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| **In order for the colors to look right, turn on your device’s “Blue Light Filter” or “Night Light”, which “orangifies” the screen to protect your eyes and make things soothing, and adjust the tint to your liking.**  **Btw, just BELIEVE IT ALL !! May seem like contradictions, hard to understand, but believing it all works!! (like a little child, Mat18:3)**  **One more thing: If it doesn’t mean what it says, it doesn’t mean anything.** | |
| NIV Bible, 1984  A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the  son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the  father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,  Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar,  Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the  father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon  the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother  was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed  the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David. David  was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,  Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah,  Abijah the father of Asa, Asa the father of Jehoshaphat,  Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram, Jehoram the father of  Uzziah, Uzziah the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz,  Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, Hezekiah the father of Manasseh,  Manasseh the father of Amon, Amon the father of Josiah, and  Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of  the exile to Babylon. After the exile to Babylon: Jeconiah was  the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,  Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, Abiud the father of Eliakim,  Eliakim the father of Azor, Azor the father of Zadok, Zadok the  father of Akim, Akim the father of Eliud, Eliud the father of  Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of  Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of  whom was born **Jesus, who is called Christ.**    Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to  David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and  fourteen from the exile to the Christ.    This is how **the birth of Jesus Christ** came about: His mother Mary  was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came  together, **she was found to be with child through the Holy**  **Spirit.** Because **Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did**  **not want to expose her to public disgrace,** he had in mind to  divorce her quietly.    But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared  to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be  afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because **what is**  **conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.** **She will give birth**  **to a son, and** **you are to give him the name Jesus, because he**  **will save his people from their sins."**    All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the  prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to  ss a son, and **they will call him Immanuel"--which means,** **"God with**  **us."**    When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had  commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no  union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him  the name Jesus.    After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of  King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked,  "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw  his star in the east and have come to worship him."    When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem  with him. When he had called together all the people's chief  priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ  was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for  this is what the prophet has written: "'But you, Bethlehem, in  the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of  Judah; for **out of you will come a ruler who will be the**  **shepherd of my people Israel.'"**    Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the  exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and  said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as  you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship  him."    After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the  star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it  stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the  star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the  child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped  him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with  gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been  warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to  their country by another route.    When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a  dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and  escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is  going to search for the child to kill him."    So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and  left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And  so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet:  "Out of Egypt I called my son."    When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he  was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in  Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in  accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then  what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: "A  voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel  weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because  they are no more."    After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to  Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his  mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying  to take the child's life are dead."    So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land  of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in  Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there.  Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of  Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So  was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be  called a Nazarene."    **In those days** **John the Baptist came,** **preaching in the Desert** of  rr Judea and saying, **"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."**  **This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A**  **ee**  **voice of one**>**calling in the desert**<**,** **'Prepare the way for the**  **Lord,**>**make straight paths for him.**<**'"**    **John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather**  **belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.**  **People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the**  rr**ee** **whole region of the Jordan.** **Confessing their sins, they were**  **baptized by him** **in the Jordan River.**    But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to  where he was baptizing, he said to them: **"You brood of vipers!**  rr**ee**  **Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?** **Produce fruit in**  **keeping with repentance.** And do not think you can say to  yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that  out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. **The**  **ax is already at the root of the trees, and** **every tree that**  **does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into**  **the fire.**    "**I baptize you with water for** **repentance.** But **after me will come**  **one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to**  ss **carry.** **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.**  His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his  threshing floor, **gathering his wheat into the barn and burning**  **up the chaff with unquenchable fire."**    Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by  John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be  baptized by you, and do you come to me?"    Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; **it is proper for us to do this**  **to fulfill all righteousness."** Then John consented.    **As soon as Jesus was baptized,** he went up out of the water. At  that moment heaven was opened, and **he saw the Spirit of God**  **descending like a dove and lighting on him.** **And a voice from**  **heaven said,** **"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well**  **pleased."**    ss**ee** **Then Jesus was** **led by the Spirit** into the desert **to be tempted by**  **the devil.** **After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was**  **hungry.** **The tempter came to him and said,** **"If you are the Son**  **of God,** **tell these stones to become bread."**    **Jesus answered,** **"It is written:** **'Man does not** **live on** **bread**  **HSMS**ss **alone, but on** **every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"**    Then the devil took him to **the holy city** and had him stand on the  highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he  said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'He will  command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in  their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a  stone.'"    Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord  your God to the test.'"    Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him  all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I  will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."    Jesus said to him, **"Away from me, Satan!** For it is written:  **'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"**    Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.    When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to  Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum,  which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali--to  fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: "Land of  Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the  Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles--**the people living in darkness**  **have seen a great light;** **on those living in the land of the**  **shadow of death a light has dawned."**    rr From that time on **Jesus began to preach, "Repent,** **for the kingdom**  **of heaven is near."**    As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, **he saw** two  brothers, **Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew.** They were  casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. **"Come,**  **follow me,"** **Jesus said,** **"and I will make you fishers of men."**  **At once they left their nets and followed him.**    Going on from there, **he saw two other brothers, James son of**  **Zebedee and his brother John.** They were in a boat with their  father Zebedee, preparing their nets. **Jesus called them, and**  **immediately they left the boat and their father and followed**  **him.**    Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues,  preaching **the good news of the kingdom,** and healing every  disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread  all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with  various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the  demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and  he healed them. Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis,  Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.    Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat  down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them,  saying: "Blessed are **the poor in spirit, for** **theirs is the**  **kingdom of heaven.** **Blessed are those who mourn, for they will**  **be comforted.** Blessed are **the meek,** for **they will inherit the**  **ee**  **earth.** Blessed are **those who hunger and thirst for**  **righteousness, for they will be filled.** Blessed are **the**  **merciful, for** **they will be shown mercy.** Blessed are **the pure in**  **heart, for they will see God.** Blessed are **the peacemakers, for**  **they will be** **called sons of God**. Blessed are **those who are**  **persecuted because of righteousness,** for **theirs is the kingdom**  **of heaven.**    **ee**  **"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and**  **falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.**  **Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven,**  **for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were**  **before you.**    **ee**  "You are the salt of the earth. But **if the salt loses its**  **saltiness,** how can it be made salty again? **It is no longer good**  **for anything,** **except to be thrown out** and trampled by men.    **"You are the light of the world.** A city on a hill cannot be  hidden. Neither do **people light a lamp** and put it under a bowl.  **Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to**  **ee everyone in the house.** In the same way, **let your light shine**  **before men,** **that they may see your good deeds** and praise your  Father in heaven.    **"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the**  **Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.**  I tell you the truth, **until heaven and earth disappear, not the**  **smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any**  **means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.**  Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and  teaches others to do the same will be called least in the  kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these  ee commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. **For I**  **tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the**  **Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not**  **enter the kingdom of heaven.**    "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not  murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.'  **ee**  But I tell you that **anyone who is angry with his brother will**  **be subject to judgment.** Again, anyone who says to his brother,  'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But **anyone who says,**  **'You fool!' will be in danger of the**>**fire of hell**<**.**    "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there  **remember that your brother has something against you,** leave  **ee** your gift there in front of the altar. **First go and be**  **reconciled to your brother;** then come and offer your gift.    **ee** **"Settle matters quickly** with **your adversary who is taking you to**  **court.** **Do it while you are still with him on the way,** **or** he may  hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to  the officer, and **you may be thrown into prison. I tell you the**  **truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.**    **ee**  "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I  tell you that **anyone who looks at a woman**>**lustfully**<**has already**  **committed adultery with her in his heart.** **If your right eye**  causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. **It is better**  **for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body**  **to be thrown into hell.** And if your right hand causes you to  sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose  one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.    "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a  certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who  divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes  her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the  divorced woman commits adultery.    "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago,  'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to  the Lord.' But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by  heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his  footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great  King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even  one hair white or black. **Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and**  **your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.**    "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for  **ee** tooth.' But I tell you, **Do not resist an evil person. If**  **someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other**  **also.** **And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let**  **him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one**  **mile, go with him two miles.** **Give to the one who asks you, and**  **do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.**    "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate  **ee** your enemy.' But I tell you: **Love** **your enemies** and pray for  those who persecute you, **that you may be sons of your Father in**  **heaven.** **He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and**  **sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.** **If you love**  **those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the**  **tax collectors doing that?** **And if you greet only your brothers,**  **what are you doing more than others?** Do not even pagans do  **HSMS**hh that? **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is**  **perfect.**    ee "Be careful not to do your 'acts of **righteousness'** before men, to  be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your  Father in heaven.    "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets,  as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to  be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received  ee their reward in full. **But when you give to the needy, do not**  **let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that**  **your giving may be in secret.** **Then your Father, who sees what**  **is done in secret, will reward you.**    "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they **love**  to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to  be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their  ee reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the  door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father,  who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you  pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they  will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them,  for **your Father knows what you need before you ask him.**    **"This,** then, **is how you should pray:** **"'Our Father in heaven,**  **hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on**  **earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.**  **Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And**  **lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'**  **ee**  For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly  Father will also forgive you. But **if you do not forgive men**  **their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.**    **"When you fast,** do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they  disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you  ee the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when  you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it  will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to  your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is  done in secret, will reward you.    **ee** **"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth**, where moth  and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But  **store up for yourselves treasures in heaven,** where moth and  rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and  steal. **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be**  **also.**    **"The eye is the lamp of the body.** **If your eyes are good, your**  **whole body will be full of** **light.** But if your eyes are bad,  your whole body will be full of darkness. **If then the light**  **within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!**    **ee**  "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and  **love** the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise  the other. **You cannot serve both God and Money.**    ff "Therefore I tell you, **do not worry about your life**, **what you**  **will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.** Is  not life more important than food, and the body more important  than clothes? **Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or**  **reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds**  **them. Are you not much more valuable than they?** **Who of you by**  **worrying can add a single hour to his life?**    ff "And **why do you worry** **about clothes?** See how the lilies of the  field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not  even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.  If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is  here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, **will he not**  much more **clothe you, O** **you of little faith**? So **do not worry,**  saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What  shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and  **ee** your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But **seek first**  **his kingdom and his righteousness,** **and all these things will be**  **given to you as well.** Therefore^**do not worry**<**about tomorrow,**  **for tomorrow will worry about itself.** **Each day has enough**  **trouble of its own.**    **ee**  **"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you**  **judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use,**  **it will be measured to you.**    "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye  and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you  say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,'  when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You  **ee** hypocrite, first **take the plank out of your own eye,** and **then**  **you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's**  **eye.**    **"Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to**  **pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and**  **then turn and tear you to pieces.**    **ee**  **"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock**  **and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks**  **receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door**  **will be opened.**    "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?  Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? **If you, then,**  **though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your**  **children,** **how much more will your Father in heaven give good**  **ee gifts to those who ask him!** So **in everything, do to others what**  **you would have them do to you,** **for this sums up the Law and the**  **Prophets.**    **ee** **"Enter through the narrow gate.** **For wide is the gate and**>**broad**<**is**  **the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.**  **But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life,**  **and only a few find it.**    **"Watch out for** **false prophets. They come to you in sheep's**  **clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.** By their  fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from  thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise **every**>**good**<**tree**  **bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.** A good tree  cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.  hh **Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown**  **into the fire.** Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.    "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will **enter the**  **ee kingdom of heaven,** but>**only**<**he who does the will of my Father**  **who is in heaven.** Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord,  did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out  demons and>**perform many miracles?'**<Then I will tell them  plainly, **'I never knew you.**>**Away from me,** **you evildoers!'**<    **ee** "Therefore everyone who hears these **words** of mine and>**puts them**  **into practice**<is like a **wise** man who built his house on the  rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and **the winds blew**  **and beat against that house;** **yet it did not fall,** because it  had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these  **words** of mine and **does not**>**put them into practice**<is like a  foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down,  the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that  house, and **it fell with a great crash."**    When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were  amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had  authority, and not as their teachers of the law.    When he came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed  him. **A man with leprosy** **came and knelt before him** and said,  **"Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."**    **Jesus** **reached out his hand and** **touched the man.** **"I am willing,"**  **he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cured** of his leprosy.  Then Jesus said to him, "See that you don't tell anyone. But  go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses  commanded, as a testimony to them."    When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking  for help. "Lord," he said, **"my servant lies** at home **paralyzed**  **and in terrible suffering."**    Jesus said to him, **"I will go and heal him."**    The centurion replied, **"Lord, I do not deserve to have you come**  **under my roof. But just say the** **word,** **and my servant will be**  **healed.** For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers  under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one,  'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he  does it."    **When Jesus heard this,** **he was astonished** and said to those  following him, "I tell you the truth, **I have not found anyone**  ff **in Israel** **with such**>**great**<**faith.** I say to you that **many will**  **come from the east and the west, and will take their places at**  **the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the** **kingdom of**  **heaven.** But the subjects of the kingdom will be **thrown outside,**  **into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of**  **teeth."**    ff **Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go!** **It will be done** **just as**  **you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that very**  **hour.**    When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law  lying in bed with a fever. He touched her hand and the fever  left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.    When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to  him, and **he drove out the spirits with a** **word** and healed all  the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the  prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and carried our  diseases."    When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to  the other side of the lake. Then a teacher of the law came to  him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."    Jesus replied, **"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests,**  **but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."**    **Another disciple said to him,** **"Lord,** **first let me go** and bury my  father."    **ee**  **But** **Jesus told him,** **"Follow me,** **and let the dead bury their own**  **dead."**    Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Without  warning, **a furious storm came up** on the lake, **so that the waves**  **swept over the boat.** **But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went**  **and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"**    ff He replied, **"You of little faith, why are you so afraid?**" Then **he**  **got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was**  **completely calm.**    The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even  the winds and the waves obey him!"    When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes,  two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They  were so violent that no one could pass that way. "What do you  want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to  torture us before the appointed time?"    Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding. The  demons begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the  herd of pigs."    He said to them, "Go!" So they came out and went into the pigs,  and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and  died in the water. Those tending the pigs ran off, went into  the town and reported all this, including what had happened to  the demon-possessed men. Then the whole town went out to meet  Jesus. And when they saw him, **they pleaded with him to leave**  **their region.**    Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town.  **Some men brought** to him **a paralytic,** lying on a mat. **When Jesus**  ff **saw their faith,** **he said to the paralytic,** **"Take heart, son;**  **your sins are forgiven."**    At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves,  "This fellow is blaspheming!"    Knowing their thoughts, **Jesus said,**>>>**"Why do you**[**entertain**]**evil**  **thoughts in your hearts?**<<<Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins  are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But so that you  may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive  sins. . . ." Then he said to the paralytic, **"Get up, take your**  **mat and go home." And the man got up and went home.** When the  crowd saw this, **they were filled with awe;** and they praised  God, who had given such authority to men.    As Jesus went on from there, **he saw a man named Matthew sitting**  **at the tax collector's booth.** **"Follow me," he told him, and**  **Matthew got up and followed him.**    While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax  collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his  disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his  disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and  'sinners'?"    On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a  doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I  desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For **I have not come to call the**  **righteous, but sinners."**    Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and  the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"    Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while  he is with them? **The time will come when the bridegroom will be**  **taken from them; then they will fast.**    "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the  patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse.  Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do,  the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins  will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and  both are preserved."    While he was saying this, a ruler came and knelt before him and  said, "My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on  her, and she will live." Jesus got up and went with him, and so  did his disciples.    Just then **a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve**  **years** **came up behind him** and touched the edge of his cloak. She  said to herself, **"If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed."**    ff Jesus turned and saw her. **"Take heart, daughter," he said,** "**your**  **faith has healed you**." And the woman was healed from that  moment.    When Jesus entered the ruler's house and saw the flute players  and the noisy crowd, he said, "Go away. The girl is not dead  but asleep." But they laughed at him. After the crowd had been  put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she  got up. News of this spread through all that region.    As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling  out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"    When he had gone indoors, the **blind men came to him,** and he asked  them, **"Do you believe that I am able to do this?"**    **"Yes, Lord," they replied.**    ff **Then he touched their eyes and said,** "**According to your faith**  **will it be done to you"; and their sight was restored.** Jesus  warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this." But  they went out and spread the news about him all over that  region.    While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and  could not talk was brought to Jesus. And when the demon was  driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowd was  amazed and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in  Israel."    But the Pharisees said, "It is by the prince of demons that he  drives out demons."    Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their  synagogues, **preaching the** **good news of the kingdom** **and healing**  **every disease and sickness.** When he saw the crowds, he had  compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless,  like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples,  "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord  of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest  field."    He called his twelve disciples to him and **gave them authority** **to**  **drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.**    These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is  called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and  his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew  the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon  the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.    These **twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions:** "Do  not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans.  Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. **As you go, preach this**  **message:** **'The kingdom of heaven is near.'** **Heal the sick, raise**  **the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.**  **Freely you have received, freely give.** **Do not take along any**  **gold or silver or copper in your belts; take no bag for the**  **journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for** **the worker**  **is worth his keep.**    hh "Whatever town or village you enter, **search for some worthy**  **person** there and stay at his house until you leave. As you  hh enter the home, give it your greeting. **If the home is**  **deserving,** **let your peace rest on it;** if it is not, let your  peace return to you. **If anyone will not welcome you or listen**  **to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that**  **home or town.** I tell you the truth, **it will be more bearable**  **for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment** than for that  town. **I am sending you out like sheep among wolves.** Therefore  **be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.**    **"Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the**  **local councils and flog you in their synagogues.** **On my account**  **you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to**  **them** and to the Gentiles. But **when they arrest you,** do not  ss worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time **you will**  **be given what to say,** for **it will not be you speaking, but** **the**  **Spirit of your Father speaking through you.**    **"Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child;**  **children will rebel against their parents and have them put to**  **ee**ff **death.** **All men will hate you because of me,** **but** **he who stands**  **firm to the end will be saved.** **When you are persecuted in one**  **place, flee to another.** I tell you the truth, you will not  finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man  comes.    "A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his  **ee** master. **It is enough for the student to be like his teacher,**  **and the servant like his master.** **If the head of the house has**  **been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his**  **household!**    **"So** **do not be afraid of them.** There is nothing concealed that  will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.  What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is  whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. **Do not be**  **afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.**  **Rather,** **be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body**  **in hell.** **Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of**  **them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your**  ss **Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.**  **So** **don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.**    **ee**  "Whoever acknowledges me before men, **I will also acknowledge him**  **before my Father in heaven.** **But whoever disowns me before men,**  **I will disown him before my Father in heaven.**    **ee** **"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth.** **I**  **did not come to bring peace, but a sword.** **For** **I have come to**  **turn "'a man against his father, a daughter against her mother,**  **a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law--a man's enemies**  **will be the members of his own household.'**    **ee** "**Anyone who loves** his father or mother more than me is **not worthy**  **of me;** anyone who **loves** his son or daughter more than me is **not**  **HSMS worthy** **of me;** and **anyone who does not take his cross and follow**  **me is not worthy of me**. Whoever finds his life will lose it,  and **whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.**    "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives  the one who sent me. Anyone who receives a prophet because he  is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who  receives a **righteous** man because he is a **righteous** man will  receive a **righteous** man's reward. And if anyone gives even a  cup of cold water to one of these little ones **because he is my**  **disciple,** I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his  reward."    After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he  went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee.    When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his  disciples to ask him, "Are you the one who was to come, or  should we expect someone else?"    Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see:  The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy  are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good  news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not  fall away on account of me."    As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the  crowd about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see?  A reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see?  A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes  are in kings' palaces. Then what did you go out to see? **A**  **prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.** This is the  one about whom it is written: "'I will send my messenger ahead  of you, who will prepare your way before you.' I tell you the  truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone  hh greater than John the Baptist; yet **he who is least in the**  **ee kingdom of heaven is greater than he.** From the days of John the  Baptist until now,>>>>**the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully**  **ee advancing,** and **forceful men lay hold of it.**<<<<For all the  Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you are  willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. **He who**  **has ears, let him hear.**    "To what can I compare **this generation?** **They are like** **children**  **ee** **sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others:** **"'We**  **played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a**  **dirge, and you did not mourn.'** For John came neither eating nor  drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came  eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a  drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners." 'But **wisdom**  **is proved right by her actions**."    **Then Jesus began to denounce the cities** **in which most of his**  rr **miracles had been performed, because they did not repent.** "Woe  to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! **If the miracles that**  **were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon,**  **they would have repented long ago** in sackcloth and ashes. But I  tell you, **it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the**  **day of judgment than for you.** And you, Capernaum, will you be  lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths**. If**  **the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in**  **Sodom, it would have remained to this day.** But I tell you that  **it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than**  **for you."