't enter the Kingdom yourselves, and you prevent others from entering."

[53] As Jesus finished speaking, the Pharisees and teachers of religious law were furious. From that time on they grilled him with many hostile questions, [54] trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him.

[12:1] Meanwhile, the crowds grew until thousands were milling about and crushing each other. Jesus turned first to his disciples and warned them, "Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees—beware of their hypocrisy. [2] The time is coming when everything will be revealed; all that is secret will be made public. [3] Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be shouted from the housetops for all to hear!

[4] "Dear friends, don't be afraid of those who want to kill you. They can only kill the body; they cannot do any more to you. [5] But I'll tell you whom to fear. Fear God, who has the power to kill people and then throw them into hell.

[6] "What is the price of five sparrows? A couple of pennies? Yet God does not forget a single one of them. [7] And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to him than a whole flock of sparrows.

[8] "And I assure you of this: If anyone acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I, the Son of Man, will openly acknowledge that person in the presence of God's angels. [9] But if anyone denies me here on earth, I will deny that person before God's angels. [10] Yet those who speak against the Son of Man may be forgiven, but anyone who speaks blasphemies against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven.

[11] "And when you are brought to trial in the synagogues and before rulers and authorities, don't worry about what to say in your defense, [12] for the Holy Spirit will teach you what needs to be said even as you are standing there."

[13] Then someone called from the crowd, "Teacher, please tell my brother to divide our father's estate with me."

[14] Jesus replied, "Friend, who made me a judge over you to decide such things as that?" [15] Then he said, "Beware! Don't be greedy for what you don't have. Real life is not measured by how much we own."

[16] And he gave an illustration: "A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. [17] In fact, his barns were full to overflowing. [18] So he said, 'I know! I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I'll have room enough to store everything. [19] And I'll sit back and say to myself, My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!'

[20] "But God said to him, 'You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get it all?'

[21] "Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God."

[22] Then turning to his disciples, Jesus said, "So I tell you, don't worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food to eat or clothes to wear. [23] For life consists of far more than food and clothing. [24] Look at the ravens. They don't need to plant or harvest or put food in barns because God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than any birds! [25] Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? Of course not! [26] And if worry can't do little things like that, what's the use of worrying over bigger things?"

[27] "Look at the lilies and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. [28] And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and gone tomorrow, won't he more surely care for you? You have so little faith! [29] And don't worry about food—what to eat and drink. Don't worry whether God will provide it for you. [30] These things dominate the thoughts of most people, but your Father already knows your needs. [31] He will give you all you need from day to day if you make the Kingdom of God your primary concern.

[32] "So don't be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom.

[33] "Sell what you have and give to those in need. This will store up treasure for you in heaven! And the purses of heaven have no holes in them. Your treasure will be safe—no thief can steal it and no moth can destroy it. [34] Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be.

[35] "Be dressed for service and well prepared, [36] as though you were waiting for your master to return from the wedding feast. Then you will be ready to open the door and let him in the moment he arrives and knocks. [37] There will be special favor for those who are ready and waiting for his return. I tell you, he himself will seat them, put on an apron, and serve them as they sit and eat! [38] He may come in the middle of the night or just before dawn. But whenever he comes, there will be special favor for his servants who are ready!

[39] "Know this: A homeowner who knew exactly when a burglar was coming would not permit the house to be broken into. [40] You must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected."

[41] Peter asked, "Lord, is this illustration just for us or for everyone?"

[42] And the Lord replied, "I'm talking to any faithful, sensible servant to whom the master gives the responsibility of managing his household and feeding his family. [43] If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. [44] I assure you, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns. [45] But if the servant thinks, 'My master won't be back for a while,' and begins oppressing the other servants, partying, and getting drunk— [46] well, the master will return unannounced and unexpected. He will tear the servant apart and banish him with the unfaithful. [47] The servant will be severely punished, for though he knew his duty, he refused to do it.

[48] "But people who are not aware that they are doing wrong will be punished only lightly. Much is required from those to whom much is given, and much more is required from those to whom much more is given.

[49] "I have come to bring fire to the earth, and I wish that my task were already completed! [50] There is a terrible baptism ahead of me, and I am under a heavy burden until it is accomplished. [51] Do you think I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I have come to bring strife and division! [52] From now on families will be split apart, three in favor of me, and two against—or the other way around. [53] There will be a division between father and son, mother and daughter, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law."

[54] Then Jesus turned to the crowd and said, "When you see clouds beginning to form in the west, you say, 'Here comes a shower.' And you are right. [55] When the south wind blows, you say, 'Today will be a scorcher.' And it is. [56] You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky, but you can't interpret these present times.

[57] "Why can't you decide for yourselves what is right? [58] If you are on the way to court and you meet your accuser, try to settle the matter before it reaches the judge, or you may be sentenced and handed over to an officer and thrown in jail. [59] And if that happens, you won't be free again until you have paid the last penny."

[13:1] About this time Jesus was informed that Pilate had murdered some people from Galilee as they were sacrificing at the Temple in Jerusalem. [2] "Do you think those Galileans were worse sinners than other people from Galilee?" he asked. "Is that why they suffered? [3] Not at all! And you will also perish unless you turn from your evil ways and turn to God. [4] And what about the eighteen men who died when the Tower of Siloam fell on them? Were they the worst sinners in Jerusalem? [5] No, and I tell you again that unless you repent, you will also perish."

[6] Then Jesus used this illustration: "A man planted a fig tree in his garden and came again and again to see if there was any fruit on it, but he was always disappointed. [7] Finally, he said to his gardener, 'I've waited three years, and there hasn't been a single fig! Cut it down. It's taking up space we can use for something else.'

[8] "The gardener answered, 'Give it one more chance. Leave it another year, and I'll give it special attention and plenty of fertilizer. [9] If we get figs next year, fine. If not, you can cut it down.' "

[10] One Sabbath day as Jesus was teaching in a synagogue, [11] he saw a woman who had been crippled by an evil spirit. She had been bent double for eighteen years and was unable to stand up straight. [12] When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are healed of your sickness!" [13] Then he touched her, and instantly she could stand straight. How she praised and thanked God!

[14] But the leader in charge of the synagogue was indignant that Jesus had healed her on the Sabbath day. "There are six days of the week for working," he said to the crowd. "Come on those days to be healed, not on the Sabbath."