**    At that time Jesus said, **"I praise you, Father,** Lord of heaven  and earth, **because** **you have hidden these things from the wise**  **and learned,** **and revealed them** **to little children.** **Yes, Father,**  **for this was your good pleasure.**    **"All things have been committed to me by my Father.** **No one knows**  **the Son except the Father,** and **no one knows the Father except**  **the Son** and **those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.**    **ee** "**Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give**  **you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am**  **gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your**  **souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."**    At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath.  His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain  and eat them. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him,  "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the  Sabbath."    He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his  companions were hungry? He entered the house of God, and he and  his companions ate the consecrated bread--which was not lawful  for them to do, but only for the priests. Or haven't you read  in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple  desecrate the day and yet are innocent? **I tell you that one**  **greater than the temple is here.** If you had known what these  words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have  condemned the innocent. For the Son of Man is Lord of the  Sabbath."    Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, and a man  with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to accuse  Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"    He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a  pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it  out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it  is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."    Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched  it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the  other. But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might  kill Jesus.    Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. Many followed him,  and **he healed all their sick,** **warning them not to tell who he**  **was.** **This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet**  **Isaiah:** **"Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love,**  **in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will**  **proclaim justice to the nations.** **He will not quarrel or** **cry**  **out;** **no one will hear his voice in the streets.** **A bruised reed**  **he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out,**  **till** **he leads justice to victory. In his name the nations will**  **put their hope."**    Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and  mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see.  All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son  of David?"    But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by  Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out  demons."    Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom  divided against itself will be ruined, and **every** **city or**  **household divided against itself will not stand.** If Satan  drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can  his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by  whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your  judges. **But if I drive out demons by** **the Spirit of God, then**  **the kingdom of God has come upon you.**    "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry  off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man?  Then he can rob his house.    **"He who is not with me is against me,** **and he who does not gather**  **with me scatters.** **And so** **I tell you, every sin and blasphemy**  **will be forgiven men, but** **the blasphemy against the Spirit will**  **not be forgiven.** **Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of**  **Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy**  **Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age**  **to come.**    hh "**Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad**  **and its fruit will be bad,** for **a tree is recognized by its**  **fruit.** You brood of vipers, **how can you who are evil say**  **anything good?** For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth  speaks. **The good man** brings good things out of the good stored  up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil  stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give  account on the **day of judgment** for **every careless word** they  have spoken. For **by your words you will be acquitted, and by**  **your words you will be condemned.**"    Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him,  "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."    He answered, **"A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a**  **miraculous sign!** But none will be given it except the sign of  the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights  in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three  days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of  Nineveh will **stand up** **at the judgment** with this generation and  condemn it; for **they repented** at the preaching of Jonah, and  now one greater than Jonah is here. The Queen of the South **will**  **rise** **at the judgment** with this generation and condemn it; for  she came from the ends of the earth to listen to **Solomon's**  **wisdom,** and now one greater than Solomon is here.    **"When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid**  **places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will**  **return to the house I left.'** When it arrives, **it finds the**  **house unoccupied,** swept clean and put in order. Then it goes  and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself,  and they go in and live there. And **the final condition of that**  **man is worse than the first.** That is how it will be with **this**  **wicked generation."**    While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and  brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told  him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to  speak to you."    He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?"  Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my  **ee**  brothers. **For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is**  **my brother and sister and mother.**"    That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake.  Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat  and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he  told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out  to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along  the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky  places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly,  because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the  plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no  root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked  the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it  produced a crop--a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was  sown. **He who has ears, let him hear."**    The disciples came to him and asked, **"Why do you speak to the**  **people in parables?"**    He replied, **"The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of**  **heaven has been given to you, but not to them.** Whoever has **will**  **be given more,** and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not  have, even what he has **will be taken from him.** This is why I  speak to them in parables: **"Though seeing, they do not see;**  **though hearing, they do not hear or understand.** In them is  fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: **"'You will be ever hearing**  **but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never**  **perceiving.** **For this people's heart has become calloused;** **they**  **hardly hear with their ears, and** **they have closed their eyes.**  **Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears,**  **understand with their hearts** **and turn,** and **I would heal them.'**  **But** **blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears**  **because they hear.** For I tell you the truth, **many prophets and**  **righteous men** **longed to see what you see but did not see it,**  and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.    "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone  **hears the message about the kingdom** and **does not understand it,**  **the evil one comes and snatches away** **what was sown in his**  **heart.** This is the seed sown along the path. The one who  received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who  **hears the word** and **at once receives it with joy.** But **since he**  **has no root, he lasts only a short time.** **When trouble or**  **persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.**  The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the  man who **hears the word,** but **the worries of this life and the**  **deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.** But the  one who received the seed that fell on good soil is **the man who**  **hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop,** yielding  a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."    Jesus told them another parable: **"The kingdom of heaven** is like a  man who sowed good seed in his field. But **while everyone was**  **sleeping,** his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and  went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the  weeds also appeared.    "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow  good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'    "'An enemy did this,' he replied.    "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'    "'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you  may root up the wheat with them. **Let both grow together** **until**  **the harvest. At that time** **I will tell the harvesters: First**  **collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then**  **gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"**    ss He told them another parable: **"The kingdom of heaven** **is like a**  **mustard seed,** which a man took and planted in his field. **Though**  **it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet** **when it grows, it is**  **the largest of garden plants** **and becomes a tree, so that the**  **birds of the air come and perch in its branches."**    ss He told them still another parable:>>>**"The kingdom of heaven is**  **like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of**  **flour until it worked all through the dough."**<<<    Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; **he did not**  **say anything to them without using a parable.** So was fulfilled  what was spoken through the prophet: "I will open my mouth in  parables, **I will utter things** **hidden since the creation of the**  **world."**    Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples  came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds  in the field."    He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man.  The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons  of the kingdom. **The weeds are the** **sons of the evil one, and the**  **enemy who sows them is the devil.** The harvest is the end of the  age, and the harvesters are angels.    hh "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be  at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels,  and they **will weed out of his kingdom**>**everything that causes**  **sin** and **all who do evil.**<They will **throw them into the fiery**  **furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**  **Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of**  **their Father.** **He who has ears, let him hear.**    **HSMS**ff **"The kingdom of heaven** **is like treasure hidden in a field.** When a  man found it, **he hid it again,** and then **in his joy** **went and**  **sold all he had** and bought that field.    **HSMS**ff **"Again,** **the kingdom of heaven** is like a merchant looking for fine  pearls. **When he found one of great value,** he went **away and sold**  **everything he had** and bought it.    **"Once again,** **the kingdom of heaven** is like a net that was let  down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was  full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat  down and **collected the good fish in baskets,** **but threw the bad**  hh  **away.** This is how it will be at the end of the age. **The angels**  **will come and separate the wicked from the righteous** and **throw**  **them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and**  **gnashing of teeth.**    "Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked.    "Yes," they replied.    He said to them, **"Therefore every teacher of the law who has been**  **instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a**  **house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as**  **old."**    When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there.  Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their  synagogue, and they were amazed. **"Where did this man get this**  **wisdom** and these **miraculous powers**?" they asked. "Isn't this  the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't  his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his  sisters with us? **Where then did this man get all these things?"**  **And they took offense at him.**    But Jesus said to them, **"Only in his hometown and in his own**  **house is a prophet without honor."**    ff **And he did not do many miracles there because of their**>**lack of**  **faith.**<    At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the reports about Jesus,  and he said to his attendants, "This is John the Baptist; he  has risen from the dead! That is why **miraculous powers are at**  **work in him."**    Now Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him in prison  because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, for John had  been saying to him: "It is not lawful for you to have her."  Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the people,  because **they considered him a prophet.**    On Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced for them and  pleased Herod so much that he promised with an oath to give her  whatever she asked. Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me  here on a platter the head of John the Baptist." The king was  distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he  ordered that her request be granted and had John beheaded in  the prison. His head was brought in on a platter and given to  the girl, who carried it to her mother. John's disciples came  and took his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus.    When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately  to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him  on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large  crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.    As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This  is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the  crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves  some food."    Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them  something to eat."    "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they  answered.    "Bring them here to me," he said. And he directed the people to  sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish  and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves.  Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them  to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the  disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that  were left over. The number of those who ate was about five  thousand men, besides women and children.    Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on  ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd.  After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by  himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the  boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by  the waves because the wind was against it.    During the fourth watch of the night **Jesus went out to them,**  **walking on the lake.** When the disciples saw him walking on the  lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried  out in fear.    But Jesus immediately said to them: **"Take courage! It is I. Don't**  **be afraid."**    "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on  the water."    "Come," he said.    Then **Peter** **got down out of the boat,** **walked on the water** and came  toward Jesus. **But when he saw the wind,** he was afraid and,  beginning to sink, **cried out, "Lord, save me!"**    ff **Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of**  **little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"**    And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then  **those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying,** **"Truly you**  **are the Son of God."**    When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret. And when  the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all  the surrounding country. **People brought all their sick to him**  **and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his**  **cloak, and all who touched him were healed.**    Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from  Jerusalem and asked, "Why do your disciples break the tradition  of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!"    Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the  sake of your tradition? For God said, 'Honor your father and  mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put  to death.' But you say that if a man says to his father or  mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from  me is a gift devoted to God,' he is not to 'honor his father'  with it. **Thus you nullify the word of God** for the sake of your  tradition. **You hypocrites!** Isaiah was right when he prophesied  about you: **"'These people honor me with their lips, but their**  **hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their**  **teachings are but rules taught by men.'"**    Jesus called the crowd to him and said, **"Listen and understand.**  What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but  what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean.'"    Then the disciples came to him and asked, "Do you know that the  Pharisees were offended when they heard this?"    He replied, **"Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted**  **will be pulled up by the roots.** **Leave them**; they are blind  guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a  pit."    Peter said, "Explain the parable to us."    **"Are you still so dull?"** Jesus asked them. "Don't you see that  whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of  the body? But the things that come out of the mouth come from  hh the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For **out of the heart**  **come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft,**  **false testimony, slander. These are what make a man 'unclean';**  but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean.'"    Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and  Sidon. A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying  out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is  **suffering terribly from demon-possession."**    **Jesus did not answer a word.** So his disciples came to him and  urged him, "Send her away, for **she keeps crying out after us."**    He answered, **"I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."**    The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said.    He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and  toss it to their dogs."    "Yes, Lord," she said, "but **even the dogs eat the crumbs that**  **fall from their masters' table."**    ff Then Jesus answered, **"Woman,** **you have great faith!** **Your request**  **is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.**    Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went  up on a mountainside and sat down. **Great crowds came to him,**  **bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many**  **others, and laid them at his feet; and** **he healed them.** The  people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the  crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And  they praised the God of Israel.    Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion  for these people; they have already been with me three days and  have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or  they may collapse on the way."    His disciples answered, "Where could we get enough bread in this  remote place to feed such a crowd?"  "How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked.    "Seven," they replied, "and a few small fish."    He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then he took the  seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he  broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to  the people. They all ate and were satisfied. Afterward the  disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were  left over. The number of those who ate was four thousand,  besides women and children. After Jesus had sent the crowd  away, he got into the boat and went to the vicinity of Magadan.    The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by  asking him to show them a sign from heaven.    He replied, "When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair  weather, for the sky is red,' and in the morning, 'Today it  will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' **You know how**  **to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot**  **interpret the signs of the times.** **A wicked and adulterous**  **generation looks for a miraculous sign,** but none will be given  it except the sign of Jonah." Jesus then left them and went  away.    When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take  bread. **"Be careful,"** Jesus said to them. **"Be on your guard**  **against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."**    They discussed this among themselves and said, "It is because we  didn't bring any bread."    ff Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, **"You of little faith,** why  are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? **Do you**  **still not understand?** Don't you remember the five loaves for  the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? Or the  seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you  gathered? **How is it you**>**don't**<**understand** that I was not talking  to you about bread? **But be on your guard against the yeast of**  **the Pharisees and Sadducees."** Then they understood that he was  not telling them to **guard** against the yeast used in bread, but  **against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees**.    When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his  disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"    They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and  still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."    "But **what about you?"** he asked. **"Who do you say I am?"**    Simon Peter answered, **"You are the Christ, the Son of the living**  **God."**    Jesus replied, **"Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was**  **not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.** And I  tell you that you are Peter, and **on this rock** **I will build my**  **church,** and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. **I will**  **give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven;** **whatever you bind**  **on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on**  **earth will be loosed in heaven."** Then **he warned his disciples**  **not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.**    From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he  must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the  elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must  be killed and on the third day be raised to life.    Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he  said. "This shall never happen to you!"    Jesus turned and said to Peter, **"Get behind me, Satan!** **You are a**  **stumbling block to me;** **you do not have in mind the things of**  **God, but the things of men."**    **HSMS**  Then Jesus said to his disciples, "**If anyone would come after me,**  >**he must deny himself**<**and take up his cross and follow me.** For  whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but **whoever loses**  **his life for me will find it.** **What good will it be for a man if**  **he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a**  **man give in exchange for his soul?** For the Son of Man is going  **ee**  to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then **he will**  **reward each person according to what he has done.** I tell you  the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death  before they see **the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."**    After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the  brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by  themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face  shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the  light. Just then **there appeared before them Moses and Elijah,**  **talking with Jesus.**    Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you  wish, I will put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses  and one for Elijah."    While he was still speaking, **a bright cloud enveloped them, and a**  **ee voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with**  **him I am well pleased.** **Listen to him!**"    When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground,  terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said.  "Don't be afraid." When they looked up, they saw no one except  Jesus.    As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them,  "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has  been raised from the dead."    The disciples asked him, "Why then do the teachers of the law say  that Elijah must come first?"    Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all  things. But I tell you, **Elijah has already come, and** **they did**  **not recognize him,** but have done to him everything they wished.  In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their  hands." Then the disciples understood that he was talking to  them about John the Baptist.    When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt  before him. "Lord, have mercy on my son," he said. "He has  seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire  or into the water. I brought him to your disciples, but they  could not heal him."    ff "O>>>**unbelieving and perverse** generation<<<," Jesus replied,>>>"**how long**  **shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you?**<<<Bring  the boy here to me." **Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out**  **of the boy,** and he was healed from that moment.    Then **the disciples** came to Jesus in private and **asked,** **"Why**  **couldn't we drive it out?"**    ff He replied, **"Because** **you have so little faith.** I tell you the  truth, **if you have faith as small as a mustard seed,** you can  say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will  move. **Nothing will be impossible for you."**    When they came together in Galilee, he said to them, "The Son of  Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will  kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life." And  the disciples were filled with grief.    After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the  collectors of the two-drachma tax came to Peter and asked,  "Doesn't your teacher pay the **temple tax**?"    "Yes, he does," he replied.    When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak.  "What do you think, Simon?" he asked. "From whom do the kings  of the earth collect duty and taxes--from their own sons or  from others?"    "From others," Peter answered.    "Then the sons are exempt," Jesus said to him. "But **so that we**  **may not offend them,** go to the lake and throw out your line.  Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find  a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and  yours."    At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the  greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"    He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he  **ee** said: **"I tell you the truth,** **unless you**>**change**<**and become like**  **little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.**  Therefore, **whoever humbles himself** **like this child is the**  **greatest in** **the kingdom of heaven.**    "And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name  welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who  believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a  large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the  depths of the sea.    "Woe to the world because of **the things that cause people to sin!**  **Such things must come,** **but woe to the man through whom they**  **ee** **come!** If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off  and throw it away. It is better for you to enter **life** maimed or  crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be **thrown into**  **eternal fire.** And **if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out**  **and throw it away.** It is better for you to enter **life** with one  eye than to have two eyes and be **thrown into**>**the fire of hell.**<    "See that you **do not look down on** one of these little ones. For I  tell you that **their angels in heaven always see the face of my**  **Father in heaven.**    "What do you think? If **a man owns a hundred sheep,** and one of  them **wanders away,** will he not leave the ninety-nine on the  hills and go to look for the one that **wandered off?** And if he  finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one  sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not **wander off.** In  the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of  these little ones should be lost.    **"If your brother sins against you,** go and **show him his fault,**  just between the two of you. **If he listens to you, you have won**  **your brother over.** But if he will not listen, take one or two  others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the  testimony of two or three witnesses.' **If he refuses to listen**  **to them,** tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen  even to the church, **treat him as you would a pagan or a tax**  **collector.**    "I tell you the truth, **whatever you bind on earth will be bound**  **in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in**  **heaven.**    "Again, **I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about**  **anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in**  **heaven.** **For where two or three come together in my name,** **there**  **am I with them."**    Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, **how many times shall I**  **forgive my brother when he sins against me?** **Up to seven times?"**    Jesus answered, **"I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven**  **times.**    "Therefore, the **kingdom of heaven** is like a king who wanted to  settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement,  **a man who owed him ten thousand talents** was brought to him.  Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and  his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay  the debt.    "The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,'  he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's  master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.    "But when that servant went out, he found **one of his fellow**  **servants who owed him a hundred denarii.** He grabbed him and  began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.    "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient  with me, and I will pay you back.'    "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into  prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw  what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and  told their master everything that had happened.    "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he  said, **'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me**  **to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as**  **I had on you?'** In anger his master turned him over to the  **jailers to be tortured,** until he should pay back all he owed.    **ee**  **"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you**  **forgive your brother from your heart."**    When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and  went into the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan.  Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.    Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful  for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"    "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the  Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason  a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his  wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer  two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man  not separate."    "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his  wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?"    Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because  your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the  beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except  for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits  adultery."    The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a  husband and wife, **it is better not to marry."**    Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this **word,** but **only those**  **to whom it has been given.** For some are eunuchs because they  were born that way; others were made that way by men; and  **others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of**  **heaven.** The one who can accept this should accept it."    Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his  hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked  those who brought them.    Jesus said, "**Let the little children come to me,** and do not  hinder them, **for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as**  **these.**" When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from  there.    Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, **what good thing**  **must I do to get eternal life?**"    **"Why do you ask me about what is good?"** Jesus replied. **"There is**  **only One who is good.** **If you want to enter life, obey the**  **commandments."**    **"Which ones?"** the man inquired.    Jesus replied, "'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not  steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and  mother,' and **'love your neighbor as yourself.'"**    **"All these I have kept,"** the young man said. **"What do I still**  **lack?"**    **ee** Jesus answered, "**If you want to be perfect,** **go,** **sell your**  **possessions and give to the poor, and** **you will have treasure in**  **heaven.** **Then come, follow me."**    When the young man heard this, **he went away sad, because** **he had**  **great wealth.**    Then Jesus said to his disciples, **"I tell you the truth, it is**  **hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.** Again I  tell you, **it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a**  **needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."**    When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and  asked, **"Who then can be saved?"**    Jesus looked at them and said, **"With man this is impossible, but**  **with God all things are possible."**    **HSMS** Peter answered him, **"We have left everything to follow you!** What  then will there be for us?"    Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all  things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, **you**  **who have followed me** will also sit on twelve thrones, judging  the twelve tribes of Israel. And **everyone who has left** houses  or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or  fields **for my sake will receive a hundred times as much** and  **will inherit eternal life.** But many who are first will be last,  and many who are last will be first.    "For the **kingdom of heaven** is like a landowner who went out early  in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. He agreed  to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his  vineyard.    "About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the  marketplace doing nothing. He told them, 'You also go and work  in my vineyard, and **I will pay you whatever is right.'** So they  went.    "He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and  did the same thing. About the eleventh hour he went out and  found still others standing around. He asked them, **'Why have**  **you been standing here all day long doing nothing?'**    "'Because no one has hired us,' they answered.    "He said to them, **'You also go and work in my vineyard.'**    "When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his  foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning  with the last ones hired and going on to the first.'    "The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each  received a denarius. So when those came who were hired first,  they expected to receive more. But each one of them also  received a denarius. When they received it, they began to  grumble against the landowner. 'These men who were hired last  worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal  to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the  day.'    "But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to  you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and  go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I  gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own  money? Or are you envious because I am generous?'    **"So the last will be first, and the first will be last."**    Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve  disciples aside and said to them, "We are going up to  Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief  priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to  death and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and  flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to  life!"    Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons  and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.    "What is it you want?" he asked.    She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at  your right and the other at your left in your kingdom."    "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. **"Can**  **you drink the cup I am going to drink?"**    "We can," they answered.    Jesus said to them, **"You will indeed drink from my cup,** but to  sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places  belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father."    When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two  brothers. Jesus called them together and said, "You know that  the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high  officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you.  Instead, **whoever wants to become great among you must be your**  **servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave**--just  as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and  **to give his life as a ransom for many."**    As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd  followed him. Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and  when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord,  Son of David, have mercy on us!"    The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they  shouted all the louder, **"Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"**    Jesus stopped and called them. **"What do you want me to do for**  **you?"** he asked.    **"Lord,"** they answered, **"we want our sight."**    **Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately**  **they received their sight and followed him.**    As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount  of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go to the  village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied  there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me.  If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs  them, and he will send them right away."    This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:  "Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your king comes to you,  gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a  donkey.'"    The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They  brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them,  and Jesus sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks  on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and  spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and  those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"  "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in  the highest!"    When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and  asked, "Who is this?"    The crowds answered, **"This is Jesus, the prophet** from Nazareth in  Galilee."    **Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying**  **and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money**  **changers and the benches of those selling doves. "It is**  **written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of**  **prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'"**    The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed  them. But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law  saw the wonderful things he did and **the children shouting in**  **the temple area, "Hosanna to the Son of David,"** they were  indignant.    "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him.    "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, **"'From the lips of**  **children and infants you have ordained praise'?"**    And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he  spent the night.    Early in the morning, as he was on his way back to the city, he  was hungry. **Seeing a fig tree** by the road, **he went up to it but**  **found nothing on it except leaves.** Then he said to it, **"May you**  **never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered.**    When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. "How did the fig  tree wither so quickly?" they asked.    ff Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, **if you have faith and do**  **not doubt,** **not only can you do what was done to the fig tree,**  **but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into**  **the sea,' and it will be done.** **If you believe,** **you will receive**  **whatever you ask** **for in prayer."**    Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the  chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. "By  what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And  who gave you this authority?"    Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer  me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things.  John's baptism--where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or  from men?"    They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From  heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' But if  we say, 'From men'--we are afraid of the people, for **they all**  **hold that John was a prophet."**    So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."    Then he said, **"Neither will I tell you by what authority I am**  **doing these things.**    **"What do you think?** There was a man who had two sons. He went to  the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'    "'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and  went.    "Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing.  He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.    "Which of the two did what his father wanted?"    "The first," they answered.    Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, **the tax collectors and**  **the prostitutes are** **entering** **the kingdom of God** **ahead of you.**  For **John** **came to you**>**to show you**<**the way of righteousness, and**  **you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the**  **prostitutes did. And even after you saw this,** **you did not**  rrff>**repent**<**and believe** **him.**    "Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a  vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and  built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers  and went away on a journey. When the harvest time approached,  he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.    "The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another,  and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more  than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way.  Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my  son,' he said.    "But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, **'This**  **is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.'** So  they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.    "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do  to those tenants?"    "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied,  "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give  him his share of the crop at harvest time."    Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "'The  stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord  has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?    **ee**  "Therefore I tell you that **the kingdom of God will be taken away**  **from you** and **given to a people**>>>**who will produce**<<<**its fruit.** He  who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on  whom it falls will be crushed."    When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables,  they knew he was talking about them. They looked for a way to  arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because **the**  **people held that he was a prophet.**    Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: **"The kingdom of**  **heaven** **is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his**  **son.** **He sent his servants to** **those who had been invited to the**  **banquet** to tell them to come, **but they refused to come.**    **"Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have**  **been invited** that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and  fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready.  **Come to the wedding banquet.'**    "But **they paid no attention and went off**--one to **his field,**  another to **his business.** The rest seized his servants,  mistreated them and killed them. **The king was enraged. He sent**  **his army and destroyed** **those murderers** and burned their city.    "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but  **those I invited**>**did not deserve to come**<**.** **Go to the street**  **corners** **and** **invite** to the banquet **anyone you find.'** So **the**  **servants went** **out into the streets** **and** **gathered all the people**  **they could find, both good and bad,** and the wedding hall was  filled with guests.    "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man  there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 'Friend,' he asked,  **ee**hh **'how did you get in here without wedding clothes?'** The man was  speechless.    "Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and  **throw him outside, into the darkness,** **where there will be**  **weeping and gnashing of teeth.'**    "For **many are invited**, but **few are chosen."**    Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his  words. They sent their disciples to him along with the  Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know you are a man of  integrity and that you teach **the way of God** in accordance with  the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no  attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion?  Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"    But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why  are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the  tax." They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, "Whose  portrait is this? And whose inscription?"    "Caesar's," they replied.    Then he said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to  God what is God's."    When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went  away.    That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection,  came to him with a question. "Teacher," they said, "Moses told  us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must  marry the widow and have children for him. Now there were seven  brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he  had no children, he left his wife to his brother. The same  thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down  to the seventh. Finally, the woman died. Now then, at the  resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of  them were married to her?"    Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the  Scriptures or **the** **power of God.** At the resurrection people will  neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the  angels in heaven. But about the resurrection of the dead--have  you not read what God said to you, 'I am the God of Abraham,  the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of  the dead but of the living."    When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.    Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got  together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with  this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in  the Law?"    **HSMS**  **Jesus replied:** **"'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and**  **with all your soul and with all your mind.'** This is the first  and>**greatest commandment**<**.** And the second is like it: **'Love your**  **neighbor as yourself.'** **All the Law and the Prophets** hang on  these two commandments."    While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,  "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?"    "The son of David," they replied.    He said to them, "How is it then that David, **speaking by the**  **Spirit,** calls him 'Lord'? For he says, "'The Lord said to my  Lord: "Sit at **my right hand** until I put your enemies under your  feet." ' If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his  son?" No one could say a word in reply, and **from that day on no**  **one dared to ask him any more questions.**    Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: "The teachers  of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must  obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what  they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up  heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they  themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.    "Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their  phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; they  love the place of honor at banquets and the most important  seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the  marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.'    "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one  Master and **you are all brothers.** And do not call anyone on  earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven.  Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher,  the Christ. **The greatest among you will be your servant.** For  whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and **whoever humbles**  **himself will be exalted.**    **"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees,** **you hypocrites!**  **You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves**  **do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.**  "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, **you hypocrites!**  **You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when**  **he becomes one,** **you make him** **twice as much a son of hell as you**  **are.**    "Woe to **you, blind guides!** You say, 'If anyone swears by the  temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of  the temple, he is bound by his oath.' **You blind fools!** Which is  greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred?  You also say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing;  but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his  oath.' **You blind men!** Which is greater: the gift, or the altar  that makes the gift sacred? Therefore, he who swears by the  altar swears by it and by everything on it. And he who swears  by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. And  he who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one  who sits on it.    "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, **you hypocrites!**  You give a tenth of your spices--mint, dill and cummin. But you  have neglected the **more important matters** of the law--**justice,**  **mercy and** **faithfulness.** You should have practiced the latter,  without neglecting the former. **You blind guides! You strain out**  **a gnat but swallow a camel.**    "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, **you hypocrites!**  **You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but** **inside they are**  **full of** **greed and self-indulgence.** **Blind Pharisee!** **First clean**  **the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will**  **be clean.**    "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, **you hypocrites!**  You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the  outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and  everything unclean. In the same way, **on the outside you appear**  **to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of**  **hypocrisy and wickedness.**    "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, **you hypocrites!**  You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of **the**  **righteous.** And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our  forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding  the blood of the prophets.' So you testify against yourselves  that you are the descendants of those who murdered the  prophets. **Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your**  **forefathers!**    **"You snakes! You brood of vipers!** **How will you escape being**  **condemned to hell?** **Therefore** **I am sending you prophets and wise**  **men and teachers.** **Some of them you will kill and crucify;**  **others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue** from town to  town. And so upon you will come all **the righteous blood** that  has been shed on earth, from **the blood of righteous Abel** to the  blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between  the temple and the altar. I tell you the truth, all this will  come upon this generation.    "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone  those sent to you, **how often I have longed to gather your**  **children together,** **as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings,**  **but you were not willing.** Look, your house is left to you  desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you  say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"    Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples  came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. "Do you  see all these things?" he asked. "I tell you the truth, **not one**  **stone here will be left on another; every one** **will be thrown**  **down."**    As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came  to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen,  and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the  age?"    Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many  will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will  deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see  to it that you are not alarmed. **Such things must happen,** but  the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and  kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes  in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.    "Then **you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death,**  **and you will be hated by all nations because of me**. **At that**  **time**>**many will turn away from the faith**<**and will betray and**  **hate each other,** and many false prophets will appear and  deceive many people. **Because**>>>**of the increase of wickedness**<<<, **the**  **eeff love of**>>>>**most**<<<<**will grow cold, but he who**>>>**stands firm**<<<**to the end**  **will be saved.** And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached  in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the  end will come.    "So when you see standing in **the holy place** 'the abomination that  causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let  the reader understand--then let those who are in Judea flee to  the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to  take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back  to get his cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for  pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will  not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. **For then there will**  **be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world**  **until now--and never to be equaled again.** **If those days had not**  **been cut short,** **no one would**>**survive**<**, but** **for the sake of the**  **elect those days will be shortened.** At that time if anyone says  to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not  believe it. For **false Christs and false prophets will appear**  **and perform great signs and miracles** **to**>>>**deceive**<<<**even** **the**  **elect--if that were possible.** See, I have told you ahead of  time.    "So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not  go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe  it. For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even  in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever  there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.    "Immediately after the distress of those days "'the sun will be  darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will  fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'    "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky,  and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the  Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with **power** and  great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet  call, and they will gather **his elect** from the four winds, from  one end of the heavens to the other.    **"Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs**  **get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is**  **near. Even so,** **when you see all these things, you know that it**  **is near, right at the door.** I tell you the truth, this  generation will certainly not pass away until all these things  have happened. **Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words**  **will never pass away.**    **"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in**  **heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.** **As it was in the days**  **of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.** **For in**  **the days before the flood,** **people were eating and drinking,**  **marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the**  **ark; and** **they knew nothing about what would happen until the**  **flood came and took them all away.** **That is how it will be at**  **the coming of the Son of Man.** **Two men will be in the field; one**  **will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding**  **with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.**    "**Therefore keep watch,** **because you do not know on what day your**  **Lord will come.** But understand this: If the owner of the house  had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would  have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken  into. So **you also must be ready,** **because the Son of Man will**  **come at an hour when you do not expect him**.    "**Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has**  **put in charge of the servants in his household to give them**  **their food at the proper time?** **It will be good for that servant**  **whose master finds him doing so when he returns.** **I tell you the**  **truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But**  **suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master**  **is staying away a long time,' and he then begins to beat his**  **fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards.** **The master**  **of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him**  **and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces**  **and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be**  **weeping and gnashing of teeth.**    "At that time the **kingdom of heaven** will be like ten virgins who  took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of  them were foolish and five were **wise**. The foolish ones took  their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The **wise,**  however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The  bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became  drowsy and fell asleep.    "At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out  to meet him!'    "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The  foolish ones said to the **wise,** 'Give us some of your oil; our  lamps are going out.'    "'No,' they replied, **'**>**there may not**<be enough for both us and  you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for  yourselves.'    "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom  arrived. **The virgins who were ready** went in with him to the  wedding banquet. And the door was shut.    "Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the  door for us!'    **"But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.'**    **ee** **"Therefore** **keep watch,** **because you do not know the day or the**  **hour.**    **"Again,** **it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his**  **servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave**  **five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another**  **one talent,** **each according to his ability.** Then he went on his  journey. **The man who had received the five talents** **went** **at once**  **and put his money to work** **and gained five more.** So also, the  one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had  received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and  hid his master's money.    **"After a long time the master of those servants returned** and  settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five  talents brought the other five. **'Master,' he said, 'you**  **ee** **entrusted me with five talents. See,** **I have gained five more.'**    "His master replied, **'Well done, good and faithful servant! You**  **have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge**  **of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'**    "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you  **ee** entrusted me with two talents; see, **I have gained two more.'**    "His master replied, **'Well done, good and faithful servant!** **You**  **have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge**  **of many things.** **Come and share your master's happiness!'**    "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he  said, 'I knew that **you are a hard man, harvesting where you**  **have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed.**  So I was **afraid** and went out and hid your talent in the ground.  See, here is what belongs to you.'    **ee** "His master replied, **'You wicked,**>**lazy**<**servant!** So you knew that  **I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not**  **scattered seed?** Well then, you should have put my money on  deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have  received it back with interest.    "'Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten  talents. For **everyone who has will be given more, and he will**  **have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will**  **be taken from him.** And **throw** that **worthless servant** outside,  **into the darkness**, **where there will be weeping and gnashing of**  **teeth.'**    **"When the Son of Man comes in his glory,** **and all the angels with**  **him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the**  **nations will be gathered before him, and** **he will separate the**  **people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from**  **the goats.** He will put the sheep on **his right** and the goats on  his left.    "Then the King will say to those on **his right,** **'Come, you who are**  **blessed by my Father; take your inheritance,** **the kingdom**  **ee** prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was  hungry and **you gave me something to eat,** I was thirsty and **you**  **gave me something to drink,** I was a stranger and **you invited me**  **in,** I needed clothes and **you clothed me,** I was sick and **you**  **looked after me**, I was in prison and **you came to visit me.'**    "Then **the righteous** will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you  hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to  drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or  needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in  prison and go to visit you?'    **ee** "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever **you did** for  one of the least **of these brothers of mine,** **you did** for me.'    "Then he will say to those on his left, **'Depart from me, you who**  **are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and**  **his angels.** For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I  was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger  and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not  clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after  me.'    "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or  thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison,  and did not help you?'    "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever **you did not do**  for one of the least of these, **you did not do** for me.'    "**Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous**  **to eternal life.**"    When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his  disciples, "As you know, the Passover is two days away--and the  Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."    Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in  the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and  they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him. "But  not during the Feast," they said, "or there may be a riot among  the people."    While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of a man known as Simon  the Leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very  expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was  reclining at the table.    When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this  waste?" they asked. "This perfume could have been sold at a  high price and the money given to the poor."    Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this  woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will  always have with you, but you will not always have me. When she  poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for  burial. I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is preached  throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in  memory of her."    Then one of the Twelve--the one called Judas Iscariot--went to  the chief priests and asked, "What are you willing to give me  if I hand him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty  silver coins. From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to  hand him over.    On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples  came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make  preparations for you to eat the Passover?"    He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The  Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to  celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" So  the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the  Passover.    When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the  Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the  truth, one of you will betray me."    They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other,  "Surely not I, Lord?"    Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl  with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is  written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of  Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."    Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I,  Rabbi?"    Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."    While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke  it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "**Take and eat; this**  **is my body."**    Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying,  "Drink from it, all of you. **This is** **my blood of the covenant,**  **which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.** I  tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now  on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's  kingdom."    When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.    Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on  account of me, for it is written: "'I will strike the shepherd,  and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have  risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."    Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never  will."    "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "this very night, before  the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."    But **Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never**  **disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.**    Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane,  and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray."  He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and  he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them,  "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay  here and keep watch with me."    Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and  prayed, **"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken**  **from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."**    Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could  you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter.  **"Watch and pray so that you will not**>**fall**<**into temptation.** **The**  **spirit is willing, but the body is weak."**    He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not  possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may  your will be done."    When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their  eyes were heavy. So he left them and went away once more and  prayed the third time, saying the same thing.    Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you  still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son  of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go!  Here comes my betrayer!"    While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived.  With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent  from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the  betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is  the man; arrest him." Going at once to Jesus, Judas said,  "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.    Jesus replied, **"Friend,** **do what you came for."**    Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. With  that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it  out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his  ear.    "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all  who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot  call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more  than twelve legions of angels? But how then would **the**  **Scriptures** **be** **fulfilled that say it must happen in this way**?"    At that time Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion,  that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me?  Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not  arrest me. But **this has all taken place that the writings of**  **the prophets might be fulfilled."** Then all the disciples  deserted him and fled.    Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas, the high  priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had  assembled. But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to  the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with  the guards to see the outcome.    The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false  evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. But  they did not find any, though many false witnesses came  forward.    Finally two came forward and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am  able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three  days.'"    Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not  going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are  bringing against you?" But Jesus remained silent.    **The high priest said to him,** **"I charge you under oath by the**  **living God:** **Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."**    **"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied.** "But I say to all of you:  In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at **the right**  **hand** of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."    Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken  blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you  have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"    "He is worthy of death," they answered.    Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists.  Others slapped him and said, "Prophesy to us, Christ. Who hit  you?"    Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl  came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said.    But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're  talking about," he said.    Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and  said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of  Nazareth."    He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!"    After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and  said, "Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you  away."    Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to  them, "I don't know the man!"    Immediately a rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered the word  Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me  three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.    Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the  people came to the decision to put Jesus to death. They bound  him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.    When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned,  he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins  to the chief priests and the elders. "I have sinned," he said,  "for I have betrayed innocent blood."    "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility."    So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went  away and hanged himself.    The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against  the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood  money." So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's  field as a burial place for foreigners. That is why it has been  called the Field of Blood to this day. Then what was spoken by  Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "They took the thirty  silver coins, the price set on him by the people of Israel, and  they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded  me."    Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and **the governor asked**  **him,** **"Are you the king of the Jews?"**    **"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied.**    When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave  no answer. Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony  they are bringing against you?" But Jesus made no reply, not  even to a single charge--to the great amazement of the  governor.    Now it was the governor's custom at the Feast to release a  prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they had a notorious  prisoner, called Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered,  Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you:  Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" For he knew it was  out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him.    While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him  this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent  man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because  of him."    But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask  for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.    "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the  governor.    "Barabbas," they answered.    "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate  asked.    They all answered, "Crucify him!"    "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate.    But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"    When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an  uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in  front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he  said. "It is your responsibility!"    All the people answered, "Let his blood be on us and on our  children!"    Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and  handed him over to be crucified.    Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and  gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They  stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted  together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a  staff in **his right hand** and knelt in front of him and mocked  him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. They spit on him, and  took the staff and struck him on the head again and again.  After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his  own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.    As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon,  and they forced him to carry the cross. They came to a place  called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). There  they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after  tasting it, he refused to drink it. When they had crucified  him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting  down, they kept watch over him there. Above his head they  placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING  OF THE JEWS. Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his  right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults  at him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who are going to  destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself!  Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!"    In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and  the elders mocked him. "He saved others," they said, "but he  can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down  ff now from the cross, and we will believe in him. **He trusts in**  **God.** Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am  the Son of God.'" In the same way the robbers who were  crucified with him also heaped insults on him.  **From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all**  **the land. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice,**  **"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"--which means, "My God, my God,**  **why have you forsaken me?"**    When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's  calling Elijah."    Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with  wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to  drink. The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah  comes to save him."    **And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up**  **his spirit.**    **At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top**  **to bottom.** The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke  open and the bodies of **many holy people** who had died were  raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus'  resurrection they went into **the holy city** and appeared to many  people.    **When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw**  **the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified,**  **and exclaimed,** **"Surely he was the Son of God!"**    Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had  followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. Among them  were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and  the mother of Zebedee's sons.    