[15] But the Lord replied, "You hypocrite! You work on the Sabbath day! Don't you untie your ox or your donkey from their stalls on the Sabbath and lead them out for water? [16] Wasn't it necessary for me, even on the Sabbath day, to free this dear woman from the bondage in which Satan has held her for eighteen years?" [17] This shamed his enemies. And all the people rejoiced at the wonderful things he did.

[18] Then Jesus said, "What is the Kingdom of God like? How can I illustrate it? [19] It is like a tiny mustard seed planted in a garden; it grows and becomes a tree, and the birds come and find shelter among its branches."

[20] He also asked, "What else is the Kingdom of God like? [21] It is like yeast used by a woman making bread. Even though she used a large amount of flour, the yeast permeated every part of the dough."

[22] Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he went, always pressing on toward Jerusalem. [23] Someone asked him, "Lord, will only a few be saved?"

He replied, [24] "The door to heaven is narrow. Work hard to get in, because many will try to enter, [25] but when the head of the house has locked the door, it will be too late. Then you will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Lord, open the door for us!' But he will reply, 'I do not know you.' [26] You will say, 'But we ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' [27] And he will reply, 'I tell you, I don't know you. Go away, all you who do evil.'

[28] "And there will be great weeping and gnashing of teeth, for you will see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets within the Kingdom of God, but you will be thrown out. [29] Then people will come from all over the world to take their places in the Kingdom of God. [30] And note this: Some who are despised now will be greatly honored then; and some who are greatly honored now will be despised then."

[31] A few minutes later some Pharisees said to him, "Get out of here if you want to live, because Herod Antipas wants to kill you!"

[32] Jesus replied, "Go tell that fox that I will keep on casting out demons and doing miracles of healing today and tomorrow; and the third day I will accomplish my purpose. [33] Yes, today, tomorrow, and the next day I must proceed on my way. For it wouldn't do for a prophet of God to be killed except in Jerusalem!

[34] "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones God's messengers! How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings, but you wouldn't let me. [35] And now look, your house is left to you empty. And you will never see me again until you say, 'Bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord!' "

[14:1] One Sabbath day Jesus was in the home of a leader of the Pharisees. The people were watching him closely, [2] because there was a man there whose arms and legs were swollen. [3] Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in religious law, "Well, is it permitted in the law to heal people on the Sabbath day, or not?" [4] When they refused to answer, Jesus touched the sick man and healed him and sent him away. [5] Then he turned to them and asked, "Which of you doesn't work on the Sabbath? If your son or your cow falls into a pit, don't you proceed at once to get him out?" [6] Again they had no answer.

[7] When Jesus noticed that all who had come to the dinner were trying to sit near the head of the table, he gave them this advice: [8] "If you are invited to a wedding feast, don't always head for the best seat. What if someone more respected than you has also been invited? [9] The host will say, 'Let this person sit here instead.' Then you will be embarrassed and will have to take whatever seat is left at the foot of the table!

[10] "Do this instead—sit at the foot of the table. Then when your host sees you, he will come and say, 'Friend, we have a better place than this for you!' Then you will be honored in front of all the other guests. [11] For the proud will be humbled, but the humble will be honored."

[12] Then he turned to his host. "When you put on a luncheon or a dinner," he said, "don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will repay you by inviting you back. [13] Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. [14] Then at the resurrection of the godly, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you."

[15] Hearing this, a man sitting at the table with Jesus exclaimed, "What a privilege it would be to have a share in the Kingdom of God!"

[16] Jesus replied with this illustration: "A man prepared a great feast and sent out many invitations. [17] When all was ready, he sent his servant around to notify the guests that it was time for them to come. [18] But they all began making excuses. One said he had just bought a field and wanted to inspect it, so he asked to be excused. [19] Another said he had just bought five pair of oxen and wanted to try them out. [20] Another had just been married, so he said he couldn't come.

[21] "The servant returned and told his master what they had said. His master was angry and said, 'Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the city and invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.' [22] After the servant had done this, he reported, 'There is still room for more.' [23] So his master said, 'Go out into the country lanes and behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to come, so that the house will be full. [24] For none of those I invited first will get even the smallest taste of what I had prepared for them.' "

[25] Great crowds were following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, [26] "If you want to be my follower you must love me more than your own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, more than your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. [27] And you cannot be my disciple if you do not carry your own cross and follow me.

[28] "But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first getting estimates and then checking to see if there is enough money to pay the bills? [29] Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of funds. And then how everyone would laugh at you! [30] They would say, 'There's the person who started that building and ran out of money before it was finished!'

[31] "Or what king would ever dream of going to war without first sitting down with his counselors and discussing whether his army of ten thousand is strong enough to defeat the twenty thousand soldiers who are marching against him? [32] If he is not able, then while the enemy is still far away, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace. [33] So no one can become my disciple without giving up everything for me.

[34] "Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? [35] Flavorless salt is good neither for the soil nor for fertilizer. It is thrown away. Anyone who is willing to hear should listen and understand!"

[15:1] Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach. [2] This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that he was associating with such despicable people—even eating with them!

[3] So Jesus used this illustration: [4] "If you had one hundred sheep, and one of them strayed away and was lost in the wilderness, wouldn't you leave the ninety-nine others to go and search for the lost one until you found it? [5] And then you would joyfully carry it home on your shoulders. [6] When you arrived, you would call together your friends and neighbors to rejoice with you because your lost sheep was found. [7] In the same way, heaven will be happier over one lost sinner who returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!

[8] "Or suppose a woman has ten valuable silver coins and loses one. Won't she light a lamp and look in every corner of the house and sweep every nook and cranny until she finds it? [9] And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors to rejoice with her because she has found her lost coin. [10] In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents."

[11] To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: "A man had two sons. [12] The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now, instead of waiting until you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.

[13] "A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and took a trip to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money on wild living. [14] About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. [15] He persuaded a local farmer to hire him to feed his pigs. [16] The boy became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.

[17] "When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired men have food enough to spare, and here I am, dying of hunger! [18] I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, [19] and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired man." ' "

[20] "So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long distance away, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. [21] His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.'

[22] "But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger, and sandals for his feet. [23] And kill the calf we have been fattening in the pen. We must celebrate with a feast, [24] for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began.