As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea,  named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going  to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it  be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean  linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut  out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance  to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary  were sitting there opposite the tomb.    The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests  and the Pharisees went to Pilate. "Sir," they said, "we  remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said,  'After three days I will rise again.' So give the order for the  tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his  disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that  he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be  worse than the first."    "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as  you know how." So they went and made the tomb secure by putting  a seal on the stone and posting the guard.    After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary  Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.    **There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came**  **down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone**  **and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his**  **clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him**  **that they shook and became like dead men.**    **The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that**  **you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here;**  **he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he**  **lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from**  **the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will**  **see him.' Now I have told you."**    So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with  joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them.  "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and  worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go  and tell **my brothers** to go to Galilee; there they will see me."    While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into  the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had  happened. When the chief priests had met with the elders and  devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money,  telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the  night and stole him away while we were asleep.' If this report  gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of  trouble." So the soldiers took the money and did as they were  instructed. And **this story has been widely circulated among the**  **Jews to this very day.**    Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where  Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped  him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, **"All**  **authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.**  **ee** **Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,** baptizing them  in the name of the Father and of the Son and of **the Holy**  **ee Spirit,** and **teaching them to**>**obey**<**everything I have commanded**  **you.** And **surely I am with you always, to the very end of the**  **age."**  **============**  The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.    **It is written in Isaiah the prophet:** **"I will send** **my messenger**  **ahead of you, who will prepare your way"--"a voice of one**  rr **calling in the desert,** **'Prepare the way for the Lord,**>**make**  **straight paths for him**<**.'"** And so John came, baptizing in the  desert region and preaching **a baptism of** **repentance for the**  **forgiveness of sins.** **The whole Judean countryside and all the**  rr **people of Jerusalem went out to him.** **Confessing their sins,**  **they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.** John wore  clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his  waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. **And this was his**  **message: "After me will come one more powerful than I,** **the**  **thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and**  ss **untie.** I baptize you with water, but **he will baptize you with**  **the Holy Spirit."**    **At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized**  **by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water,**  **he saw heaven being torn open and** **the Spirit** **descending on him**  **like a dove.** **And a voice came from heaven:** **"You are my Son,**  **whom I love; with you I am well pleased."**    **At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, and he was in**  **the desert forty days,** **being tempted by Satan.** **He was with the**  **wild animals, and angels attended him.**    After John was put in prison, **Jesus went into Galilee,**  **proclaiming** **the good news of God.** **"The time has come,"** he said.  rrff **"The kingdom of God is**>**near**<**. Repent and believe the good news!"**    As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, **he saw Simon and his**  **brother Andrew** casting a net into the lake, for they were  fishermen. **"Come, follow me,"** Jesus said, "and **I will make you**  **fishers of men."** **At once they left their nets and followed him.**    When he had gone a little farther, **he saw James son of Zebedee**  **and his brother John** in a boat, preparing their nets. **Without**  **delay he called them,** **and** **they left their father Zebedee in the**  **boat with the hired men and followed him.**    They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, **Jesus went**  **into the synagogue and began to teach.** The people were amazed  at his teaching, because **he taught them** **as one who had**  **authority,** not as the teachers of the law. Just then a man in  their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out,  **"What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to**  **destroy us?** **I know who you are--the Holy One of God!"**    **"Be quiet!"** said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" The evil  spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a  shriek.    The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What  is this? **A new teaching--and with authority!** He even gives  orders to evil spirits and they obey him." News about him  spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.    As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John  to the home of Simon and Andrew. Simon's mother-in-law was in  bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. So he went to  her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and  she began to wait on them.    That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the  sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gathered at the door,  and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove  out many demons, but **he would not let the demons speak because**  **they knew who he was.**    Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up,  left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he  prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when  they found him, they exclaimed: **"Everyone is looking for you!"**    Jesus replied, **"Let us go somewhere else**--to the nearby  villages--so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."  So **he traveled throughout Galilee,** **preaching in their**  **synagogues** and driving out demons.    **A man with leprosy** came to him and **begged him on his knees,** **"If**  **you are willing, you can make me clean."**    **Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched**  **the man.** **"I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"** **Immediately the**  **leprosy left him** and he was cured.    Jesus sent him away at once with **a strong warning:** **"See that you**  **don't tell this to anyone.** But go, show yourself to the priest  and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your  cleansing, as a testimony to them." **Instead** he went out and  began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus  could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in  lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from  everywhere.    A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people  heard that he had come home. So many gathered that there was no  room left, not even outside the door, and **he preached the word**  **to them.** Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by  four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of  the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and,  after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was  ff lying on. **When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic,**  **"Son, your sins are forgiven."**    Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to  themselves, **"Why does this fellow talk like that?** He's  blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"    Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were  thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you  thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to the  paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take  your mat and walk'? But that you may know that **the Son of Man**  **has authority on earth to forgive sins**. . . ." He said to the  paralytic, **"I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." He**  **got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all.**  This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have  never seen anything like this!"    Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to  him, and he began to teach them. As he walked along, **he saw**  **Levi** son of Alphaeus **sitting at the tax collector's booth.**  **"Follow me,"** Jesus told him, and **Levi got up and followed him.**    While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax  collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his  disciples, for there were many who followed him. When the  teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the  "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why  does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"    On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who  need a doctor, but the sick. **I have not come to call the**  **righteous, but sinners."**    Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people  came and asked Jesus, "How is it that John's disciples and the  disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?"    Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while  he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with  them. But **the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken**  **from them, and on that day they will fast.**    "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he  does, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the  tear worse. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he  does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the  wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new  wineskins."    One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his  disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain.  The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is  unlawful on the Sabbath?"    He answered, "Have you never read what David did when he and his  companions were hungry and in need? In the days of Abiathar the  high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the  consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And  he also gave some to his companions."    Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for  the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."    Another time **he went into the synagogue, and a man with a**  **shriveled hand was there. Some of them were looking for a**  **reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if**  **he would heal him on the Sabbath. Jesus said to the man with**  **the shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone."**    Then **Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do**  **good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained**  **silent.**    **He looked around at them in anger and,** **deeply distressed at their**  **stubborn hearts,** **said to the man,** **"Stretch out your hand." He**  **stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.** **Then**  **the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how**  **they might kill Jesus.**    Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd  from Galilee followed. When they heard all he was doing, many  people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the  regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. Because of  the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for  him, to keep the people from crowding him. For he had healed  many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch  him. Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before  him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." **But he gave them**  **strict orders not to tell who he was.**    **Jesus** went up on a mountainside and **called to him those he**  **wanted,** and **they came to him.** **He appointed twelve--designating**  **them apostles--that they might be with him** **and that** **he might**  **send them out to preach** and to have authority to drive out  demons. These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he  gave the name Peter); James son of Zebedee and his brother John  (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of  Thunder); Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James  son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas  Iscariot, who betrayed him.    Then Jesus entered a house, and again **a crowd gathered, so that**  **he and his disciples were not even able to eat.** When his family  heard about this, **they went to take charge of him,** for they  said, **"He is out of his mind**."    And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said,  "He is possessed by Beelzebub! By the prince of demons he is  driving out demons."    So Jesus called them and spoke to them in parables: "How can  Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself,  that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against  itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan opposes himself  and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. In fact, no  one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his  possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can  rob his house. I tell you the truth, all the sins and  blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. But **whoever**  **blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he**  **is guilty of an eternal sin."**    **He said this because they were saying, "He has an evil spirit."**    Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they  sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him,  and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside  looking for you."    "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked.    Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said,  **ee**hh "Here are my mother and my brothers! **Whoever does God's will is**  **my brother and sister** and mother."    Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered  around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it  out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at  the water's edge. He taught them many things by parables, and  in his teaching said: "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his  seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path,  and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places,  where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because  the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were  scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other  seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so  that they did not bear grain. Still other seed fell on good  soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty,  sixty, or even a hundred times."    Then Jesus said, **"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."**    When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him  about the parables. He told them, **"The secret of the kingdom of**  **God has been given to you. But to those on the outside**  **everything is said in parables so that, "'they may be ever**  **seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never**  **understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!'"**    Then Jesus said to them, **"Don't you understand** this parable? How  then will you understand>**any**<parable? The farmer sows **the word.**  Some people are like seed along the path, where **the word** is  sown. **As soon as they hear it,** **Satan comes and takes away the**  **word** **that was sown in them.** Others, like seed sown on rocky  places, hear **the word** and at **once receive it with joy.** But  **since they have no root,**>**they last only a short time**<**. When**  **trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly**  **fall away.** Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear **the**  **word;** **but the**>**worries of this life**<**, the deceitfulness of wealth**  **and the desires for other things come in and choke the word,**  **making it unfruitful.** Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear  **the word,** **accept it,** and **produce a crop**--thirty, sixty or even  a hundred times what was sown."    He said to them, **"Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl**  **or a bed?** **Instead, don't you put it on its stand?** **For whatever**  **is hidden is meant to be disclosed,** and **whatever is concealed**  **is meant to be brought out into the open.** If anyone has **ears to**  **hear, let him hear."**    ff**ee** **"Consider carefully** **what you hear,"** he continued. "**With the**  **measure you use,** **it will be measured to you--and even more.**  **Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even**  **what he has will be taken from him."**    He also said, **"This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man**  **scatters seed on the ground.** Night and day, whether he sleeps  or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know  ss how. **All by itself the soil produces grain--first the stalk,**  **then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the**  **grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest**  **has come."**    Again he said, "What shall we say **the kingdom of God** is like, or  ss what parable shall we use to describe it? **It is like a mustard**  **seed,** which is the smallest seed you plant in the ground. Yet  when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden  plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can  perch in its shade."    With many similar parables **Jesus spoke the word to them,** **as much**  **as they could understand.** **He did not say anything to them**  **without using a parable.** **But when he was alone with his own**  **disciples, he explained everything.**    That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go  over to the other side." **Leaving the crowd behind,** they took  him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other  boats with him. **A furious squall came up, and the waves broke**  **over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.** Jesus was in the  stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said  to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"    **He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves,** **"Quiet! Be**  **still!"** Then **the wind died down and it was completely calm.**    ff He said to his disciples, **"Why are you so afraid?** **Do you still**  **have no faith?"**    **They were terrified and asked each other,** **"Who is this?** **Even** **the**  **wind and the waves obey him!"**    They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When  Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from  the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one  could bind him any more, not even with a chain. For he had  often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart  and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to  subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he  would cry out and cut himself with stones.    When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees  in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do  you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God  that you won't torture me!" For Jesus had said to him, "Come  out of this man, you evil spirit!"    Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"    "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." And he begged  Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.    A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The  demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go  into them." He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came  out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in  number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were  drowned.    Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and  countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened.  When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been  possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and  in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it  told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed  man--and told about the pigs as well. Then **the people began to**  **plead with Jesus to leave their region.**    As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been  demon-possessed **begged to go with him.** Jesus did not let him,  but said, **"Go home to your family and tell them how much the**  **ee Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."** **So the**  **man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus**  **had done for him.** And all the people were amazed.    When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of  the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the  lake. Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came  there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet and pleaded earnestly  with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put  your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." So  Jesus went with him.    A large crowd followed and pressed around him. **And a woman was**  **there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years.** She  had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and  had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew  worse. When she heard about Jesus, **she came up behind him in**  **the crowd and touched his cloak,** because **she thought, "If I**  **just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her**  **bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed**  **from her suffering.**    At once Jesus realized that **power** had gone out from him. He  turned around in the crowd and asked, **"Who touched my clothes?"**    **"You see the people crowding against you," his disciples**  **answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"**    **But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the**  **woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his**  **feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth.** He  ff said to her, "Daughter, **your faith has healed you**. Go in **peace**  and **be freed from your suffering."**    While Jesus was still speaking, **some men came from the house of**  **Jairus, the synagogue ruler.** **"Your daughter is dead," they**  **said. "Why bother the teacher any more?"**    ff **Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't**  **be afraid;** **just believe."**    He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the  brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue  ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing  loudly. He went in and said to them, **"Why all this commotion**  **and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep."** But they  laughed at him.    After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother  and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the  child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha  koum!" (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!").  Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve  years old). At this they were completely astonished. **He gave**  **strict orders not to let anyone know about this,** and told them  to give her something to eat.    Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his  disciples. When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the  synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.    **"Where did this man get these things?"** they asked. **"What's this**  **wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles!**  Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother  of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with  us?" **And they took offense at him.**    Jesus said to them, **"Only in his hometown, among his relatives**  **and in his own house is a prophet without honor."** **He could**>**not**  **do any miracles**<**there,** except lay his hands on a few sick  ff people and heal them. And **he**>**was amazed at their lack of faith.**<    Then **Jesus went around teaching from village to village. Calling**  **the Twelve to him,** **he sent them out two by two** and **gave them**  **authority over evil spirits.**    These were his instructions: **"Take nothing for the journey except**  **a staff--no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals**  **but not an extra tunic.** Whenever you enter a house, stay there  until you leave that town. And if any place will **not welcome**  **you or listen to you,** shake the dust off your feet when you  leave, as **a testimony against them."**    **They went out and preached that people should repent.** They drove  out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and  healed them.    King Herod heard about this, for **Jesus' name had become well**  **known.** Some were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from  the dead, and that is why miraculous **powers** are at work in  him."    Others said, "He is Elijah."    And still others claimed, **"He is a prophet, like one of the**  **prophets of long ago."**    But when Herod heard this, he said, "John, the man I beheaded,  has been raised from the dead!"    For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he  had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of  Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. For  John had been saying to Herod, **"It is not lawful for you to**  **have your brother's wife."** So Herodias nursed a grudge against  John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, because  **Herod feared John** **and protected him,** **knowing him to be a**  **righteous and holy man.** **When Herod heard John,** **he was greatly**  >**puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him**<**.**    **Finally the opportune time came.** On his birthday Herod gave a  banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the  leading men of Galilee. When the daughter of Herodias came in  and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests.    The king said to the girl, "Ask me for anything you want, and  I'll give it to you." And he promised her with an oath,  "Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom."    She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?"    "The head of John the Baptist," she answered.    At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: "I want  you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a  platter."    The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his  dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. So he immediately  sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. The man  went, beheaded John in the prison, and brought back his head on  a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her  mother. On hearing of this, John's disciples came and took his  body and laid it in a tomb.    The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they  had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming  and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said  to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get  some rest."    So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.  But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot  from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus  landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them,  because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So **he began**  **teaching them many things.**    By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to  him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already  very late. Send the people away so they can go to the  surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves  something to eat."    But he answered, "You give them something to eat."    They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages!  Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them  to eat?"    "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see."    When they found out, they said, "Five--and two fish."    Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in  groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of  hundreds and fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish  and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves.  Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He  also divided the two fish among them all. **They all ate and were**  **satisfied,** and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of  broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had  eaten was five thousand.    Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on  ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. After  leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.    When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he  was alone on land. He saw the disciples straining at the oars,  because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of  the night he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was  about to pass by them, but when **they saw him walking on the**  **lake,** they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, because they  all saw him and were terrified.    Immediately he spoke to them and said, **"Take courage! It is I.**  **Don't be afraid."** Then he climbed into the boat with them, and  the wind died down. They were completely amazed, for **they had**  **not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.**    When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and  anchored there. As soon as they got out of the boat, people  recognized Jesus. **They ran throughout that whole region and**  **carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And**  **wherever he went--into villages, towns or countryside--they**  **placed the sick in the marketplaces.** **They begged him to let**  **them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him**  **were healed.**    The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come  from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and saw some of his  disciples eating food with hands that were "unclean," that is,  unwashed. (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless  they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the  tradition of the elders. When they come from the marketplace  they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other  traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)    So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't  your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders  instead of eating their food with 'unclean' hands?"    He replied, **"Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you**  **hypocrites;** as it is written: **"'These people honor me with**  **their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me**  **in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.' You have**  **let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the**  **traditions of men."**    And he said to them: **"You have a fine way of setting aside the**  **commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!** For  Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Anyone  who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' But you  say that if a man says to his father or mother: 'Whatever help  you might otherwise have received from me is Corban' (that is,  a gift devoted to God), then you no longer let him do anything  for his father or mother. Thus **you nullify the** **word of God** by  your tradition that you have handed down. **And you do many**  **things like that."**  Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, **"Listen to me,**  **everyone, and understand this.** Nothing outside a man can make  him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out  of a man that makes him 'unclean.'"    After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples  asked him about this parable. **"Are you so dull?" he asked.**  **"Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside**  **can make him 'unclean'? For** **it doesn't go into his heart** but  into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this,  Jesus declared all foods "clean.")    He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.'  For **from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts,**  **sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice,**  **deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these**  **evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'"**    Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He  entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he  could not keep his presence secret. In fact, as soon as she  heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by  an evil spirit came and fell at his feet. The woman was a  Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the  demon out of her daughter.    "First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it  is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their  dogs."    "Yes, Lord," she replied, "but **even the dogs under the table eat**  **the children's crumbs."**    Then he told her,>>>**"For such a reply**,<<<**you may go; the demon has**  **left your daughter."**    She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon  gone.    Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down  to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis.  There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could  hardly talk, and they begged him to place his hand on the man.    After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his  fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's  tongue. He looked up to heaven and **with a deep sigh** said to  him, "Ephphatha!" (which means, "Be opened!"). At this, the  man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to  speak plainly.    **Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone.** But the more he did so,  the more they kept talking about it. People were overwhelmed  with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He  even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."    During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had  nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I  have compassion for these people; they have already been with  me three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them home  hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them  have come a long distance."    His disciples answered, "But where in this remote place can  anyone get enough bread to feed them?"    "How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked.    "Seven," they replied.    He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken  the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them  to his disciples to set before the people, and they did so.  They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also  and told the disciples to distribute them. The people ate and  were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven  basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. About four  thousand men were present. And having sent them away, he got  into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of  Dalmanutha.    The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they  asked him for a sign from heaven. **He sighed deeply** and said,  **"Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign?** I tell you  the truth, **no sign will be given to it**." **Then he left them,** got  back into the boat and crossed to the other side.    **The disciples had forgotten to bring bread,** except for one loaf  they had with them in the boat. **"Be careful,"** Jesus warned  them. **"Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of**  **Herod."**    They discussed this with one another and said, **"It is because we**  **have no bread."**    Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: **"Why are you talking**  **about having no bread?** **Do you still not see or understand? Are**  **your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and**  **ears but fail to hear?** And don't you remember? When I broke the   five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of  pieces did you pick up?"    "Twelve," they replied.    "And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how  many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"    They answered, "Seven."    He said to them, **"Do you still not understand?"**    They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and  begged Jesus to touch him. **He took the blind man by the hand**  **and led him outside the village.** **When he had spit on the man's**  **eyes and put his hands on him,** Jesus asked, **"Do you see**  **anything?"**    He looked up and said, **"I see people; they look like trees**  **walking around."**    Once more Jesus **put his hands on the man's eyes.** Then his eyes  were opened, **his sight was restored,** **and he saw everything**  **clearly.** Jesus sent him home, saying, **"Don't go into the**  **village."**    Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea  Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"    They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and  still others, one of the prophets."    "But **what about you?"** he asked. **"Who do you say I am?"**    **Peter answered,** **"You are the Christ."**    **Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.**    **He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many**  **things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and**  **teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three**  **days rise again.** **He spoke plainly about this, and** **Peter took**  **him aside and began to rebuke him.**    But when **Jesus** turned and looked at his disciples, he **rebuked**  **Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!"** he said. **"You do not have in**  **mind the things of God, but the things of men."**    **Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and**  **HSMS** **said:** **"If anyone would come after me,**>**he must**<**deny himself and**  **take up his cross and follow me.** For whoever wants to save his  life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for  the gospel will **save it.** **What good is it for a man to gain the**  **whole world, yet forfeit his soul?** **Or what can a man give in**  **exchange for his soul?** If anyone is ashamed of me and my **words**  in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will  be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the  **holy angels."**    And he said to them, "I tell you the truth, some who are standing  here will not taste death before they **see the kingdom of God**  **come with power.**"    After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led  them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he  was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling  white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And  there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking  with Jesus.    Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us  put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for  Elijah." (He did not know what to say, they were so  frightened.)    Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from  the cloud: **"This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"**    Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with  them except Jesus.    As they were coming down the mountain, **Jesus gave them orders not**  **to tell anyone what they had seen** until the Son of Man had  risen from the dead. They kept the matter to themselves,  discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.    And they asked him, "Why do the teachers of the law say that  Elijah must come first?"    Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah does come first, **and restores**  all things. **Why then is it written that the Son of Man must**  **suffer much and be rejected?** But I tell you, Elijah has come,  and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is  written about him."    When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd  around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. **As**  **soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with**  **wonder** and ran to greet him.    "What are you arguing with them about?" he asked.    A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who  is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech.  Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams  at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your  disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not."    ff "O>**unbelieving**<generation," Jesus replied, "**how long**>**shall I stay**  **with you? How long shall I put up with you?**<Bring the boy to  me."    So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately  threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and  rolled around, foaming at the mouth.    Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?"    "From childhood," he answered. "It has often thrown him into fire  or water to kill him. But **if you can do anything,** **take pity** on  us and **help us."**    ff **"'If you can'?" said Jesus.** **"**>**Everything**<**is possible for him who**  **believes."**    **Immediately the boy's father exclaimed,**>>>**"I do believe; help me**  **overcome my unbelief!"**<<<    When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked  the evil spirit. "**You deaf and mute spirit,"** he said, **"I**  **command you,** **come out of him and never enter him again."**    The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The  boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead."  But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and  he stood up.    After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately,  "Why couldn't we drive it out?"    He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer."    They left that place and passed through Galilee. **Jesus did not**  **want anyone to know where they were,** **because he was teaching**  **his disciples.** He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be  betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after  three days he will rise." But **they did not understand what he**  **meant and were afraid to ask him about it**.    They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them,  "What were you arguing about on the road?" But they kept quiet  because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.    Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, **"If anyone wants**  **to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."**    He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him  in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one of these  little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me  does not welcome me but the one who sent me."    "Teacher," said John, "we saw a man **driving out demons** in your  name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us."    "Do not stop him," Jesus said. "No one who **does a miracle** **in my**  **name** can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for  **whoever is not against us is for us.** I tell you the truth,  anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name **because you**  **belong to Christ** will certainly not lose his reward.    **"And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me**  **to sin,** **it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea**  **with a large millstone tied around his neck.** **If your hand**  **causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter**  **life maimed than with two hands to** **go into hell, where the fire**  **never goes out.** And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it  off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have  **ee** two feet and be thrown into hell. **And if your eye causes you**  **to sin, pluck it out.** It is better for you to **enter the** **kingdom**  **of God** with one eye than to have two eyes and be **thrown into**  **hell,** **where "'their worm does not die, and the fire is not**  **quenched.'** **Everyone will be salted with fire.**    "Salt is good, but **if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it**  **ee salty again?** **Have salt in yourselves,** and **be at peace with each**  **other."**    Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and  across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and **as**  **was his custom, he taught them.**    Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful for a  man to divorce his wife?"    "What did Moses command you?" he replied.    They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of  divorce and send her away."    "It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this  law," Jesus replied. "But at the beginning of creation God  'made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man will leave  his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two  will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one.  Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."    When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus  about this. He answered, **"Anyone who divorces his wife and**  **marries another woman commits adultery against her.** **And if she**  **divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits**  **adultery."**    People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch  them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he  was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come  to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs  **ee** to such as these. I tell you the truth, **anyone who will not**  **receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter**  **it."** And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on  them and blessed them.    As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his  knees before him. **"Good teacher,"** he asked, **"what must I do to**  **inherit eternal life?"**    **"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is**  **good--except God alone. You know the commandments:** 'Do not  murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false  testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'"    "Teacher," he declared, "**all these I have kept since I was a**  **boy."**    Jesus looked at him and **loved him.** "**One thing you lack**," he said.  **ee** "Go, **sell everything you have and give to the poor,** and **you**  **will have treasure in heaven.** **Then** come, follow me."    At this **the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had**  **great wealth.**    Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, **"How hard it is**  **for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"**    The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again,  **HSMS** "Children, **how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!** **It is**  **easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a**  **rich man to enter the** **kingdom of God."**    The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, **"Who**  **then can be saved?"**    Jesus looked at them and said, **"With man this is impossible, but**  **not with God; all things are possible with God."**    **HSMS** Peter said to him, **"We have left everything to follow you!"**    "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, **"no one who has left home**  **or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or**  **fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred**  **times as much in this present age** (homes, brothers, sisters,  mothers, children and fields--**and with them, persecutions)** **and**  **in the age to come, eternal life.** But **many** who are first will  be last, and the last first."    **They were on their way up to Jerusalem,**>**with Jesus leading the**  **way,** and **the disciples were astonished**<**, while** **those who**  **followed were afraid.** **Again he took the Twelve aside and told**  **them what was going to happen to him. "We are going up to**  **Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to**  **the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn**  **him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will**  **mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days**  **later he will rise."**    Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher,"  they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."    "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.    They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at  your left in your glory."    "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink  the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized  with?"    "We can," they answered.    Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be  baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my  right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to  those for whom they have been prepared."    When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James  and John. Jesus called them together and said, "You know that  those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over  them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.  Not so with you. Instead, **whoever wants to become great among**  **you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be**  **slave of all.** **For even the Son of Man did not come to be**  **served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for**  **many."**    Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together  with a large crowd, were leaving the city, **a blind man,**  Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), **was sitting by the**  **roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth,**  **he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"**    Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the  more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"    **Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."**    So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's  calling you." Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet  and came to Jesus.    **"What do you want me to do for you?"** Jesus asked him.    The blind man said, **"Rabbi, I want to see."**    **"Go,"** said Jesus, **"your faith has healed you."** **Immediately he**  **received his sight** **and followed Jesus** **along the road.**    As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at  the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to  them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter  it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever  ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why  are you doing this?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it and will send  it back here shortly.'"    They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a  doorway. As they untied it, some people standing there asked,  "What are you doing, untying that colt?" They answered as Jesus  had told them to, and the people let them go. When they brought  the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it.  Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others  spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went  ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he  who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the coming  kingdom of our father David!" "Hosanna in the highest!"    Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around  at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to  Bethany with the Twelve.    The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry.  Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out  if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but  leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to  the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his  disciples heard him say it.    **On reaching Jerusalem,** **Jesus entered the temple area and began**  **driving out those who were buying and selling there. He**  **overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of**  **those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry**  **merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them,**  **he said, "Is it not written: "'My house will be called a house**  **of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of**  **robbers.'"**    The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and  began **looking for a way to kill him,** for **they feared him,**  because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.    When evening came, they went out of the city.    In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree  withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus,  "Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!"    ff **"Have faith in God,"** Jesus answered. **"I tell you the truth, if**  **anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the**  **sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he**  **says will**>**happen**<**, it will be done for him.** Therefore I tell  you, **whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have**  **received it, and it will be yours**. **And when you stand praying,**  **ee**  **if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your**  **Father in heaven may forgive you your**>**sins**<**."**    They arrived again in Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in  the temple courts, the chief priests, the teachers of the law  and the elders came to him. "By what authority are you doing  these things?" they asked. "And who gave you authority to do  this?"    Jesus replied, "I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I  will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. **John's**  **baptism**--was it from heaven, or from men? Tell me!"    They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From  heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' But if  we say, 'From men' . . . ." (They feared the people, for  **everyone held that John really was a prophet.)**    So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."    Jesus said, **"Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing**  **these things."**    **He then began to speak to them in parables:** "A man planted a  vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress  and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some  farmers and **went away on a journey.** At harvest time he sent a  servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit  of the vineyard. But they seized him, beat him and sent him  away empty-handed. Then he sent another servant to them; they  struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. He sent  still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others;  some of them they beat, others they killed.    **"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved.** He sent him last  of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'    "But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come,  let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' So they took  him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.    "What then will the owner of the vineyard do? **He will come and**  **kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.** Haven't you  read this scripture: "'The stone the builders rejected has  become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is  marvelous in our eyes'?"    Then they looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had  spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the  crowd; so they left him and went away.    Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to  catch him in his words. They came to him and said, "Teacher, we  know you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by men,  because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the  way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay  taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn't we?"    But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. "Why are you trying to trap me?"  he asked. "Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." They  brought the coin, and he asked them, "Whose portrait is this?  And whose inscription?"    "Caesar's," they replied.    Then Jesus said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to  God what is God's."    And they were amazed at him.    Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him  with a question. "Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that  if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the  man must marry the widow and have children for his brother. Now  there were seven brothers. The first one married and died  without leaving any children. The second one married the widow,  but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the  third. In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of  all, the woman died too. At the resurrection whose wife will  she be, since the seven were married to her?"    Jesus replied, "Are you not in error because you do not know the  Scriptures or the **power of God?** When the dead rise, they will  neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the  angels in heaven. Now about the dead rising--have you not read  in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said  to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God  of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.  **You are badly mistaken!"**    One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating.  Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him,  "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"    **"The most important one,"** answered Jesus, **"is this:** 'Hear, O  **HSMS** Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. **Love the Lord your**  **God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all**  **your mind and with all your strength.'** **The second is this:**  **'Love your neighbor as yourself.'** There is no commandment  greater than these."    **"Well said, teacher,"** **the man replied.** "You are right in saying  that God is one and there is no other but him. **To love him** with  **all** **your** **heart**, with **all your understanding** and with **all your**  **strength,** and **to love your neighbor as yourself** **is more**  **important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."**    **When** **Jesus saw that** **he had answered** **wisely,** **he said to him,** **"You**  **are not far from the kingdom of God."** And **from then on** **no one**  **dared ask him any more questions.**    While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, "How is  it that the teachers of the law say that the Christ is the son  of David? David himself, speaking by the **Holy Spirit**, declared:  "'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put  your enemies under your feet." ' David himself calls him  'Lord.' How then can he be his son?"    The large crowd listened to him with delight.    As he taught, Jesus said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law.  They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted in the  marketplaces, and have the most important seats in the  synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. They devour  widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. **Such men**  **will be punished most severely."**    Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put  and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple  treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor  widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a  fraction of a penny.    Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth,  this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the  others. They all gave out of their wealth; but **she, out of her**  **poverty, put in everything--all she had to live on."**    As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him,  "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent  buildings!"    "Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one  stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown  down."    As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple,  Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, "Tell us,  when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that  they are all about to be fulfilled?"    Jesus said to them: **"Watch out** **that no one**>**deceives**<**you.** Many  will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive  many. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be  alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.  Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.  There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These  are **the beginning of birth pains**.    **"You must be on your guard. You will be handed over** to the local  councils **and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me** **you**  **will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them.** And  the gospel must first be preached to all nations. **Whenever you**  **are arrested and brought to trial,** do not worry beforehand  about what to say. **Just say whatever is given you at the time,**  **for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.**    **"Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child.**  **Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to**  **ee death.** **All men will hate you because of me, but he who**>**stands**  **firm**<**to the end will be saved**.    "When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation' standing  where it does not belong--let the reader understand--then let  those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the  roof of his house go down or enter the house to take anything  out. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. How  dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and  nursing mothers! Pray that this will not take place in winter,  because **those will be days of distress unequaled from the**  **beginning, when God created the world, until now--and never to**  **be equaled again.** **If the Lord had not cut short those days,** **no**  **one**>**would survive**<**.** **But for the sake of** **the elect, whom he has**  **chosen,** **he has shortened them.** At that time if anyone says to  you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, there he is!' do  not believe it. For **false Christs and false prophets will**  appear and **perform signs and miracles** **to deceive** **the elect--if**  >**that were**<**possible.** **So** **be on your guard;** I have told you  everything ahead of time.    "But in those days, following that distress, "'the sun will be  darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will  fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'    "At that time **men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with**  **great power and glory.** And **he will send his angels and gather**  **his elect** **from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to**  **the ends of the heavens.**    "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs  get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is  near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know  that it is near, right at the door. I tell you the truth, this  generation will certainly not pass away until all these things  have happened. **Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words**  **will never pass away.**    **"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in**  **heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.**>>>**Be on guard! Be**  **alert!**<<<You do not know when that time will come. **It's like a**  **man going away:** **He leaves his house and** **puts his servants in**  **ee** **charge,** **each with his assigned task,** **and tells the one at the**  **door to**>>>**keep watch.**<<<  "Therefore>>>**keep watch**<<<**because you do not know when the owner of**  **the house will come back**--whether in the evening, or at  midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn**. If he comes**  **suddenly,** **do not let him find you sleeping.** What I say to you,  **ee**  **I say to everyone:**>>>**'Watch!'"**<<<    Now the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two  days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law  were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him.  "But not during the Feast," they said, "or the people may  riot."    While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a  man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster  jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the  jar and poured the perfume on his head.    Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another,  "Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more  than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they  rebuked her harshly.    **"Leave her alone,"** said Jesus. **"Why are you bothering her? She**  **has done a beautiful thing to me.** The poor you will always have  with you, and you can help them any time you want. But **you will**  **not always have me. She did what she could.** **She poured perfume**  **on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial.** I tell you the  truth**, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world,**  what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."    Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests  to betray Jesus to them. They were delighted to hear this and  promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to  hand him over.    On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was  customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples  asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations  for you to eat the Passover?"    So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city,  and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him.  Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks:  Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my  disciples?' He will show you a large upper room, furnished and  ready. Make preparations for us there."    The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as  Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.    When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. While they were  reclining at the table eating, he said, "I tell you the truth,  one of you will betray me--one who is eating with me."    They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely not  I?"    "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into  the bowl with me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written  about him. **But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It**  **would be better for him if he had not been born."**    While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke  it, and gave it to his disciples, saying**, "Take it; this is my**  **body."**    Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and  they all drank from it.    **"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,"**  he said to them. "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again  of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in  **the kingdom of God."**    When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.    "You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written:  "'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'  But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."    Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not."    "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, **"today--yes,**  **tonight--before the rooster crows twice you yourself will**  **disown me three times."**    **But Peter insisted emphatically,** **"Even if I have to die with you,**  **I will never disown you."** **And all the others said the same.**    They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his  disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James and  John along with him, and **he began to be**>**deeply distressed and**  **troubled. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of**  **death**<**,"** he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."    Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if  possible the hour might pass from him. "Abba, **Father,"** he said,  **"everything is possible for you**. **Take this cup from me. Yet not**  **what I will, but what you will."**    Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping.  "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep  **ee**  watch for one hour? **Watch and pray so that you will not**>>>**fall**<<<  **into temptation.** **The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."**    Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. When he came  back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were  heavy. They did not know what to say to him.    Returning the third time, he said to them, **"Are you still**  **sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come.** Look, the Son  of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go!  Here comes my betrayer!"    Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With  him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the  chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.    Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss  is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." Going at  once to Jesus, Judas said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. The men  seized Jesus and arrested him. Then one of those standing near  drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest,  cutting off his ear.    "Am I leading a rebellion," said Jesus, "that you have come out  with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I was with you,  teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But  the Scriptures must be fulfilled." Then everyone deserted him  and fled.    **A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment,** was following  Jesus. **When they seized him, he fled naked, leaving his garment**  **behind.**    They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests,  elders and teachers of the law came together. Peter followed  him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest.  There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.    The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for  evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but  they did not find any. Many testified falsely against him, but  their statements did not agree.    Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: "We  heard him say, 'I will destroy this man-made temple and in  three days will build another, not made by man.'" Yet even then  their testimony did not agree.    Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are  you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men  are bringing against you?" But Jesus remained silent and gave  no answer.    **Again** **the high priest asked him,** **"Are you the Christ, the Son of**  **the Blessed One?"**    **"I am," said Jesus.** **"And you will see the Son of Man sitting at**  **the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of**  **heaven."**    The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more  witnesses?" he asked. "You have heard the blasphemy. What do  you think?"    They all condemned him as worthy of death. Then some began to  spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists,  and said, "Prophesy!" And the guards took him and beat him.    While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls  of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself,  she looked closely at him.    "You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus," she said.    But he denied it. "I don't know or understand what you're talking  about," he said, and went out into the entryway.    When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those  standing around, "This fellow is one of them." Again he denied  it.    After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, "Surely  you are one of them, for you are a Galilean."    He began to call down curses on himself, and he swore to them, "I  don't know this man you're talking about."    Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter  remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: "Before the  rooster crows twice you will disown me three times." And he  broke down and wept.    Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders,  the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, reached a  decision. They bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to  Pilate.    "Are you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate.    "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied.    The chief priests accused him of many things. So again Pilate  asked him, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things  they are accusing you of."    But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.    Now it was the custom at the Feast to release a prisoner whom the  people requested. A man called Barabbas was in prison with the  insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. The  crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually  did.    "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" asked  Pilate, knowing it was out of envy that the chief priests had  handed Jesus over to him. But the chief priests stirred up the  crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead.    "What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the  Jews?" Pilate asked them.    "Crucify him!" they shouted.    "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate.    But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"    Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them.  He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.    The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the  Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers.  They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of  thorns and set it on him. And they began to call out to him,  "Hail, king of the Jews!" Again and again they struck him on  the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees,  they paid homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they  took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then  they led him out to crucify him.    A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and  Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they  forced him to carry the cross. They brought Jesus to the place  called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). Then they  offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. And  they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to  see what each would get.    It was the third hour when they crucified him. The written notice  of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS. They  crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his  left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their  heads and saying, "So! You who are going to destroy the temple  and build it in three days, come down from the cross and save  yourself!"    In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law  mocked him among themselves. "He saved others," they said, "but  he can't save himself! Let this Christ, this King of Israel,  come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe."  Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.    **At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the**  **ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud**  **voice,** **"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"--which means, "My God,**  **my God, why have you forsaken me?"**    When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen,  he's calling Elijah."    One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a  stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone.  Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.    **With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.**    **The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.** **And**  **when** **the centurion,** **who stood there in front of Jesus,** **heard**  **his cry and saw how he died,** **he said,** **"Surely this man was the**  **Son of God!"**    Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary  Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses,  and Salome. In Galilee these women had followed him and cared  for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to  Jerusalem were also there.    It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So  as evening approached, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member  of the Council, who was himself **waiting for** **the kingdom of God,**  went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate was  surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the  centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. When he  learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to  Joseph. So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body,  wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of  rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.  Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was  laid.    When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of  James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint  Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, just  after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they  asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the  entrance of the tomb?"    But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very  large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw  **a young man** dressed in a white robe sitting on **the right side,**  and they were alarmed.    "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the  Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See  the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and  Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will  see him, just as he told you.'"    **Trembling and bewildered,** the women went out and fled from the  tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.  The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses  do not have Mark 16:9-20.    When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared  first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven  demons. She went and told those who had been with him and who  were mourning and weeping. When they heard that Jesus was alive  and that she had seen him, **they did not believe it.**    Afterward **Jesus appeared in a different form** to two of them while  they were walking in the country. These returned and reported  it to the rest; but they **did not believe them either.**    Later **Jesus appeared to the Eleven** as they were eating; **he**  **rebuked them for their** **lack of faith and their stubborn refusal**  **to believe** those who had seen him after he had risen.    **ee** He said to them, **"Go into all the world and preach the good news**  ff **to all creation.** **Whoever believes and is baptized** **will be**  **saved,** but **whoever does not believe will be condemned.** And  these signs will accompany those who believe: **In my name they**  **will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues;** they  will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink  deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; **they will place**  **their hands on sick people, and they will get well."**    After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into  heaven and he sat at **the right hand of God.** Then the disciples  went out and preached everywhere, and **the Lord worked with them**  **and confirmed his** **word** **by the signs that accompanied it.**  **============**  Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that  have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to  us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and **servants**  **of the** **word.** Therefore, since I myself have carefully  investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also  to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent  Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things  you have been taught.    In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named  Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his  wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. **Both of them**  **HSMS were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's**  **commandments and regulations blamelessly.** But they had no  children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well  along in years.    Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as  priest before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the  custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and  burn incense. And when the time for the burning of incense  came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.    Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at **the right**  **side** of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was  startled and **was gripped with fear.** But the angel said to him:  "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your  wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the  name John. **He will be a joy and delight to you,** and many will  rejoice because of his birth, for **he will be great in the sight**  **of the Lord.** **He is** **never to take wine or other fermented drink,**  and **he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth.**  >**Many** of the people of Israel **will he bring back**<**to the Lord**  **their God.** And **he will** **go on before the Lord,** **in the spirit and**  **power of Elijah,** **to turn** **the hearts of the fathers to their**  **children** and **the disobedient** **to the wisdom of the**>**righteous**--**to**  **make ready** a people **prepared** for the Lord."<    Zechariah asked the angel, **"How can I be sure of this?** I am an  old man and my wife is well along in years."    The angel answered, **"I am Gabriel.** **I stand in the presence of**  **God**, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this  good news. And **now you will be silent and not able to speak**  ff **until the day this happens,** **because** **you did not believe** **my**  **words,** which will come true at their proper time."    Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering  why he stayed so long in the temple. When he came out, he could  not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the  temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to  speak.    When his time of service was completed, he returned home. After  this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months  remained in seclusion. "The Lord has done this for me," she  said. "In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my  disgrace among the people."    In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a  town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man  named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was  Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, **you who are**  **highly favored! The Lord is with you**."    Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of  greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be  afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with  child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name  Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most  High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father  David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his  kingdom will never end."    "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"    The angel answered, **"The Holy Spirit will come upon you,** **and the**  **power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to**  **be born will be called the Son of God.** Even Elizabeth your  relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who  was said to be barren is in her sixth month. **For nothing**>**is**<  **impossible with God."**    "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you  have said." Then the angel left her.    At that time Mary got ready and **hurried** to a town in the hill  country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and  greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, **the**  **baby leaped in her womb,** and Elizabeth was **filled with the Holy**  **Spirit.** In a **loud voice** she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among  women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so  favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? **As soon**  **as the sound of your greeting reached my ears,** **the baby in my**  **womb leaped for joy.** **Blessed is she who has believed that what**  **the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"**    And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices  in **God my Savior,** **for** **he has been mindful of the humble state**  **of his servant.** From now on all generations will call me  blessed, for **the Mighty One has done great things for me--holy**  **is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him,** from  generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with  his arm; **he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost**  **thoughts.** He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has  **lifted up the humble.** He has **filled the hungry with good things**  but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant  Israel, **remembering to be merciful** to Abraham and his  descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers."    Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then  returned home.    When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth  to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had  shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.    On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they  were going to name him after his father Zechariah, but his  mother spoke up and said, "No! He is to be called John."    They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has  that name."    Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would  like to name the child. He asked for a writing tablet, and to  everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John."  Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed, and  he began to speak, praising God. The neighbors were all filled  with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were  talking about all these things. Everyone who heard this  wondered about it, asking, **"What then is this child going to**  **be?" For the Lord's hand was with him.**    His father Zechariah was **filled with the Holy Spirit** and  **prophesied:** "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because  **he has come and has redeemed his people.** He has raised up a  horn of **salvation** for us in the house of his servant David (as  he said through his **holy prophets** of long ago), **salvation from**  **our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us**--to show mercy  to our fathers and to remember **his holy covenant,** the oath he  swore to our father Abraham: **to rescue us from the hand of our**  **ee**hh **enemies,** and **to enable us to serve** **him without fear** **in holiness**  **and righteousness before him all our days.** And **you,** **my child,**  **will be called a** **prophet of the Most High;** for **you will go on**  **before the Lord to** **prepare**>**the way** **for him**<, to **give** his people  the **knowledge** of **salvation**>**through**<**the forgiveness of their**  **sins,** **because of the** **tender mercy of our God,** **by which the**  **rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine** **on those living**  **in darkness and in the shadow of death,** **to guide our feet into**  **the path of peace."**    **And the child grew and became strong in spirit;** and **he lived in**  **the desert until he appeared publicly to Israel.**    In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census  should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first  census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)  And everyone went to his own town to register.    So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to  Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to  the house and line of David. He went there to register with  Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a  child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be  born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped  him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no  room for them in the inn.    And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping  watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared  to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they  were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid.  I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the  people. Today in the town of David **a Savior has been born** to  you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You  will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."    Suddenly **a great company of the heavenly host appeared** with the  angel, praising God and **saying,** **"Glory to God in the highest,**  **and** **on earth peace**>**to men on whom his favor rests**<**."**    When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds  said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing  that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."    So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who  was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread  the word concerning what had been told them about this child,  and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to  them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them  in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising  God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just  as they had been told.    On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was  named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had  been conceived.    When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses  had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to  present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the  Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"),  and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the  Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."    hh Now there was a man in Jerusalem called **Simeon,** **who was righteous**  **and devout.** He **was waiting** for the consolation of Israel, and  **the Holy Spirit was upon him.** **It had been revealed to him by**  **the Holy Spirit** that he would not die before he had seen the  Lord's Christ. **Moved by the Spirit,** he went into the temple  courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for  him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his  arms and praised God, saying: "Sovereign Lord, as you have  promised, **you now dismiss your servant in peace.** For my eyes  have seen **your salvation,** which you have prepared in the sight  of all people, **a light for revelation** to the Gentiles and for  glory to your people Israel."    The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about  him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother:  "This child **is destined to cause the falling and rising of many**  in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so  that **the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.** And **a sword**  **will pierce your own soul too."**    There was also **a prophetess,** **Anna,** the daughter of Phanuel, of  the tribe of Asher. She was very old; **she had lived with her**  **husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow**  **HSMS until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but**  **worshiped night and day, fasting and praying**. Coming up to them  at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the  child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of  Jerusalem.    When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of  the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of  Nazareth. And **the child** grew and **became strong;** **he was filled**  **with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.**    Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the  Passover. **When he was twelve years old,** **they went up to the**  **Feast,** according to the custom. **After the Feast** was over, while  his parents were returning home, **the boy Jesus stayed behind** in  Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in  their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began  looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they  did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.  **After three days** **they found him in the temple courts, sitting**  **among the teachers,** **listening to them and asking them**  **questions.** **Everyone who heard him was** **amazed at his**  **understanding and his answers.** When his parents saw him, they  were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you  treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously  searching for you."    "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had  to be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what  he was saying to them.    Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them.  But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And  **Jesus grew in wisdom** and stature, **and in favor with God** and  men.    In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar--when  Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of  Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis,  and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene--during the high priesthood of  Annas and Caiaphas, **the word of God came to John** son of  Zechariah in the desert. **He went** into all the country around  the Jordan, **preaching a baptism of repentance for the**  **forgiveness of sins.** **As is written in the book of the words of**  **Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one calling in the desert,**  rr **'Prepare the way**>**for the Lord, make straight paths for him**<**.**  **Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made**  **low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways**  **smooth.** **And all mankind will see** **God's salvation.'"**    **John said to the crowds** coming out to be baptized by him, **"You**  **brood of vipers!** **Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?**  rr**ee**  >**Produce**<**fruit in keeping with repentance.** And do not begin to  say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell  you that out of these stones God can raise up children for  Abraham. **The ax is already at the root of the trees, and** **every**  **ee tree that does not**>**produce**<**good fruit will be cut down and**  **thrown into the fire."**    **"What should we do then?"** the crowd asked.    ee John answered, **"The man with two tunics should share with him who**  **has none, and the one who has food should do the same."**    **Tax collectors** also came to be baptized. "Teacher," they **asked,**  **"what should we do?"**    ee **"Don't collect any more than you are required to,"** he told them.    Then some **soldiers** **asked** him, "And **what should we do?"**    ee He replied, **"Don't extort money and don't accuse people**  **falsely--be content with your pay."**    The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in  their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. John  answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But **one more**  **powerful than I will come,** the thongs of whose sandals I am not  ss worthy to untie. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and**  **ee with fire.** His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his  threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he  will burn up the chaff with **unquenchable fire."** And with many  other words John exhorted the people and preached the good news  to them.    But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of Herodias, his  brother's wife, **and all the other evil things he had done,**  Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison.    When all the people were being baptized, **Jesus was baptized too.**  And **as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit**  **descended on him in bodily form like a dove.** **And a voice came**  **HSMS** **from heaven:** **"You are my Son,** **whom I love; with you I am well**  **pleased**."    Now **Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his**  **ministry.** He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son  of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melki,  the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, the son of Mattathias,  the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of  Naggai, the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of  Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, the son of Joanan,  the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel,  the son of Neri, the son of Melki, the son of Addi, the son of  Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, the son of Joshua,  the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the  son of Levi, the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of  Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, the son of Melea,  the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the  son of David, the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of  Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon, the son of  Amminadab, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez,  the son of Judah, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son  of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, the son of  Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the  son of Shelah, the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son  of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of  Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of  Mahalalel, the son of Kenan, the son of Enosh, the son of Seth,  the son of Adam, the son of God.    **Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit**, returned from the Jordan and **was**  **led by the Spirit** **in the desert, where for forty days he was**  **tempted by the devil.** **He ate nothing during those days,** **and at**  **the end of them he was hungry.**    The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this  stone to become bread."    Jesus answered, **"It is written: '**Man does not live on bread  alone.'"    The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant  all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give  you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to  me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship  me, it will all be yours."    Jesus answered, **"It is written:** 'Worship the Lord your God and  serve him only.'"    The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest  point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said,  "throw yourself down from here. For it is written: "'He will  command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they  will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike  your foot against a stone.'"    Jesus answered, "**It says:** 'Do not put the Lord your God to the  test.'"    **When the devil had finished all this tempting, he** **left him until**  **an opportune time**.    **Jesus returned to Galilee** **in the power of the Spirit,** and news  about him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in  their synagogues, and everyone praised him.    **He went to Nazareth,** where he had been brought up, **and on the**  **Sabbath day** **he went into the synagogue,** **as was his custom. And**  **he stood up to read.** **The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was**  **handed to him.** Unrolling it, he found the place where it is  written: **"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has**  **anointed me to preach good news to the poor.** **He has sent me** **to**  **proclaim**>**freedom for the prisoners**<**and** **recovery of sight for**  **the blind,**>**to release the oppressed,**<**to proclaim the year of**  **the Lord's favor."**    **Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and**  **sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened**  **on him, and he began by saying to them,** **"Today this scripture**  **is fulfilled in your hearing."**    All spoke well of him and were amazed at the **gracious words** that  came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked.    Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me:  **'Physician, heal** yourself! Do here in your hometown what we  have heard that you did in Capernaum.'"    "I tell you the truth," he continued, **"no prophet is accepted in**  **his hometown.** I assure you that there were many widows in  Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a  half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land.  Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in  Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel  with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of  them was cleansed--only Naaman the Syrian."    All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard  this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and **took him to**  **the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to**  **throw him down the cliff.** **But he walked right through the crowd**  **and went on his way.**    Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and **on the**  **Sabbath began to teach the people.** They were amazed at his  teaching, because **his message had authority.**    In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil  spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, "Ha! What do you  want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I  know who you are--**the Holy One of God!"**    **"Be quiet!"** Jesus said sternly. "Come out of him!" Then the demon  threw the man down before them all and came out without  injuring him.    All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What is this  teaching? With authority and **power** he gives orders to evil  spirits and they come out!" And the news about him spread  throughout the surrounding area.    Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now  Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they  asked Jesus to help her. So **he** bent over her and **rebuked the**  **fever, and it left her.** She got up at once and began to wait on  them.    When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had  various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he  healed them. Moreover, demons came out of many people,  shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But **he rebuked them and**  **would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the**  **Christ.**    At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were  looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried  to keep him from leaving them. But he said, **"I must preach** **the**  **good news of the kingdom of God** **to the other towns also,**  **because that is why** **I was sent.**" And he kept on preaching in  the synagogues of Judea.    One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the  people crowding around him and listening to **the** **word of God,** he  saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen,  who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the  one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from  shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.    When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into  deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."    Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't  caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the  nets."  When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish  that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners  in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and  filled both boats so full that they began to sink.    When **Simon Peter** saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and **said,** **"Go**  **away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"** For he and all his  companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken,  and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's  partners.    Then Jesus said to Simon, **"Don't be afraid;** **from now on you will**  **catch men."** **So they** pulled their boats up on shore, **left**  **HSMS everything and followed him.**    While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was  covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face  to the ground and begged him, **"Lord, if you are willing, you**  **can make me clean."**    **Jesus** **reached out his hand and** **touched the man.** **"I am willing,"**  **he said. "Be clean!"** And **immediately the leprosy left him.**    Then Jesus ordered him, **"Don't tell anyone**, but go, show yourself  to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for  your cleansing, as a testimony to them."    Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of  people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses.  But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.    One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law,  who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and  Jerusalem, were sitting there. And **the power of the Lord was**  **present for him to heal the sick.** Some **men came carrying a**  **paralytic on a mat** and tried to take him into the house to lay  him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this  because of the crowd, **they went up on the roof and lowered him**  **on his mat through the tiles** into the middle of the crowd,  right in front of Jesus.    ff **When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are**  **forgiven."**    The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to  themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can  forgive sins but God alone?"    Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you  thinking these things in your hearts? Which is easier: to say,  'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But  that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to  forgive sins. . . ." He said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you,  get up, take your mat and go home." Immediately he stood up in  front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home  praising God. Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They  were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things  today."    After this, **Jesus** went out and **saw a tax collector** by the name of  Levi sitting at his tax booth. **"Follow me," Jesus said** to him,  **HSMS**  **and** **Levi got up, left everything and followed him.**    Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a  large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them.  But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to  their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and  drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"    Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor,  but the sick. **I have not come to call the righteous, but**  rr **sinners to repentance."**    They said to him, "John's disciples often fast and pray, and so  do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and  drinking."    Jesus answered, "Can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast  while he is with them? But **the time will come when the**  **bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will**  **fast."**    He told them this parable: "No one tears a patch from a new  garment and sews it on an old one. If he does, he will have  torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match  the old. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he  does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out  and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured  into new wineskins. **And no one after drinking old wine wants**  **the new, for he says, 'The old is better.'"**    One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and his  disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their  hands and eat the kernels. Some of the Pharisees asked, "Why  are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"    Jesus answered them, "Have you never read what David did when he  and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God,  and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only  for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions."  Then Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the  Sabbath."    **On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue and was teaching**,  and **a man was there whose right hand was shriveled.** The  Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason  to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would  heal on the Sabbath. But Jesus knew what they were thinking and  said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Get up and stand in  front of everyone." So he got up and stood there.    Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, which is lawful on the  Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy  it?"    He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, **"Stretch**  **out your hand." He did so, and his hand was completely**  **restored.** But they were furious and began to discuss with one  another what they might do to Jesus.    One of those days **Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and**  **spent the night praying to God.** When morning came, he called  his disciples to him and **chose twelve** of them, whom he also  designated apostles: Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother  Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas,  James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, Judas  son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.    He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd  of his disciples was there and a great number of people from  all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and  Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their  diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, and the  people all tried to touch him, because **power was coming from**  **him and healing them all.**    Looking at his disciples, he said: **"Blessed are you who are poor,**  **for yours is the kingdom of God.** Blessed are you who hunger  now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now,  for you will laugh. **Blessed are you when men hate you, when**  **they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil,**  **because of the Son of Man.**    "**Rejoice in that day and leap for joy,** because great is your  reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the  prophets. "But woe to you who are rich, for you have already  received your comfort. Woe to you who are well fed now, for you  will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn  and weep. **Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for** **that**  **is how their fathers treated the false prophets.**    **ee** "But I tell you who hear me: **Love your enemies, do good to those**  **who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who**  **mistreat you.** If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him  the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him  from taking your tunic. **Give to everyone who asks you,** and **if**  **anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.** Do to  others as you would have them do to you.    "If you **love** those who **love** you, **what credit is that to you?** Even  'sinners' **love** those who **love** them. And if you **do good** to those  who are good to you, **what credit is that to you?** Even 'sinners'  do that. And if you **lend to** those from whom you expect  repayment, **what credit is that to you?** Even 'sinners' lend to  'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. **But love your**  **ee enemies, do good to them,** and lend to them without expecting to  get anything back. **Then** your reward will be great, and **you will**  **be sons of the Most High,** because **he is kind to the ungrateful**  **and wicked**. **Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.**    **ee**  **"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and**  **you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.**  **Give**, **and it will be given to you.** **A good measure, pressed**  **down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into**  **your lap.** **For with the measure you use, it will be measured to**  **you."**    He also told them this parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind  man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A student is not above  **HSMS** his teacher, but **everyone who is fully trained will be like his**  **teacher.**    "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye  and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you  say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of  your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own  **ee**  eye? **You hypocrite,** first **take the plank out of your eye,** and  **then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your**  **brother's eye.**    hh "**No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good**  **fruit.** Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not  pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briers. **The good man**  **brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and**  **the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in**  **his heart.** For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth  speaks.    "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? I  will show you what he is like who comes to me and **hears my**  **ee words** and>**puts them into practice**<**.** He is like a man building a  house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. **When**  **a flood came,**>**the torrent struck**<**that house but could not shake**  **it,** because it was well built. But the one who **hears my** **words**  and **does not**>**put them into practice**<is like a man who built a  house on the ground without a foundation. **The moment the**  **torrent struck** that house, it collapsed and>>>**its destruction was**  **complete**<<<**."**    When Jesus had finished saying all this in the hearing of the  people, he entered Capernaum. There **a centurion's servant,** whom  his master valued highly, **was sick and about to die.** The  centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to  him, asking him to come and heal his servant. When they came to  Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man **deserves** to  have you do this, because **he loves our nation and has built our**  **synagogue."** **So Jesus went with them.**    He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to  say to him: **"Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve**  **to have you come under my roof. That is why I did not even**  **consider myself worthy to come to you. But** **say the word, and my**  **servant will be healed.** For I myself am a man under authority,  with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and  that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,'  and he does it."    When **Jesus** heard this, he **was amazed at him,** and turning to the  crowd following him, he said, **"I tell you, I have not found**  >**such great faith**<**even in Israel."** Then the men who had been  sent returned to the house and found the servant well.    Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his  disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he  approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried  out--the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a  large crowd from the town was with her. **When the Lord saw her,**  **his heart went out to her** and he said, "Don't cry."    Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it  stood still. He said, **"Young man, I say to you, get up!"** **The**  **dead man sat up and began to talk,** and Jesus gave him back to  his mother.    They were all filled with awe and praised God. **"A great prophet**  **has appeared among us,"** they said. "God has come to help his  people." This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the  surrounding country.    John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of  them, he sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who was  to come, or should we expect someone else?"    When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us  to you to ask, 'Are you the one who was to come, or should we  expect someone else?'"    At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses  and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. So he  replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you  have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk,  those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are  raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is  the man who does not fall away on account of me."    After John's messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd  about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed  swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see? A man  dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes  and indulge in luxury are in palaces. But what did you go out  to see? **A prophet? Yes,** I tell you, **and more than a prophet.**  This is the one about whom it is written: "'I will send my  messenger ahead of you, **who will prepare your way before you.'**  **I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater**  **ee than John; yet** **the one who is least in the kingdom of God is**  **greater than he."**    **(All the people, even the tax collectors,** **when they heard Jesus'**  rr **words,**>**acknowledged that God's way was right**<**, because they had**  **been baptized by John.** **But** **the Pharisees and experts in the law**  **rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not**  **been baptized by John.)**    "To what, then, can I compare the people of this generation? What  are they like? They are like children sitting in the  marketplace and calling out to each other: **"'We played the**  **flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you**  **did not cry.'** For John the Baptist came neither eating bread  nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of  Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton  and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners." ' But  **wisdom is**>**proved right**<**by all her children."**    Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him,  so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.  When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned  that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an  alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his  feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then  she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on  them.    When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to  himself, **"If this man were a prophet, he would know who is**  **touching him** and what kind of woman she is--that she is a  sinner."    Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."    "Tell me, teacher," he said.    "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five  hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the  money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now  **which of them will love him more?"**    Simon replied, **"I suppose the one who had the bigger debt**  **canceled."**    **"You have judged correctly,"** Jesus said.    Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see  this woman? **I came into your house. You did not give me any**  **water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped**  **them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but** **this woman,**  **from the time I entered,** **has not stopped kissing my feet.** **You**  **did not put oil on my head, but** **she has poured perfume on my**  **feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been**  **forgiven--for she loved much.** **But he who has been forgiven**  **little loves little."**    Then **Jesus said to her,** **"Your sins are forgiven."**    The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who  even forgives sins?"    ff Jesus said to the woman, **"Your faith has saved you;** **go in peace."**    After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to  another, proclaiming the good news **of the kingdom of God**. The  Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of  evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom  seven demons had come out; Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager  of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women  were helping to support them out of their own means.    While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus  from town after town, he told this parable: "A farmer went out  to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along  the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it  up. Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered  because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns,  which grew up with it and choked the plants. Still other seed  fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred  times more than was sown."    When he said this, he called out, **"He who has ears to hear, let**  **him hear."