[25] "Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house, [26] and he asked one of the servants what was going on. [27] 'Your brother is back,' he was told, 'and your father has killed the calf we were fattening and has prepared a great feast. We are celebrating because of his safe return.'

[28] "The older brother was angry and wouldn't go in. His father came out and begged him, [29] but he replied, 'All these years I've worked hard for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends. [30] Yet when this son of yours comes back after squandering your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the finest calf we have.'

[31] "His father said to him, 'Look, dear son, you and I are very close, and everything I have is yours. [32] We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!' "

[16:1] Jesus told this story to his disciples: "A rich man hired a manager to handle his affairs, but soon a rumor went around that the manager was thoroughly dishonest. [2] So his employer called him in and said, 'What's this I hear about your stealing from me? Get your report in order, because you are going to be dismissed.'

[3] "The manager thought to himself, 'Now what? I'm through here, and I don't have the strength to go out and dig ditches, and I'm too proud to beg. [4] I know just the thing! And then I'll have plenty of friends to take care of me when I leave!'

[5] "So he invited each person who owed money to his employer to come and discuss the situation. He asked the first one, 'How much do you owe him?' [6] The man replied, 'I owe him eight hundred gallons of olive oil.' So the manager told him, 'Tear up that bill and write another one for four hundred gallons.'

[7] " 'And how much do you owe my employer?' he asked the next man. 'A thousand bushels of wheat,' was the reply. 'Here,' the manager said, 'take your bill and replace it with one for only eight hundred bushels.'

[8] "The rich man had to admire the dishonest rascal for being so shrewd. And it is true that the citizens of this world are more shrewd than the godly are. [9] I tell you, use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. In this way, your generosity stores up a reward for you in heaven.

[10] "Unless you are faithful in small matters, you won't be faithful in large ones. If you cheat even a little, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. [11] And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? [12] And if you are not faithful with other people's money, why should you be trusted with money of your own?

[13] "No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

[14] The Pharisees, who dearly loved their money, naturally scoffed at all this. [15] Then he said to them, "You like to look good in public, but God knows your evil hearts. What this world honors is an abomination in the sight of God.

[16] "Until John the Baptist began to preach, the laws of Moses and the messages of the prophets were your guides. But now the Good News of the Kingdom of God is preached, and eager multitudes are forcing their way in. [17] But that doesn't mean that the law has lost its force in even the smallest point. It is stronger and more permanent than heaven and earth.

[18] "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries someone else commits adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery."

[19] Jesus said, "There was a certain rich man who was splendidly clothed and who lived each day in luxury. [20] At his door lay a diseased beggar named Lazarus. [21] As Lazarus lay there longing for scraps from the rich man's table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores. [22] Finally, the beggar died and was carried by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, [23] and his soul went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he saw Lazarus in the far distance with Abraham.

[24] "The rich man shouted, 'Father Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in anguish in these flames.'

[25] "But Abraham said to him, 'Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted, and you are in anguish. [26] And besides, there is a great chasm separating us. Anyone who wanted to cross over to you from here is stopped at its edge, and no one there can cross over to us.'

[27] "Then the rich man said, 'Please, Father Abraham, send him to my father's home. [28] For I have five brothers, and I want him to warn them about this place of torment so they won't have to come here when they die.'

[29] "But Abraham said, 'Moses and the prophets have warned them. Your brothers can read their writings anytime they want to.'

[30] "The rich man replied, 'No, Father Abraham! But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will turn from their sins.'

[31] "But Abraham said, 'If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't listen even if someone rises from the dead.' "

[17:1] One day Jesus said to his disciples, "There will always be temptations to sin, but how terrible it will be for the person who does the tempting. [2] It would be better to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around the neck than to face the punishment in store for harming one of these little ones. [3] I am warning you! If another believer sins, rebuke him; then if he repents, forgive him. [4] Even if he wrongs you seven times a day and each time turns again and asks forgiveness, forgive him."

[5] One day the apostles said to the Lord, "We need more faith; tell us how to get it."

[6] "Even if you had faith as small as a mustard seed," the Lord answered, "you could say to this mulberry tree, 'May God uproot you and throw you into the sea,' and it would obey you!

[7] "When a servant comes in from plowing or taking care of sheep, he doesn't just sit down and eat. [8] He must first prepare his master's meal and serve him his supper before eating his own. [9] And the servant is not even thanked, because he is merely doing what he is supposed to do. [10] In the same way, when you obey me you should say, 'We are not worthy of praise. We are servants who have simply done our duty.' "

[11] As Jesus continued on toward Jerusalem, he reached the border between Galilee and Samaria. [12] As he entered a village there, ten lepers stood at a distance, [13] crying out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

[14] He looked at them and said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, their leprosy disappeared.

[15] One of them, when he saw that he was healed, came back to Jesus, shouting, "Praise God, I'm healed!" [16] He fell face down on the ground at Jesus' feet, thanking him for what he had done. This man was a Samaritan.

[17] Jesus asked, "Didn't I heal ten men? Where are the other nine? [18] Does only this foreigner return to give glory to God?" [19] And Jesus said to the man, "Stand up and go. Your faith has made you well."

[20] One day the Pharisees asked Jesus, "When will the Kingdom of God come?"

Jesus replied, "The Kingdom of God isn't ushered in with visible signs. [21] You won't be able to say, 'Here it is!' or 'It's over there!' For the Kingdom of God is among you."

[22] Later he talked again about this with his disciples. "The time is coming when you will long to share in the days of the Son of Man, but you won't be able to," he said. [23] "Reports will reach you that the Son of Man has returned and that he is in this place or that. Don't believe such reports or go out to look for him. [24] For when the Son of Man returns, you will know it beyond all doubt. It will be as evident as the lightning that flashes across the sky. [25] But first the Son of Man must suffer terribly and be rejected by this generation.

[26] "When the Son of Man returns, the world will be like the people were in Noah's day. [27] In those days before the flood, the people enjoyed banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat and the flood came to destroy them all.

[28] "And the world will be as it was in the days of Lot. People went about their daily business—eating and drinking, buying and selling, farming and building— [29] until the morning Lot left Sodom. Then fire and burning sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. [30] Yes, it will be 'business as usual' right up to the hour when the Son of Man returns. [31] On that day a person outside the house must not go into the house to pack. A person in the field must not return to town. [32] Remember what happened to Lot's wife! [33] Whoever clings to this life will lose it, and whoever loses this life will save it. [34] That night two people will be asleep in one bed; one will be taken away, and the other will be left. [35] Two women will be grinding flour together at the mill; one will be taken, the other left." [36]

[37] "Lord, where will this happen?" the disciples asked.

Jesus replied, "Just as the gathering of vultures shows there is a carcass nearby, so these signs indicate that the end is near."

[18:1] One day Jesus told his disciples a story to illustrate their need for constant prayer and to show them that they must never give up. [2] "There was a judge in a certain city," he said, "who was a godless man with great contempt for everyone. [3] A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, appealing for justice against someone who had harmed her. [4] The judge ignored her for a while, but eventually she wore him out. 'I fear neither God nor man,' he said to himself, [5] 'but this woman is driving me crazy. I'm going to see that she gets justice, because she is wearing me out with her constant requests!' "

[6] Then the Lord said, "Learn a lesson from this evil judge. [7] Even he rendered a just decision in the end, so don't you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who plead with him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? [8] I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly! But when I, the Son of Man, return, how many will I find who have faith?"

[9] Then Jesus told this story to some who had great self-confidence and scorned everyone else: [10] "Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a dishonest tax collector. [11] The proud Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: 'I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else, especially like that tax collector over there! For I never cheat, I don't sin, I don't commit adultery, [12] I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.'

[13] "But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.' [14] I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For the proud will be humbled, but the humble will be honored."

[15] One day some parents brought their little children to Jesus so he could touch them and bless them, but the disciples told them not to bother him. [16] Then Jesus called for the children and said to the disciples, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. [17] I assure you, anyone who doesn't have their kind of faith will never get into the Kingdom of God."

[18] Once a religious leader asked Jesus this question: "Good teacher, what should I do to get eternal life?"

[19] "Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked him. "Only God is truly good. [20] But as for your question, you know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery. Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not testify falsely. Honor your father and mother.' "

[21] The man replied, "I've obeyed all these commandments since I was a child."

[22] "There is still one thing you lack," Jesus said. "Sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." [23] But when the man heard this, he became sad because he was very rich.

[24] Jesus watched him go and then said to his disciples, "How hard it is for rich people to get into the Kingdom of God! [25] It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!"

[26] Those who heard this said, "Then who in the world can be saved?"

[27] He replied, "What is impossible from a human perspective is possible with God."

[28] Peter said, "We have left our homes and followed you."

[29] "Yes," Jesus replied, "and I assure you, everyone who has given up house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the Kingdom of God, [30] will be repaid many times over in this life, as well as receiving eternal life in the world to come."

[31] Gathering the twelve disciples around him, Jesus told them, "As you know, we are going to Jerusalem. And when we get there, all the predictions of the ancient prophets concerning the Son of Man will come true. [32] He will be handed over to the Romans to be mocked, treated shamefully, and spit upon. [33] They will whip him and kill him, but on the third day he will rise again."

[34] But they didn't understand a thing he said. Its significance was hidden from them, and they failed to grasp what he was talking about.

[35] As they approached Jericho, a blind beggar was sitting beside the road. [36] When he heard the noise of a crowd going past, he asked what was happening. [37] They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was going by. [38] So he began shouting, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" [39] The crowds ahead of Jesus tried to hush the man, but he only shouted louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

[40] When Jesus heard him, he stopped and ordered that the man be brought to him. [41] Then Jesus asked the man, "What do you want me to do for you?"

"Lord," he pleaded, "I want to see!"

[42] And Jesus said, "All right, you can see! Your faith has healed you." [43] Instantly the man could see, and he followed Jesus, praising God. And all who saw it praised God, too.

[19:1] Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. [2] There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was one of the most influential Jews in the Roman tax-collecting business, and he had become very rich. [3] He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowds. [4] So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree beside the road, so he could watch from there.

[5] When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! For I must be a guest in your home today."

[6] Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. [7] But the crowds were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled.

[8] Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have overcharged people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!"

[9] Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a son of Abraham. [10] And I, the Son of Man, have come to seek and save those like him who are lost."

[11] The crowd was listening to everything Jesus said. And because he was nearing Jerusalem, he told a story to correct the impression that the Kingdom of God would begin right away. [12] He said, "A nobleman was called away to a distant empire to be crowned king and then return. [13] Before he left, he called together ten servants and gave them ten pounds of silver to invest for him while he was gone. [14] But his people hated him and sent a delegation after him to say they did not want him to be their king.

[15] "When he returned, the king called in the servants to whom he had given the money. He wanted to find out what they had done with the money and what their profits were. [16] The first servant reported a tremendous gain—ten times as much as the original amount! [17] 'Well done!' the king exclaimed. 'You are a trustworthy servant. You have been faithful with the little I entrusted to you, so you will be governor of ten cities as your reward.'

[18] "The next servant also reported a good gain—five times the original amount. [19] 'Well done!' the king said. 'You can be governor over five cities.'

[20] "But the third servant brought back only the original amount of money and said, 'I hid it and kept it safe. [21] I was afraid because you are a hard man to deal with, taking what isn't yours and harvesting crops you didn't plant.'

[22] " 'You wicked servant!' the king roared. 'Hard, am I? If you knew so much about me and how tough I am, [23] why didn't you deposit the money in the bank so I could at least get some interest on it?' [24] Then turning to the others standing nearby, the king ordered, 'Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one who earned the most.'

[25] " 'But, master,' they said, 'that servant has enough already!'

[26] " 'Yes,' the king replied, 'but to those who use well what they are given, even more will be given. But from those who are unfaithful, even what little they have will be taken away. [27] And now about these enemies of mine who didn't want me to be their king—bring them in and execute them right here in my presence.' "

[28] After telling this story, Jesus went on toward Jerusalem, walking ahead of his disciples. [29] As they came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany, on the Mount of Olives, he sent two disciples ahead. [30] "Go into that village over there," he told them, "and as you enter it, you will see a colt tied there that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. [31] If anyone asks what you are doing, just say, 'The Lord needs it.' "

[32] So they went and found the colt, just as Jesus had said. [33] And sure enough, as they were untying it, the owners asked them, "Why are you untying our colt?"