**  His disciples asked him what this parable meant. He said, **"The**  **knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given**  **to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, "'though**  **seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not**  **understand.'**    "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the **word of God.**  Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then **the devil**  **comes and takes away the word from their hearts,** **so that they**  ff **may** **not believe and be saved.** Those on the rock are the ones  who **receive the word with joy when they hear it,** **but they have**  ffee **no root.** **They believe for a while**, but **in the time of testing**  **they fall away.** The seed that fell among thorns stands for  those who hear, but **as they go on their way** they are **choked by**  **life's**>**worries**<**, riches and pleasures,** and they do not mature.  hh But the seed on good soil stands for those with>>>>**a noble and**  **ee good heart,**<<<<who **hear** the **word,**>>>>**retain it,** and **by persevering**  **produce a crop.**<<<<    **"No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a**  **bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in**  **can see the light.** For there is nothing hidden that will not be  disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or  brought out into the open. Therefore **consider carefully** how you  listen. **Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have,**  **even what he thinks he has will be taken from him."**    Now Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him, but they were not  able to get near him because of the crowd. Someone told him,  "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see  you."    **ee** He replied, "My mother and brothers are **those who hear God's word**  **and**>**put it into practice**<**."**    One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's go over to the other  side of the lake." So they got into a boat and set out. As they  sailed, he fell asleep. **A squall came down on the lake, so that**  **the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger.**    The disciples went and woke him, saying, **"Master, Master, we're**  **going to drown!"**    **He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters;** **the storm**  ff **subsided, and all was calm.** "**Where is your faith?**" he asked his  disciples.    **In fear and amazement** **they asked one another, "Who is this? He**  **commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him."**    They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the  lake from Galilee. When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by **a**  **demon-possessed man** from the town. **For a long time this man had**  **not worn clothes** or lived in a house, but had lived in the  tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet,  shouting at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me,  Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!"  For Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man.  Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand  and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had  been driven by the demon into solitary places.    Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"    "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. And  they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the  Abyss.    A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The  demons begged Jesus to let them go into them, and he gave them  permission. When the demons came out of the man, they went into  the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake  and was drowned.    When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off  and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people  went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus,  they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting  at Jesus' feet, dressed and **in his right mind;** and they were  afraid. Those who had seen it told the people how the  demon-possessed man had been cured. Then all the people of the  region of the Gerasenes **asked Jesus to leave them, because they**  **were overcome with fear.** **So he got into the boat and left.**    **The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him,**  **ee** but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return home and tell how much  God has done for you." So **the man went away and told all over**  **town how much Jesus had done for him.**    Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all  expecting him. Then a man named Jairus, a ruler of the  synagogue, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to  come to his house because his only daughter, a girl of about  twelve, was dying.    As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. And **a**  **woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve**  **years,** but no one could heal her. **She came up behind him and**  **touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding**  **stopped.**    **"Who touched me?" Jesus asked.**    When they all denied it, Peter said, **"Master, the people are**  **crowding and pressing against you."**    **But Jesus said,** **"Someone touched me; I know that** **power has gone**  **out from me."**    Then **the woman,** seeing that she could not go unnoticed, **came**  **trembling and fell at his feet.** **In the presence of all the**  **people, she told why she had touched him** and how she had been  ff instantly healed. Then he said to her, **"Daughter, your faith**  **has healed you**. **Go in peace."**    While Jesus was still speaking, **someone came from the** house of  Jairus, **the synagogue ruler. "Your daughter is dead,"** he said.  **"Don't bother the teacher any more."**    ff Hearing this, **Jesus said** to Jairus, "**Don't be afraid**; **just**  **believe**, and **she will be healed."**    When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go  in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child's  father and mother. Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and  mourning for her. "Stop wailing," Jesus said. **"She is not dead**  **but asleep."**    **They laughed at him,** knowing that she was dead. But he took her  by the hand and said, "My child, get up!" Her spirit returned,  and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her  something to eat. Her parents were astonished, but **he ordered**  **them not to tell anyone what had happened.**    When **Jesus** had **called the Twelve together,** **he gave them power and**  **authority** **to drive out all demons** **and** **to cure diseases,** and **he**  **sent them out to preach the kingdom of God** **and to** **heal the**  **sick.** He told them: **"Take nothing for the journey**--**no staff, no**  **bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic.** Whatever house you  enter, stay there until you leave that town. **If people do not**  **welcome you,** **shake the dust off your feet when you leave their**  **town,** **as a testimony against them."** **So they** set out and **went**  **from village to village,** **preaching the gospel** and **healing**  **people everywhere.**    Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was going on. And he  was perplexed, because some were saying that John had been  raised from the dead, others that Elijah had appeared, and  still others that one of the prophets of long ago had come back  to life. But Herod said, "I beheaded John. Who, then, is this I  hear such things about?" And he tried to see him.    When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had  done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by  themselves to a town called Bethsaida, but the crowds learned  about it and followed him. He welcomed them and **spoke to them**  **about the kingdom of God,** and healed those who needed healing.    Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, "Send the  crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and  countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a  remote place here."    He replied, "You give them something to eat."    They answered, "We have only five loaves of bread and two  fish--unless we go and buy food for all this crowd." (About  five thousand men were there.)    But he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of  about fifty each." The disciples did so, and everybody sat  down. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to  heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the  disciples to set before the people. They all ate and were  satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of  broken pieces that were left over.    Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were  with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?"    They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and  still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come  back to life."    "But what about you?" he asked. **"Who do you say I am?"**    Peter answered, **"The Christ of God."**    **Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone.** And he  said, **"The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected**  **by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he**  **must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."**    **HSMS** Then he said to them all: **"If anyone would come after me,**>**he must**<  **deny himself and take up his cross daily** and follow me. For  ff**ee** whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but **whoever loses**  **his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain**  **the whole world, and**>**yet lose or forfeit his very self?**<**If**  **anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be**  **ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of**  **the Father and of the holy angels.** I tell you the truth, some  who are standing here will not taste death before they see **the**  **kingdom of God."**    About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and  James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was  praying, **the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes**  **became as bright as a flash of lightning.** Two men, **Moses and**  **Elijah,** appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They  spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to  fulfillment at Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were very  sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory  and the two men standing with him. As the men were leaving  Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be  here. Let us put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses  and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.)    While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and  they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from  the cloud, saying, **"This is my Son, whom** **I have chosen**; **listen**  **to him."** When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was  alone. The disciples kept this to themselves, and told no one  at that time what they had seen.    The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large  crowd met him. A man in the crowd called out, "Teacher, I beg  you to look at my son, for he is my only child. A spirit seizes  him and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions so  that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is  destroying him. I begged your disciples to drive it out, but  they could not."    ff >>**"O unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied,** "**how long**  **shall I stay with you and put up with you?**<<Bring your son  here."    Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground  in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, healed the  boy and gave him back to his father. And they were all amazed  at the greatness of God.    **While everyone was marveling** at all that Jesus did, he said to  his disciples, **"Listen carefully** to what I am about to tell  you: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of  men." **But they did not understand** **what this meant.** **It was**  **hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it**, and they were  afraid to ask him about it.    An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would  be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little  child and had him stand beside him. Then he said to them,  **"Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and**  **whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.** For **he who is**  **least among you all--he is the greatest."**    "Master," said John, "we saw a man driving out demons in your  name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us."    "Do not stop him," Jesus said, "for whoever is not against you is  for you."    **As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven,** **Jesus**  >**resolutely set out**<**for Jerusalem.** And he sent messengers on  ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready  for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he  was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John  saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down  from heaven to destroy them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked  them, and they went to another village.    As they were walking along the road, **a man said to him, "I will**  **follow you wherever you go."**    Jesus replied, **"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests,**  **but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."**    He said to another man, "**Follow me.**"    But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."    Jesus said to him, **"Let the dead bury their own dead,** **but** **you go**  **and proclaim the kingdom of God**.**"**    Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go  back and say good-by to my family."    Jesus replied, **"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks**  **back is fit for**>**service in**<**the kingdom of God.**"    After this **the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them**  two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was  about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the  workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to  send out workers into his harvest field. **Go!** **I am sending you**  **out like lambs among wolves.** Do not take a purse or bag or  sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.  hh "When you enter a house, first say, **'Peace to this house.'** **If a**  **man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it**  **will return to you.** Stay in that house, eating and drinking  whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do  not move around from house to house.    "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before  you. **Heal the sick** who are there and **tell them,** **'The kingdom of**  **God is near you.**' But when you enter a town and are not  welcomed, go into its streets and say, **'Even the dust of your**  **town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be**  **sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.'** I tell you, it will  be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.    "Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles  that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and  Sidon, **they would have repented long ago,** **sitting in sackcloth**  **and ashes.** But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at  **the judgment** than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be  lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths.    **"He who listens to you listens to me;** **he who rejects you rejects**  **me**; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."    The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the  demons submit to us in your name."    He replied, **"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.** **I have**  **given you authority** to trample on snakes and scorpions and **to**  **overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.**  **However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but**  **rejoice that your names are written in heaven**.**"**    At that time **Jesus,** **full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said,** **"I**  **praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because** **you have**  **hidden these things from the wise and learned,** **and revealed**  **them to little children. Yes, Father, for** **this was your**>**good**  **pleasure.**<    **"All things have been committed to me by my Father.** **No one knows**  **who the Son is except the Father, and** **no one knows who the**  **Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to**  **reveal him."**    Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, "Blessed are  the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many  prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see  it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it."    On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus.  "Teacher," he asked, **"what must I do to inherit eternal life?"**    **"What is written in the Law?"** he replied. **"How do you read it?"**    **HSMS** He answered: **"'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and**  **with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your**  **mind'**; and, **'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"**    **"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied.** **"Do this and you**  **will live."**    But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is  my neighbor?"    In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to  Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped  him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half  dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and  when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a  Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the  other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man  was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him  and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put  the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of  him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to  the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I  will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'    **"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who**  **fell into the hands of robbers?"**    The expert in the law replied, **"The one who had mercy on him."**    **ee**  Jesus told him, **"Go and do** likewise."  As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a  village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She  had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening  to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the  preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked,  "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work  by myself? Tell her to help me!"    **"Martha, Martha,"** the Lord answered, **"you are worried and upset**  **about many things, but only one thing is**>**needed**<**.** **Mary has**  **chosen**>**what is better**<**, and it will not be taken away from her."**    One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished,  one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just  as John taught his disciples."    He said to them, **"When you pray, say:** **"'Father, hallowed be your**  **name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread.**  **Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who**>**sins**  **Against**<**us. And lead us not into temptation.'"**    Then he said to them, "**Suppose one of you has a friend, and** **he**  **goes to him at midnight and says,** **'Friend, lend me three loaves**  **of bread,** because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me,  and I have nothing to set before him.'    "Then **the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me.** The door is  already locked, and my children are with me in bed. **I can't get**  **up and give you anything.'** **I tell you,** **though he will not get**  **up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet** **because**  **of the man's**>>>**boldness**<<<**he will get up and give him as much as he**  **needs.**    **ee**  **"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you**  **will find; knock and**>**the door**<**will be opened to you.** For  **everyone** who asks **receives;** he who seeks **finds;** and to him who  knocks, **the door will be opened.**    "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him  a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a  scorpion? **If you then, though you are evil, know how to give**  **ee** **good gifts to your children,** **how much more will your Father in**  ss **heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!**"    Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left,  the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed. But  some of them said, "By Beelzebub, the prince of demons, he is  driving out demons." Others tested him by asking for a sign  from heaven.    Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: "Any kingdom divided  against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against  itself will fall. If Satan is divided against himself, how can  his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive  out demons by Beelzebub. Now if I drive out demons by  Beelzebub, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then,  they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the  finger of God, then **the kingdom of God has come to you**.    **"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his**  **possessions are safe.** But **when someone stronger attacks** and  **overpowers** him, **he takes away the armor in which the man**  **trusted** and divides up the spoils.    **"He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather**  **with me, scatters.**    **"When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid**  **places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will**  **return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the**  **house swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes**  **seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and**  **live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than**  **the first."**    As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called  out, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you."    **ee** He replied, **"Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God**  **and**>>>**obey it.**<<<**"**    As the crowds increased, Jesus said, **"This is a wicked**  **generation. It asks for a miraculous sign,** but none will be  given it except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah was a sign to  the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this  generation. The Queen of the South will **rise at the judgment**  with the men of this generation and condemn them; for she came  from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's **wisdom,** and  now one greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will  **stand up at the judgment** with this generation and condemn it;  for **they repented** at the preaching of Jonah, and now one  greater than Jonah is here.    "No one **lights a lamp** and **puts it in a place where it will be**  **hidden, or under a bowl. Instead he puts it on its stand,** so  that those who come in may see the **light.** **Your eye is the lamp**  **of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is**  **full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of**  **ee darkness.**>**See to it**<**,** then, that the light within you is not  darkness. Therefore, **if** **your whole body is full of light,** **and**  **no part of it dark,** **it will be completely lighted,** as when the  **light of a lamp** shines on you."    When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat  with him; so he went in and reclined at the table. But the  Pharisee, noticing that Jesus did not first wash before the  meal, was surprised.    Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, **you** **Pharisees clean the**  **outside of the cup and dish,** **but** **inside you are full of greed**  **and wickedness.** You foolish people! Did not the one who made  **ee** the outside make the inside also? But **give**>**what is inside the**  **dish to the poor,**<**and everything will be clean for you.**    "Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint,  rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but **you neglect**  **justice and the** **love of God.** You should have practiced the  latter without leaving the former undone.    "Woe to you Pharisees, because **you love the most important seats**  **in the synagogues** and greetings in the marketplaces.    "Woe to you, because **you are like unmarked graves, which men walk**  **over without knowing it."**    One of the experts in the law answered him, "Teacher, when you  say these things, you insult us also."    Jesus replied, "And you experts in the law, woe to you, because  you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and  you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them.    "Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was  your forefathers who killed them. So you testify that you  approve of what your forefathers did; they killed the prophets,  and you build their tombs. Because of this, **God in his wisdom**  said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom  they will kill and others they will persecute.' Therefore this  generation will be held responsible for **the blood of** **all the**  **prophets** that has been shed since the beginning of the world,  **from the blood of Abel** to the blood of Zechariah, who was  killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you,  this generation will be held responsible for it all.    **"Woe to you experts in the law, because** **you have taken away the**  **Key**>**to**<**knowledge.** **You yourselves have not entered, and you have**  **hindered those who were entering."**    When Jesus left there, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law  **began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions,**  waiting to catch him in something he might say.    Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that  they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first  to his disciples, saying: **"Be on your guard** a**gainst the yeast**  **of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.** **There is nothing**  **concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not**  **be made known.** **What you have said in the dark will be heard in**  **the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the**  **inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.**    "I tell you, **my friends,** do not be afraid of those who kill the  body and after that can do no more. But **I will show you** **whom**  **you should fear:** **Fear him** who, after the killing of the body,  has **power** to throw you into **hell.** Yes, **I tell you, fear him.**  **Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them**  **is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are**  **all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many**  **sparrows.**    "I tell you, **whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man**  **will also acknowledge him before the angels of God.** **But he who**  >**disowns**<**me before men will be**>**disowned**<**before the angels of**  **God. And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will**  **be forgiven, but** **anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit**  **will not be forgiven.**    **"When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities,**  do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you  will say, for **the Holy Spirit will teach you** at that time what  you should say."    Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to  divide the inheritance with me."    Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter  between you?" Then he said to them,>**"Watch out!**<**Be on your**  **guard against**>**all kinds of greed**<**; a man's life does not consist**  **in the abundance of his possessions."**    And he told them this parable: **"The ground of a certain rich man**  **produced a good crop.** He thought to himself, 'What shall I do?  I have no place to store my crops.'    "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns  and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and  my goods. And **I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good**  **things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and**  **be merry." '**    **"But God said to him,** **'You fool! This very night your life will**  **be demanded from you.** Then who will get **what you have prepared**  **for yourself?'**    "This is **how it will be with anyone who stores up things for**  **himself but is not rich toward God."**    ff Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, **do not**  **worry** **about your life,** **what you will eat; or about your body,**  **what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more**  **than clothes.** **Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap,**  **they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how   much more valuable you are than birds!** **Who of you by worrying**  **can add a single hour to his life?** **Since you cannot do this**  **very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?**    "Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I  tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like  one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the  field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the  ff fire, how much more will he clothe you, **O** **you of little faith!**  And>**do not set your heart on**<**what you will eat or drink;** **do not**  **worry about it.** For>**the pagan world runs after all such**<**things,**  **ee** and your Father knows that you need them. But **seek his kingdom**,  and these things will be given to you>**as well**<.    **"Do not be afraid**, little flock, for **your Father has been pleased**  ff**ee to give you the kingdom.** **Sell your possessions and give to the**  **poor.** Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, **a**  **treasure in heaven** that>will not be exhausted,<where no thief  comes near and no moth destroys. **For where your treasure is,**  **there your heart will be also.**    **ee**  "**Be dressed ready for**>**service**<**and keep your lamps burning,** **like**  **men waiting for their master to return** **from a wedding banquet,**  **so that when he comes** **and knocks** **they can immediately open the**  **door for him.** **It will be good for those servants whose master**  **finds them** **watching** **when he comes.** **I tell you the truth,** **he**  **will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the**  **table and will come and wait on them.** **It will be good for those**  **servants whose master finds them**>**ready**<**,** **even if he comes in the**  **second or third watch of the night.** But understand this: If the  owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming,  he would not have let his house be broken into. **You** also **must**  **be ready, because** **the Son of Man will come at an hour when you**  **do not expect him."**    Peter asked, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to  everyone?"    The Lord answered, "Who then is the **faithful** and **wise** manager,  whom the master puts in charge of his servants to **give them**  **their food allowance at the proper time**? It will be good for  that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. I  tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his  possessions. But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My  master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to  beat the menservants and maidservants and **to eat and drink and**  **get drunk.** **The master of that servant will come on a day when**  **he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of.** **He**  **will cut him to pieces and** **assign him a place with the**  >**unbelievers.**<    "That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready  or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many  blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving  punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has  been **given much,** **much will be**>**demanded**<**;** and from the one who  has **been entrusted with much,**>**much more** **will be asked.**<    **"I have come to bring fire on the earth,** **and how I wish it were**  **already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and how**  **distressed I am until it is completed! Do you think I came to**  **bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but** **division.** From now on  there will be five in one family **divided against each other,**  three against two and two against three. **They will be divided,**  father against son and son against father, mother against  daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against  daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."    He said to the crowd: "When you see a cloud rising in the west,  immediately you say, 'It's going to rain,' and it does. And  when the south wind blows, you say, 'It's going to be hot,' and  it is. **Hypocrites!** You know how to interpret the appearance of  the earth and the sky. **How is it that you don't know how to**  **interpret this present time?**    **"Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right?** **As you are**  **going with your adversary to the magistrate,**>**try hard to be**  **reconciled**<**to him on the way**, **or he may** drag you off to the  judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the  officer **throw you into prison.** I tell you, **you will not get out**  **until you have paid the last penny."**    Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about **the**  **Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.**  Jesus answered, **"Do you think that these Galileans were worse**  **sinners than all the other Galileans** because they suffered this  way? I tell you, **no! But** **unless you repent, you too will all**  **perish.** Or **those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam**  **fell on them--do you think they were more guilty than all the**  rr  **others** **living in Jerusalem?** I tell you, **no!** **But** **unless you**  **repent, you too will all perish**."    Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his  vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find  any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, **'For**  **three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig**  **tree and haven't found any. Cut it down!** Why should it use up  the soil?'  "'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and  **I'll dig around it and**>**fertilize it**<**.** **If it bears fruit next**  **year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'"**    On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and **a**  **woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen**  **years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all.**  When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her,  **"Woman, you are set free from your infirmity."** Then he put his  hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised  God.    Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue  ruler said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come  and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath."    The Lord answered him, **"You hypocrites!** Doesn't each of you on  the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it  out to give it water? Then **should not this woman**, **a daughter of**  **Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be**  **set free** on the Sabbath day **from what bound her?"**    When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the  people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was  doing.    ss Then Jesus asked, "What is **the kingdom of God** like? What shall I  compare it to? **It is like a mustard seed**, which a man took and  planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds  of the air perched in its branches."    ss Again he asked, "What shall I compare **the kingdom of God** to? It  is>>**like yeast** that a woman took and **mixed into a large amount**  **of flour until it worked all through the dough**.**"**<<    Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he  made his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, **"Lord, are only a**  **few people going to be saved?"**    **HSMS** He said to them, **"**>>>>**Make every effort**<<<<**to enter through the narrow**  **door, because many, I tell you, will**>>>>**try to enter**<<<<**and will not**  **be able to.** **Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the**  **door,** you will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Sir, open  the door for us.'    **"But he will answer,** **'I don't know you or where you come from.'**    **"Then you will say,** 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in  our streets.'    **"But he will reply,** **'I don't know you or where you come from.**  **Away from me,** **all** **you evildoers!**'    **"There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see**  **Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the** **kingdom of**  **God,** **but you yourselves thrown out.** **People will come from east**  **and west and north and south, and will take their places at the**  **feast in the kingdom of God.** Indeed there are those who are  last who will be first, and first who will be last."    At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, "Leave  this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you."    He replied, **"Go tell that fox,** 'I will drive out demons and heal  people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my  goal.' **In any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and**  **the next day--for surely no prophet**>**can die**<**outside Jerusalem!**    "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone  those sent to you, **how often I have longed to gather your**  **children together,** as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings,  **but you were not willing!** Look, your house is left to you  desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say,  'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"    One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent  Pharisee, he was being carefully watched. There in front of him  was a man suffering from dropsy. Jesus asked the Pharisees and  experts in the law, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or  not?" But they remained silent. So **taking hold of the man, he**  **healed him and sent him away.**    Then he asked them, "If one of you has a son or an ox that falls  into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull  **him** out?" **And they had nothing to say.**    When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the  table, he told them this parable: "When someone invites you to  a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person  more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the  host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give  this man your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take  the least important place. But when you are invited, take the  lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you,  'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored  in the presence of all your fellow guests. For **everyone who**  **exalts himself will be humbled,** and **he who humbles himself will**  **be exalted."**  Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner,  do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your  rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you  will be repaid. **But when you give a banquet,** **invite the poor,**  **the crippled, the lame, the blind,** and you will be blessed.  Although they cannot repay you, **you will be repaid at the**  **resurrection of the righteous**."    When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to  Jesus, "Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the  **kingdom of God."**    Jesus replied: **"A certain man** **was preparing a great banquet and**  **invited many guests.** At the time of the banquet **he sent** **his**  **servant to tell those who had been invited,** **'Come, for**  **everything is now ready.'**    "But **they all alike began to make excuses.** The first said, **'I**  **have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please**  **excuse me.'**    "Another said, **'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on**  **my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'**    "Still another said, **'I just got married, so I can't come.'