[34] And the disciples simply replied, "The Lord needs it." [35] So they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it for him to ride on.

[36] Then the crowds spread out their coats on the road ahead of Jesus. [37] As they reached the place where the road started down from the Mount of Olives, all of his followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen.

[38] "Bless the King who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven
and glory in highest heaven!"

[39] But some of the Pharisees among the crowd said, "Teacher, rebuke your followers for saying things like that!"

[40] He replied, "If they kept quiet, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!"

[41] But as they came closer to Jerusalem and Jesus saw the city ahead, he began to cry. [42] "I wish that even today you would find the way of peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from you. [43] Before long your enemies will build ramparts against your walls and encircle you and close in on you. [44] They will crush you to the ground, and your children with you. Your enemies will not leave a single stone in place, because you have rejected the opportunity God offered you."

[45] Then Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out the merchants from their stalls. [46] He told them, "The Scriptures declare, 'My Temple will be a place of prayer,' but you have turned it into a den of thieves."

[47] After that, he taught daily in the Temple, but the leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the other leaders of the people began planning how to kill him. [48] But they could think of nothing, because all the people hung on every word he said.

[20:1] One day as Jesus was teaching and preaching the Good News in the Temple, the leading priests and teachers of religious law and other leaders came up to him. [2] They demanded, "By whose authority did you drive out the merchants from the Temple? Who gave you such authority?"

[3] "Let me ask you a question first," he replied. [4] "Did John's baptism come from heaven, or was it merely human?"

[5] They talked it over among themselves. "If we say it was from heaven, he will ask why we didn't believe him. [6] But if we say it was merely human, the people will stone us, because they are convinced he was a prophet." [7] Finally they replied, "We don't know."

[8] And Jesus responded, "Then I won't answer your question either."

[9] Now Jesus turned to the people again and told them this story: "A man planted a vineyard, leased it out to tenant farmers, and moved to another country to live for several years. [10] At grape-picking time, he sent one of his servants to collect his share of the crop. But the farmers attacked the servant, beat him up, and sent him back empty-handed. [11] So the owner sent another servant, but the same thing happened; he was beaten up and treated shamefully, and he went away empty-handed. [12] A third man was sent and the same thing happened. He, too, was wounded and chased away.

[13] " 'What will I do?' the owner asked himself. 'I know! I'll send my cherished son. Surely they will respect him.'

[14] "But when the farmers saw his son, they said to each other, 'Here comes the heir to this estate. Let's kill him and get the estate for ourselves!' [15] So they dragged him out of the vineyard and murdered him.

"What do you suppose the owner of the vineyard will do to those farmers?" Jesus asked. [16] "I'll tell you—he will come and kill them all and lease the vineyard to others."

"But God forbid that such a thing should ever happen," his listeners protested.

[17] Jesus looked at them and said, "Then what do the Scriptures mean?"

'The stone rejected by the builders
has now become the cornerstone.'

[18] All who stumble over that stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone on whom it falls."

[19] When the teachers of religious law and the leading priests heard this story, they wanted to arrest Jesus immediately because they realized he was pointing at them—that they were the farmers in the story. But they were afraid there would be a riot if they arrested him.

[20] Watching for their opportunity, the leaders sent secret agents pretending to be honest men. They tried to get Jesus to say something that could be reported to the Roman governor so he would arrest Jesus. [21] They said, "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right and are not influenced by what others think. You sincerely teach the ways of God. [22] Now tell us—is it right to pay taxes to the Roman government or not?"

[23] He saw through their trickery and said, [24] "Show me a Roman coin. Whose picture and title are stamped on it?"

"Caesar's," they replied.

[25] "Well then," he said, "give to Caesar what belongs to him. But everything that belongs to God must be given to God." [26] So they failed to trap him in the presence of the people. Instead, they were amazed by his answer, and they were silenced.

[27] Then some Sadducees stepped forward—a group of Jews who say there is no resurrection after death. [28] They posed this question: "Teacher, Moses gave us a law that if a man dies, leaving a wife but no children, his brother should marry the widow and have a child who will be the brother's heir. [29] Well, there were seven brothers. The oldest married and then died without children. [30] His brother married the widow, but he also died. Still no children. [31] And so it went, one after the other, until each of the seven had married her and died, leaving no children. [32] Finally, the woman died, too. [33] So tell us, whose wife will she be in the resurrection? For all seven were married to her!"

[34] Jesus replied, "Marriage is for people here on earth. [35] But that is not the way it will be in the age to come. For those worthy of being raised from the dead won't be married then. [36] And they will never die again. In these respects they are like angels. They are children of God raised up to new life. [37] But now, as to whether the dead will be raised—even Moses proved this when he wrote about the burning bush. Long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died, he referred to the Lord as 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' [38] So he is the God of the living, not the dead. They are all alive to him."

[39] "Well said, Teacher!" remarked some of the teachers of religious law who were standing there. [40] And that ended their questions; no one dared to ask any more.

[41] Then Jesus presented them with a question. "Why is it," he asked, "that the Messiah is said to be the son of David? [42] For David himself wrote in the book of Psalms:

"The Lord said to my Lord,
Sit in honor at my right hand
[43] until I humble your enemies,
making them a footstool under your feet."

[44] Since David called him Lord, how can he be his son at the same time?"

[45] Then, with the crowds listening, he turned to his disciples and said, [46] "Beware of these teachers of religious law! For they love to parade in flowing robes and to have everyone bow to them as they walk in the marketplaces. And how they love the seats of honor in the synagogues and at banquets.

[47] But they shamelessly cheat widows out of their property, and then, to cover up the kind of people they really are, they make long prayers in public. Because of this, their punishment will be the greater."

[21:1] While Jesus was in the Temple, he watched the rich people putting their gifts into the collection box. [2] Then a poor widow came by and dropped in two pennies. [3] "I assure you," he said, "this poor widow has given more than all the rest of them. [4] For they have given a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she has."

[5] Some of his disciples began talking about the beautiful stonework of the Temple and the memorial decorations on the walls. But Jesus said, [6] "The time is coming when all these things will be so completely demolished that not one stone will be left on top of another."

[7] "Teacher," they asked, "when will all this take place? And will there be any sign ahead of time?"

[8] He replied, "Don't let anyone mislead you. For many will come in my name, claiming to be the Messiah and saying, 'The time has come!' But don't believe them. [9] And when you hear of wars and insurrections, don't panic. Yes, these things must come, but the end won't follow immediately." [10] Then he added, "Nations and kingdoms will proclaim war against each other. [11] There will be great earthquakes, and there will be famines and epidemics in many lands, and there will be terrifying things and great miraculous signs in the heavens.

[12] "But before all this occurs, there will be a time of great persecution. You will be dragged into synagogues and prisons, and you will be accused before kings and governors of being my followers. [13] This will be your opportunity to tell them about me. [14] So don't worry about how to answer the charges against you, [15] for I will give you the right words and such wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to reply! [16] Even those closest to you—your parents, brothers, relatives, and friends—will betray you. And some of you will be killed. [17] And everyone will hate you because of your allegiance to me. [18] But not a hair of your head will perish! [19] By standing firm, you will win your souls.

[20] "And when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you will know that the time of its destruction has arrived. [21] Then those in Judea must flee to the hills. Let those in Jerusalem escape, and those outside the city should not enter it for shelter. [22] For those will be days of God's vengeance, and the prophetic words of the Scriptures will be fulfilled. [23] How terrible it will be for pregnant women and for mothers nursing their babies. For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. [24] They will be brutally killed by the sword or sent away as captives to all the nations of the world. And Jerusalem will be conquered and trampled down by the Gentiles until the age of the Gentiles comes to an end.

[25] "And there will be strange events in the skies—signs in the sun, moon, and stars. And down here on earth the nations will be in turmoil, perplexed by the roaring seas and strange tides. [26] The courage of many people will falter because of the fearful fate they see coming upon the earth, because the stability of the very heavens will be broken up. [27] Then everyone will see the Son of Man arrive on the clouds with power and great glory. [28] So when all these things begin to happen, stand straight and look up, for your salvation is near!"

[29] Then he gave them this illustration: "Notice the fig tree, or any other tree. [30] When the leaves come out, you know without being told that summer is near. [31] Just so, when you see the events I've described taking place, you can be sure that the Kingdom of God is near. [32] I assure you, this generation will not pass from the scene until all these events have taken place. [33] Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will remain forever.

[34] "Watch out! Don't let me find you living in careless ease and drunkenness, and filled with the worries of this life. Don't let that day catch you unaware, [35] as in a trap. For that day will come upon everyone living on the earth. [36] Keep a constant watch. And pray that, if possible, you may escape these horrors and stand before the Son of Man."

[37] Every day Jesus went to the Temple to teach, and each evening he returned to spend the night on the Mount of Olives. [38] The crowds gathered early each morning to hear him.

C. DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS, THE SAVIOR (Luke 22:1-24:53)

The Savior of the world was arrested and executed. But death could not destroy him, and Jesus came back to life and ascended to heaven. In Luke's careful, historical account, we receive the facts about Jesus' resurrection. We must not only believe that these facts are true, but we must also trust Christ as our Savior. It is shortsighted to neglect the facts, but how sad it is to accept the facts and neglect the forgiveness that Jesus offers to each of us.

Luke 22:1-24:53

The Festival of Unleavened Bread, which begins with the Passover celebration, was drawing near. [2] The leading priests and teachers of religious law were actively plotting Jesus' murder. But they wanted to kill him without starting a riot, a possibility they greatly feared.

[3] Then Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve disciples, [4] and he went over to the leading priests and captains of the Temple guard to discuss the best way to betray Jesus to them. [5] They were delighted that he was ready to help them, and they promised him a reward. [6] So he began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus so they could arrest him quietly when the crowds weren't around.

[7] Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread arrived, when the Passover lambs were sacrificed. [8] Jesus sent Peter and John ahead and said, "Go and prepare the Passover meal, so we can eat it together."

[9] "Where do you want us to go?" they asked him.

[10] He replied, "As soon as you enter Jerusalem, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him. At the house he enters, [11] say to the owner, 'The Teacher asks, where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?' [12] He will take you upstairs to a large room that is already set up. That is the place. Go ahead and prepare our supper there." [13] They went off to the city and found everything just as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover supper there.

[14] Then at the proper time Jesus and the twelve apostles sat down together at the table. [15] Jesus said, "I have looked forward to this hour with deep longing, anxious to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. [16] For I tell you now that I won't eat it again until it comes to fulfillment in the Kingdom of God."

[17] Then he took a cup of wine, and when he had given thanks for it, he said, "Take this and share it among yourselves. [18] For I will not drink wine again until the Kingdom of God has come."

[19] Then he took a loaf of bread; and when he had thanked God for it, he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." [20] After supper he took another cup of wine and said, "This wine is the token of God's new covenant to save you—an agreement sealed with the blood I will pour out for you."

[21] "But here at this table, sitting among us as a friend, is the man who will betray me. [22] For I, the Son of Man, must die since it is part of God's plan. But how terrible it will be for my betrayer!" [23] Then the disciples began to ask each other which of them would ever do such a thing.

[24] And they began to argue among themselves as to who would be the greatest in the coming Kingdom. [25] Jesus told them, "In this world the kings and great men order their people around, and yet they are called 'friends of the people.' [26] But among you, those who are the greatest should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. [27] Normally the master sits at the table and is served by his servants. But not here! For I am your servant. [28] You have remained true to me in my time of trial. [29] And just as my Father has granted me a Kingdom, I now grant you the right [30] to eat and drink at my table in that Kingdom. And you will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

[31] "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to have all of you, to sift you like wheat. [32] But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen and build up your brothers."

[33] Peter said, "Lord, I am ready to go to prison with you, and even to die with you."

[34] But Jesus said, "Peter, let me tell you something. The rooster will not crow tomorrow morning until you have denied three times that you even know me."

[35] Then Jesus asked them, "When I sent you out to preach the Good News and you did not have money, a traveler's bag, or extra clothing, did you lack anything?"

"No," they replied.

[36] "But now," he said, "take your money and a traveler's bag. And if you don't have a sword, sell your clothes and buy one! [37] For the time has come for this prophecy about me to be fulfilled: 'He was counted among those who were rebels.' Yes, everything written about me by the prophets will come true."

[38] "Lord," they replied, "we have two swords among us."

"That's enough," he said.

[39] Then, accompanied by the disciples, Jesus left the upstairs room and went as usual to the Mount of Olives. [40] There he told them, "Pray that you will not be overcome by temptation."

[41] He walked away, about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, [42] "Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will, not mine." [43] Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened him. [44] He prayed more fervently, and he was in such agony of spirit that his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood. [45] At last he stood up again and returned to the disciples, only to find them asleep, exhausted from grief. [46] "Why are you sleeping?" he asked. "Get up and pray. Otherwise temptation will overpower you."

[47] But even as he said this, a mob approached, led by Judas, one of his twelve disciples. Judas walked over to Jesus and greeted him with a kiss. [48] But Jesus said, "Judas, how can you betray me, the Son of Man, with a kiss?"

[49] When the other disciples saw what was about to happen, they exclaimed, "Lord, should we fight? We brought the swords!" [50] And one of them slashed at the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear.

[51] But Jesus said, "Don't resist anymore." And he touched the place where the man's ear had been and healed him. [52] Then Jesus spoke to the leading priests and captains of the Temple guard and the other leaders who headed the mob. "Am I some dangerous criminal," he asked, "that you have come armed with swords and clubs to arrest me? [53] Why didn't you arrest me in the Temple? I was there every day. But this is your moment, the time when the power of darkness reigns."

[54] So they arrested him and led him to the high priest's residence, and Peter was following far behind. [55] The guards lit a fire in the courtyard and sat around it, and Peter joined them there. [56] A servant girl noticed him in the firelight and began staring at him. Finally she said, "This man was one of Jesus' followers!"

[57] Peter denied it. "Woman," he said, "I don't even know the man!"

[58] After a while someone else looked at him and said, "You must be one of them!"

"No, man, I'm not!" Peter replied.

[59] About an hour later someone else insisted, "This must be one of Jesus' disciples because he is a Galilean, too."

[60] But Peter said, "Man, I don't know what you are talking about." And as soon as he said these words, the rooster crowed. [61] At that moment the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered that the Lord had said, "Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny me three times." [62] And Peter left the courtyard, crying bitterly.

[63] Now the guards in charge of Jesus began mocking and beating him. [64] They blindfolded him; then they hit him and asked, "Who hit you that time, you prophet?" [65] And they threw all sorts of terrible insults at him.

[66] At daybreak all the leaders of the people assembled, including the leading priests and the teachers of religious law. Jesus was led before this high council, [67] and they said, "Tell us if you are the Messiah."

But he replied, "If I tell you, you won't believe me. [68] And if I ask you a question, you won't answer. [69] But the time is soon coming when I, the Son of Man, will be sitting at God's right hand in the place of power."

[70] They all shouted, "Then you claim you are the Son of God?"

And he replied, "You are right in saying that I am."

[71] "What need do we have for other witnesses?" they shouted. "We ourselves heard him say it."

[23:1] Then the entire council took Jesus over to Pilate, the Roman governor. [2] They began at once to state their case: "This man has been leading our people to ruin by telling them not to pay their taxes to the Roman government and by claiming he is the Messiah, a king."

[3] So Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus replied, "Yes, it is as you say."

[4] Pilate turned to the leading priests and to the crowd and said, "I find nothing wrong with this man!"

[5] Then they became desperate. "But he is causing riots everywhere he goes, all over Judea, from Galilee to Jerusalem!"

[6] "Oh, is he a Galilean?" Pilate asked. [7] When they answered that he was, Pilate sent him to Herod Antipas, because Galilee was under Herod's jurisdiction, and Herod happened to be in Jerusalem at the time.

[8] Herod was delighted at the opportunity to see Jesus, because he had heard about him and had been hoping for a long time to see him perform a miracle. [9] He asked Jesus question after question, but Jesus refused to answer. [10] Meanwhile, the leading priests and the teachers of religious law stood there shouting their accusations. [11] Now Herod and his soldiers began mocking and ridiculing Jesus. Then they put a royal robe on him and sent him back to Pilate. [12] Herod and Pilate, who had been enemies before, became friends that day.

[13] Then Pilate called together the leading priests and other religious leaders, along with the people, [14] and he announced his verdict. "You brought this man to me, accusing him of leading a revolt. I have examined him thoroughly on this point in your presence and find him innocent. [15] Herod came to the same conclusion and sent him back to us. Nothing this man has done calls for the death penalty. [16] So I will have him flogged, but then I will release him." [17]

[18] Then a mighty roar rose from the crowd, and with one voice they shouted, "Kill him, and release Barabbas to us!" [19] (Barabbas was in prison for murder and for taking part in an insurrection in Jerusalem against the government.) [20] Pilate argued with them, because he wanted to release Jesus. [21] But they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

[22] For the third time he demanded, "Why? What crime has he committed? I have found no reason to sentence him to death. I will therefore flog him and let him go."

[23] But the crowd shouted louder and louder for Jesus' death, and their voices prevailed. [24] So Pilate sentenced Jesus to die as they demanded. [25] As they had requested, he released Barabbas, the man in prison for insurrection and murder. But he delivered Jesus over to them to do as they wished.

[26] As they led Jesus away, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country just then, was forced to follow Jesus and carry his cross. [27] Great crowds trailed along behind, including many grief-stricken women. [28] But Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, don't weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. [29] For the days are coming when they will say, 'Fortunate indeed are the women who are childless, the wombs that have not borne a child and the breasts that have never nursed.' [30] People will beg the mountains to fall on them and the hills to bury them. [31] For if these things are done when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

[32] Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. [33] Finally, they came to a place called The Skull. All three were crucified there—Jesus on the center cross, and the two criminals on either side.

[34] Jesus said, "Father, forgive these people, because they don't know what they are doing." And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.

[35] The crowd watched, and the leaders laughed and scoffed. "He saved others," they said, "let him save himself if he is really God's Chosen One, the Messiah." [36] The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. [37] They called out to him, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" [38] A signboard was nailed to the cross above him with these words: "This is the King of the Jews."

[39] One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, "So you're the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you're at it!"

[40] But the other criminal protested, "Don't you fear God even when you are dying? [41] We deserve to die for our evil deeds, but this man hasn't done anything wrong." [42] Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom."

[43] And Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise."

[44] By this time it was noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. [45] The light from the sun was gone. And suddenly, the thick veil hanging in the Temple was torn apart. [46] Then Jesus shouted, "Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!" And with those words he breathed his last.

[47] When the captain of the Roman soldiers handling the executions saw what had happened, he praised God and said, "Surely this man was innocent." [48] And when the crowd that came to see the crucifixion saw all that had happened, they went home in deep sorrow. [49] But Jesus' friends, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching.

[50] Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph. He was a member of the Jewish high council, [51] but he had not agreed with the decision and actions of the other religious leaders. He was from the town of Arimathea in Judea, and he had been waiting for the Kingdom of God to come. [52] He went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. [53] Then he took the body down from the cross and wrapped it in a long linen cloth and laid it in a new tomb that had been carved out of rock. [54] This was done late on Friday afternoon, the day of preparation for the Sabbath.

[55] As his body was taken away, the women from Galilee followed and saw the tomb where they placed his body. [56] Then they went home and prepared spices and ointments to embalm him. But by the time they were finished it was the Sabbath, so they rested all that day as required by the law.

[24:1] But very early on Sunday morning the women came to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. [2] They found that the stone covering the entrance had been rolled aside. [3] So they went in, but they couldn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. [4] They were puzzled, trying to think what could have happened to it. Suddenly, two men appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes. [5] The women were terrified and bowed low before them. Then the men asked, "Why are you looking in a tomb for someone who is alive? [6] He isn't here! He has risen from the dead! Don't you remember what he told you back in Galilee, [7] that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again the third day?"

[8] Then they remembered that he had said this. [9] So they rushed back to tell his eleven disciples—and everyone else—what had happened. [10] The women who went to the tomb were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and several others. They told the apostles what had happened, [11] but the story sounded like nonsense, so they didn't believe it. [12] However, Peter ran to the tomb to look. Stooping, he peered in and saw the empty linen wrappings; then he went home again, wondering what had happened.

[13] That same day two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles out of Jerusalem. [14] As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. [15] Suddenly, Jesus himself came along and joined them and began walking beside them. [16] But they didn't know who he was, because God kept them from recognizing him.

[17] "You seem to be in a deep discussion about something," he said. "What are you so concerned about?"

They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. [18] Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days."

[19] "What things?" Jesus asked.

"The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth," they said. "He was a prophet who did wonderful miracles. He was a mighty teacher, highly regarded by both God and all the people. [20] But our leading priests and other religious leaders arrested him and handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. [21] We had thought he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. That all happened three days ago. [22] Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. [23] They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! [24] Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, Jesus' body was gone, just as the women had said."

[25] Then Jesus said to them, "You are such foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. [26] Wasn't it clearly predicted by the prophets that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his time of glory?" [27] Then Jesus quoted passages from the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining what all the Scriptures said about himself.

[28] By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus would have gone on, [29] but they begged him to stay the night with them, since it was getting late. So he went home with them. [30] As they sat down to eat, he took a small loaf of bread, asked God's blessing on it, broke it, then gave it to them. [31] Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!

[32] They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts feel strangely warm as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" [33] And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem, where the eleven disciples and the other followers of Jesus were gathered. When they arrived, they were greeted with the report, [34] "The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter!"

[35] Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread. [36] And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them. He said, "Peace be with you." [37] But the whole group was terribly frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost!

[38] "Why are you frightened?" he asked. "Why do you doubt who I am? [39] Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don't have bodies, as you see that I do!" [40] As he spoke, he held out his hands for them to see, and he showed them his feet.

[41] Still they stood there doubting, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" [42] They gave him a piece of broiled fish, [43] and he ate it as they watched.

[44] Then he said, "When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me by Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must all come true." [45] Then he opened their minds to understand these many Scriptures. [46] And he said, "Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah must suffer and die and rise again from the dead on the third day. [47] With my authority, take this message of repentance to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: 'There is forgiveness of sins for all who turn to me.' [48] You are witnesses of all these things.

[49] "And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven."

[50] Then Jesus led them to Bethany, and lifting his hands to heaven, he blessed them. [51] While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up to heaven. [52] They worshiped him and then returned to Jerusalem filled with great joy. [53] And they spent all of their time in the Temple, praising God.

MEGATHEMES

THEME: Jesus Christ, the Savior

EXPLANATION:

Luke describes how God's Son entered human history. Jesus lived as the perfect example of a human. After a perfect ministry, he provided a perfect sacrifice for our sin so we could be saved.

IMPORTANCE:

Jesus is our perfect leader and Savior. He offers forgiveness to all who will accept him as Lord of their lives and believe that what he says is true.

THEME: History

EXPLANATION:

Luke was a medical doctor and historian. He put great emphasis on dates and details, connecting Jesus to events and people in history.

IMPORTANCE:

Luke gives details so we can believe in the reliability of the history of Jesus' life. Even more important, we can believe with certainty that Jesus is God.

THEME: People

EXPLANATION:

Jesus was deeply interested in people and relationships. He showed warm concern for his followers and friends—men, women, and children.

IMPORTANCE:

Jesus' love for people is good news for everyone. His message is for all people in every nation. Each one of us has an opportunity to respond to him in faith.

THEME: Compassion

EXPLANATION:

As a perfect human, Jesus showed tender sympathy to the poor, the despised, the hurt, and the sinful. No one was rejected or ignored by him.

IMPORTANCE:

Jesus is more than an idea or teacher—he cares for you. Only this kind of deep love can satisfy your need.

THEME: Holy Spirit

EXPLANATION:

The Holy Spirit was present at Jesus' birth, baptism, ministry, and resurrection. As a perfect example for us, Jesus lived in dependence on the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was sent by God as confirmation of Jesus' authority.

IMPORTANCE:

The Holy Spirit is given to enable people to live for Christ. By faith we can have the Holy Spirit's presence and power to witness and to serve.

TIMELINE

Herod the Great begins to rule 37 B.C.

Jesus is born 6/5 B.C.

Escape to Egypt 5/4 B.C.

Herod the Great dies 4 B.C.

Return to Nazareth 4/3 B.C.

Jesus visits temple as a boy A.D. 6/7

Tiberius Caesar becomes emperor 14

John's ministry begins 26

Jesus begins his ministry 26/27

Jesus chooses twelve disciples 28

Jesus feeds 5,000 29

Jesus is crucified, rises again, and ascends 30

An invitation is given to open your heart's door.

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

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Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print