**    "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then **the**  **owner of the house became angry** and ordered his servant, **'Go**  **out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring**  **in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'**    "'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but  there is still room.'    "Then the master told his servant, **'Go out to the roads and**  **country lanes and**>**make them come in,**<so that my house will be  full. I tell you, **not one of those men who were invited will**  **get a taste of my banquet.'"**    Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he  said: **"If anyone comes to me and does not hate** his father and  mother, **his wife and children,** his brothers and sisters**--yes,**  **HSMS even his own life--he cannot be my disciple.** And **anyone who**  **does not**>**carry his cross and follow me**<**cannot be my disciple.**    "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit  down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to  complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to  finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying,  'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'    "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king.  Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with  ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with  twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation  while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms  **HSMS** of peace. In the same way, **any of you who does not**>**give up**  **everything he has**<**cannot be my disciple.**    **ee**  "Salt is good, but>**if it loses its saltiness,**<how can it be made  salty again? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure  pile; **it is thrown out.**    **"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."**    **Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to**  **hear him.** But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law  muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."    Then Jesus told them this parable: "Suppose one of you has a  hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not **leave** the  ninety-nine in the open country **and go after the lost sheep**  **until he finds it?** And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on  his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and  neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my  lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way **there will be more**  **rejoicing in heaven over** **one sinner who repents** than over  ninety-nine **righteous** persons who do not need to repent.    "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she  not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until  she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and  neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my  lost coin.' In the same way, I tell you, **there is rejoicing in**  **the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."**    Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger  one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the  estate.' So he divided his property between them.    "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had,  set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth  in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a  severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in  need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that  country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to  fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but  no one gave him anything.  "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's  hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!  I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father,  I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer  worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired  men.' So he got up and went to his father.    "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and  was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw  his arms around him and kissed him.    "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and  against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'    "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe  and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his  feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast  and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive  again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.    "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the  house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the  servants and asked him what was going on. 'Your brother has  come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened  calf because he has him back safe and sound.'    "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his  father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his  father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and  never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young  goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of  yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes  home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'    "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and  everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be  glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive  again; he was lost and is found.'"    Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was  accused of wasting his possessions. So he called him in and  asked him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of  your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.'    "The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now? My master is  taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm  ashamed to beg--I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job  here, people will welcome me into their houses.'    "So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the  first, 'How much do you owe my master?'    "'Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,' he replied.    "The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and  make it four hundred.'    "Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?'    "'A thousand bushels of wheat,' he replied.    "He told him, 'Take your bill and make it eight hundred.'    "The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted  shrewdly. For **the** **people** **of this world are more shrewd in**  **dealing with their own kind than are** **the people of the light.** **I**  **ee** **tell you,**>**use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so**  **that when it is gone,**<**you will be welcomed into eternal**  **dwellings.**    **"Whoever**>**can be trusted**<**with very little**>**can also be trusted with**<  **much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be**  **dishonest with much.** **So if you have not been trustworthy in**  >**handling worldly wealth,**<**who will trust you with true riches?**  **And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's**  **property, who will give you property of your own?**    **ee** "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one  and **love** the other, or he will be devoted to the one and  despise the other. **You cannot serve both God and Money**."    **The Pharisees,** **who loved money,** **heard all this and were sneering**  **at Jesus. He said to them,** **"You are the ones who justify**  **yourselves in the eyes of men, but** **God knows your hearts.**^^**What**  **is**>**highly valued among men is detestable**<**in God's sight.**<<    **"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John.** **Since that**  **time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached,**  **ee** **and**>>>**everyone is forcing his way into it.**<<<**It is easier for**  **heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a**  **pen to drop out of the Law.**    "**Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits**  **adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits**  **adultery.**    **"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen**  **and lived in luxury every day.** **At his gate was laid a beggar**  **named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell**  **from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his**  **sores.**    **"The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to**  **Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried.**>**In hell,**  **where he was in torment,**<he looked up and saw Abraham far away,  with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham,  have>pity<on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger  in water and cool my tongue, because **I am**>**in agony in this**  **fire**<**.'**    "But Abraham replied, **'Son, remember that in your lifetime you**  **received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things,**  **but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.** And besides  all this, **between us and you a great chasm has been fixed,** so  that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can  anyone cross over from there to us.'    "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, **send Lazarus** to my  father's house, for I have five brothers. **Let him warn them,** so  that they will not also come to this place of torment.'    "Abraham replied, **'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them**  **listen to them.'**    "'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but **if someone from the dead**  **goes to them, they will repent.'**    "He said to him, **'If they do not listen to Moses and the**  **Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from**  **the dead.**'"    Jesus said to his disciples: **"Things that cause people to sin are**  **bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come.**  **It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a**  **millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of**  **these little ones to sin. So**>>**watch yourselves.**<<    **"If your brother sins, rebuke him,** **and if he repents, forgive**  **him.** **If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven**  **times comes back to you and says,** **'I repent,'** **forgive him."**    ff The apostles said to the Lord, "**Increase our faith!**"    He replied, **"If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you**  **can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the**  **sea,' and it will obey you.**    "Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the  sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the  field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? Would he not  rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on  me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'?  Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to  do? So **you also, when you have done everything you were told to**  **do, should say,** **'We are unworthy servants; we have only done**  **our duty.'"**    Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border  between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village,  **ten men who had leprosy** met him. They stood at a distance and  called out in a loud voice, **"Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"**    When he saw them, he said, **"Go, show yourselves to the priests."**  **And as they went, they were cleansed.**    **One** of them, when he saw he was healed, **came back**, **praising God**  **in a loud voice. He** **threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked**  **him-**-and he was a Samaritan.    Jesus asked**, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other**  **nine?** **Was no one found to return and give praise to God except**  ff **this foreigner?"** Then he said to him, "Rise and go; **your faith**  **has made you well."**    Once, **having been asked** by the Pharisees **when the kingdom of God**  **would come,** **Jesus replied,**>>>**"The kingdom of God does not come**  **with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it**  ss  **is,' or 'There it is,'** **because the kingdom of God is within**  **you."**<<<    Then he said to his disciples, "The time is coming when you will  long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not  see it. Men will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do  not go running off after them. **For the Son of Man in his day**  **will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky**  **from one end to the other. But first** **he must suffer many things**  **and be rejected by this generation.**    **"Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the**  **days of the Son of Man.** **People were eating, drinking, marrying**  **and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark.**  **Then** **the flood came and destroyed them all.**    **"It was the same in the days of Lot.** **People were eating and**  **drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the**  **day Lot left Sodom,** **fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and**  **destroyed them all.**  **"It will be just like this on** **the day the Son of Man is revealed.**  **On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his**  **goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in**  **the field should go back for anything. Remember Lot's wife!**  **ee**  **Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses**  **his life will preserve it.** I tell you, **on that night two people**  **will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. Two**  **women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and**  **the other left."**    "Where, Lord?" they asked.    He replied, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will  gather."    Then **Jesus told** **his disciples** **a parable to show** them that **they**  **should always pray and not**>**give up**<**.** He said: "In a certain town  **there was** **a judge who** **neither** **feared God** **nor cared about men.**  And there was **a widow** in that town who **kept coming to him with**  **the plea,** **'Grant me justice against my adversary.'**    "For some time he refused. But **finally he said to himself,** 'Even  though **I don't** **fear God** **or care about men, yet** because this  widow keeps bothering me, **I will see that she gets justice, so**  **that she won't eventually wear me** **out** with her coming!'"    And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And  **will not God bring about justice** **for his chosen ones,** **who cry**  **out to him day and night?** Will he keep putting them off? I tell  you, **he will see that they get justice, and quickly.** **However,**  ff **when the Son of Man comes,** **will he find faith on the earth?**"    **To some** **who were confident of their own righteousness and looked**  **down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable:** **"Two men went**  **up to the temple to pray,** one a Pharisee and the other a tax  collector. **The Pharisee** stood up and **prayed** about himself:  **'God, I thank you that I am not like other men**--**robbers,**  **evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector.** **I fast**  **twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'**    "But **the tax collector** **stood at a distance. He would not even**  **look up to heaven, but beat his breast and** **said,** **'God, have**  **mercy on me, a sinner.'**    "I tell you that **this man, rather than the other, went home**  **justified before God.** **For everyone who exalts himself will be**  **humbled, and** **he who humbles himself will be exalted."**    People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them.  When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus  called the children to him and said, "Let the little children  come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God  **ee**  belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, **anyone who will**  **not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never**  **enter it."**    **A** certain **ruler** **asked him,** **"Good teacher,** **what must I do to**  **inherit eternal life?"**    **"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered.** **"No one is**  **good--except God alone.** **You know the commandments:** 'Do not  commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false  testimony, honor your father and mother.'"    **"All these I have kept** **since I was a boy,"** he said.    When Jesus heard this, he said to him, **"You still lack one thing.**  **ee** **Sell everything you have** and give to the poor, and you will  have **treasure in heaven.** **Then come**, follow me."    When he heard this, **he became very sad,** **because he was a man of**  **great wealth.** Jesus looked at him and said, **"How hard it is for**  **the rich to enter the kingdom of God!** Indeed, **it is easier for**  **a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man**  **to enter the kingdom of God."**    Those who heard this asked, **"Who then can be saved?"**    Jesus replied, **"What is impossible with men is possible with**  **God."**    **HSMS** Peter said to him, **"We have left all we had to follow you!"**    "I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, **"no one who has left**  **home** or **wife** or **brothers** or **parents or** **children** **for the sake of**  **the kingdom of God** **will fail to receive many times as much in**  **this age and, in the age to come, eternal life."**    **Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them,** **"We are going up to**  **Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about**  **the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the**  **Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him**  **and kill him. On the third day he will rise again."**    **The disciples** **did not understand any of this. Its meaning was**  **hidden from them,** and **they did not know what he was talking**  **about.**    As Jesus approached Jericho, **a blind man was sitting by the   roadside begging.** When he heard the crowd going by, he asked  what was happening. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is  passing by."    He called out, **"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"**    Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but  he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"    **Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him.** When he  came near, Jesus asked him, **"What do you want me to do for**  **you?"**    "Lord, I want to **see,"** he replied.    Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; **your faith has healed**  **you."** Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus,  praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised  God.    Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by  the name of **Zacchaeus;** he **was a** **chief tax collector** **and was**  **wealthy.** **He wanted to see who Jesus was,** but **being a short man**  he could not, because of the crowd. So **he** ran ahead and **climbed**  **a sycamore-fig tree to see him,** since Jesus was coming that  way.    When **Jesus** reached the spot, he looked up and **said to him,**  **"Zacchaeus**, **come down** **immediately.** **I must stay at your house**  **today."** So **he came down** at once **and welcomed him gladly.**    All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be  the guest of a 'sinner.'"    But **Zacchaeus** **stood up and** **said** to the Lord, **"Look, Lord!** Here  **ee** and **now** **I give half of my possessions to the poor,** and>**if I**  **have cheated anybody out of anything,**<**I will pay back four**  **times the amount."**    **Jesus said to him,** "**Today salvation has come to this house**,  **because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.** **For the Son of Man**  **came to seek and to save what was lost."**    While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a  parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought  that **the kingdom of God** was going to appear at once. He said:  **"A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself**  **appointed king and then to return.** **So he called ten of his**  **ee servants and gave them ten minas.** **'Put this money to work,'** he  said, **'until I come back.'**    **"But his subjects hated him** and sent a delegation after him to  say, **'We don't want this man to be our king.'**    **"He was made king, however,** and returned home. Then he sent for  the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find  out what they had gained with it.    **ee** "The first one came and said, 'Sir, **your mina has earned ten**  **more.'**    **"'Well done,** **my good servant!'** his master replied. **'Because you**  **have been trustworthy in a very small matter,** **take charge of**  **ten cities.'**    **ee** "The second came and said, 'Sir, **your mina has earned five more.'**    "His master answered, 'You **take charge of five cities.'**    ee "Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I  have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of  you, because **you are a**>**hard**<**man. You take out what you did not**  >**put in**<**and reap what you did not sow**.'    "His master replied, **'I will judge you** **by your own words,** **you**  **wicked servant!** **You knew,** did you, that **I am a**>**hard**<**man, taking**  **out what I did not**>**put in**<**, and reaping what I did not sow**? **Why**  **then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came**  **back, I could have collected it with interest?'**    "Then he said to those standing by, **'Take his mina away from him**  **and give it to the one who has ten minas.'**    "'Sir,' they said, 'he already has ten!'    "He replied, 'I tell you that **to everyone who has, more will be**  **given,** but as **for the one who has nothing, even what he has**  **will be taken away.** But **those enemies** **of mine** **who** **did not want**  **me to be king over them--bring them here and kill them in front**  **of me.'"**    After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to  Jerusalem. As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill  called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,  saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you  enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has  ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you,  'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it.'"   Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told  them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them,  "Why are you untying the colt?"    They replied, "The Lord needs it."    They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put  Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on  the road.    When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of  Olives, the whole **crowd of disciples** began joyfully to praise  God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: **"Blessed**  **is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"** **"Peace in**  **heaven** and glory in the highest!"    Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher,  rebuke your disciples!"    "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will  cry out."    As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and  said, **"If you,** even you, **had only known** on this day **what would**  **bring you peace--but now it is hidden from your eyes.** The days  will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment  against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They  will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your  walls. They will not leave **one** stone on another, **because you**  **did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."**    Then **he entered the temple area and began driving out those who**  **were selling. "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will**  **be a house of prayer'; but you have made it 'a den of**  **robbers.'"**    **Every day he was teaching at the temple.** But the chief priests,  the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were  trying to kill him. Yet they could not find any way to do it,  because **all the people hung on his words**.    One day as **he was teaching the people in the temple courts and**  **preaching the gospel,** the chief priests and the teachers of the  law, together with the elders, came up to him. "Tell us by what  authority you are doing these things," they said. "Who gave you  this authority?"    He replied, "I will also ask you a question. Tell me, John's  baptism--was it from heaven, or from men?"    They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From  heaven,' he will ask, 'Why didn't you believe him?' But if we  say, 'From men,' **all the people will stone us, because they are**  **persuaded that John was a prophet."**    So they answered, "We don't know where it was from."    Jesus said, "**Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing**  **these things."**    He went on to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a  vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long  time. At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants so they  would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the  tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. He sent  another servant, but that one also they beat and treated  shamefully and sent away empty-handed. He sent still a third,  and they wounded him and threw him out.    "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? **I will**  **send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him.'**    "But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. 'This  is the heir,' they said. 'Let's kill him, and the inheritance  will be ours.' So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed  him.    "What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? **He will**  **come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others."**    When the people heard this, they said, "May this never be!"    **Jesus looked directly at them** and asked, "Then what is the  meaning of that which is written: "'The stone the builders  rejected has become the capstone'? Everyone who falls on that  stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be  crushed."    The teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to  arrest him immediately, because they knew he had spoken this  parable against them. But they were afraid of the people.    Keeping a close watch on him, they sent spies, who pretended to  be honest. They hoped to catch Jesus in something he said so  that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the  governor. So the spies questioned him: **"Teacher, we know that**  **you speak and teach what is right,** and that you do not show  partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the  truth. Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"    He saw through their duplicity and said to them, "Show me a  denarius. Whose portrait and inscription are on it?"    "Caesar's," they replied.    He said to them, "Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to  God what is God's."    They were unable to trap him in what he had said there in public.  And astonished by his answer, they became silent.    Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to  Jesus with a question. "Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for  us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no  children, the man must marry the widow and have children for  his brother. Now there were seven brothers. The first one  married a woman and died childless. The second and then the  third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving  no children. Finally, the woman died too. Now then, at the  resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were  married to her?"    Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in  hh marriage. But **those who are considered worthy**>**of taking part in**<  **that age and in the resurrection from the dead** will neither  marry nor be given in marriage, and **they can no longer die;** for  they are like the angels. **They are God's children,** since they  are children of the resurrection. But in the account of the  bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the  Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of  Jacob.' He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for  to him all are alive."    Some of the teachers of the law responded, "Well said, teacher!"  **And no one dared to ask him any more questions.**    Then Jesus said to them, "How is it that they say the Christ is  the Son of David? David himself declares in the Book of Psalms:  "'The Lord said to my Lord: **"Sit at my right hand** until I make  your enemies a footstool for your feet." ' David calls him  'Lord.' How then can he be his son?"    While all the people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples,  "Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in  flowing robes and love to be greeted in the marketplaces and  have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places  of honor at banquets. They devour widows' houses and for a show  make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."    As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the  temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small  copper coins. "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow  has put in more than all the others. All these people gave  their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty **put**  **in all she had to live on."**    Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was  adorned with beautiful stones and **with gifts dedicated to God.**  But Jesus said, "As for what you see here, the time will come  when **not one stone will be left on another; every one of them**  **will be thrown down."**    "Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what  will be the sign that they are about to take place?"    He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. **For many will**  **come in my name, claiming,** 'I am he,' and, **'The time is near.'**  Do not follow them. When you hear of wars and revolutions, do  not be frightened. These things must happen first, but **the end**  will not come right away."    Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and  kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes,  famines and pestilences in various places, and **fearful events**  **and great signs from heaven.**    "But before all this, **they will lay hands on you and persecute**  **you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons,** **and you**  **will be brought before kings and governors, and** **all on account**  **of my name.** **This will result in your being witnesses to them.**  ff**ee** But **make up your mind** **not to worry** beforehand **how you will**  ss **defend yourselves.** For **I will give you words and wisdom that**  **none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.**  **You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and**  **friends, and they will put some of you to death. All men will**  **hate you because of me. But not a hair of your head will**  **ffee perish.**>>>**By standing firm you will gain life.**<<<    "When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know  that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea  flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let  those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time  of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. How  dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and  nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and  wrath against this people. **They will fall by the sword and** **will**  **be taken as prisoners to all the nations.** Jerusalem will be  trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are  fulfilled.    "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth,  **nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and**  **tossing of the sea.** **Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of**  **what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be**  **shaken.** **At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a**  **cloud with power and great glory.** **When these things begin to**  **take place,**>**stand up**<**and lift up your heads, because your**  **redemption is drawing near."**    He told them this parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the  trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and  know that summer is near. Even so, **when you see these things**  **happening,** **you know** **that** **the kingdom of God is near.**    "I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass  away until all these things have happened. **Heaven and earth**  **will pass away, but my words will never pass away.**    **ee** **"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with**  **dissipation,** **drunkenness and the**>**anxieties of life**<**,** **and that**  **day will close on you**>**unexpectedly**<**like a trap.** For **it will**  **come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth.**>**Be**  **always on the watch**<**, and pray that you may**>>>>>**be able**<<<<<**to escape**  **all that is about to happen, and**>**that you may be able to stand**<  **before the Son of Man."**    **Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple,** and each evening he  went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of  Olives, and **all the people came early in the morning to hear**  **him at the temple**.    Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was  approaching, and **the chief priests and the teachers of the law**  **were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus,** **for they were**  **afraid of the people.** Then **Satan entered Judas,** called  Iscariot, one of the Twelve. And Judas went to the chief  priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with  them how he might betray Jesus. They were delighted and agreed  to give him money. He consented, and watched for an opportunity  to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.    Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb  had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go  and make preparations for us to eat the Passover."    "Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked.    He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water  will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say  to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the  guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He  will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make  preparations there."    They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they  prepared the Passover.    When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table.  And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this  Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not  eat it again until it finds fulfillment in **the kingdom of God."**    After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and  divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of  the fruit of the vine until **the kingdom of God** comes."    And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them,  saying, **"This is my body given for you;** **do this in remembrance**  **of me."**    In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, **"This**  **cup is** **the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for**  **you.** But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine  on the table. The Son of Man will go **as it has been decreed,**  but woe to that man who betrays him." They began to question  among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.    Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was  considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, "The kings of  the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise  authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are  not to be like that. Instead, **the greatest among you should be**  **like the youngest,** and **the** **one who rules like the one who**  **serves.** For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the  one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am  among you as one who serves. **You are those who have stood by me**  **in my trials.** **And** **I**>**confer**<**on you a** **kingdom,** **just as my Father**  >**conferred one**<**on me,** **so** **that** **you may eat and drink at my table**  **in my** **kingdom** and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of  Israel.    ff **"Simon,** **Simon,** **Satan**>**has asked**<**to sift you as wheat.** **But I have**  **prayed for you,** **Simon,** **that your faith may not fail.** And **when**  **you have**>**turned back,**<**strengthen** your brothers."    But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to  death."    Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows  today, you will deny three times that you know me."  Then **Jesus asked them, "When I sent you without purse, bag or**  **sandals, did you lack anything?"**    **"Nothing,"** they answered.    He said to them, **"But now** **if you have a purse, take it, and also**  **a bag; and** **if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy**  **one.** It is written: 'And he was numbered with the  transgressors'; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in  me. Yes, **what is written about me**>**is reaching**<**its fulfillment."**    The disciples said, "See, Lord, here are two swords."  "That is enough," he replied.    Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples  **ee**  followed him. On reaching the place, **he said to them,** **"Pray**  **that you will not**>**fall**<**into temptation."** He withdrew about a  stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, **"Father, if**  **you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but**  **yours be done."** **An angel from heaven appeared to him and**  **strengthened him.** **And** **being in**>**anguish**<**, he prayed more**  **earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the**  **ground.**    When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, **he found**  **them asleep, exhausted from sorrow.** **"Why are you sleeping?"** he  asked them. **"Get up** and **pray so that you will not**>**fall**<**into**  **temptation."**    While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was  called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He  approached Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are  you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"    When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said,  "Lord, should we strike with our swords?" And one of them  struck the servant of the high priest, cutting **off his right**  **ear.**    But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's  ear and healed him.    Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple  guard, and the elders, who had come for him, "Am I leading a  rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? **Every day**  **I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand**  **on me. But** **this is your hour--**>**when darkness reigns**<."    Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house  of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. But when they  had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat  down together, Peter sat down with them. A servant girl saw him  seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and  said, "This man was with him."    But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said.    A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one  of them."    "Man, I am not!" Peter replied.    About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was  with him, for he is a Galilean."    Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!"  Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned  and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word  the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today,  you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept  bitterly.    The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him.  They blindfolded him and demanded, "Prophesy! Who hit you?" And  they said many other insulting things to him.    At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both **the**  **chief priests and teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus**  **was led before them. "If you are the Christ," they said, "tell**  **us."**    Jesus answered, **"If I tell you, you will not believe me,** **and** **if I**  **asked you, you would not answer. But from now on, the Son of**  **Man will be seated at the right hand of**>**the mighty God**<**."**    **They all asked,** **"Are you then the Son of God?"**    He replied,>**"You are right in saying I am."**<    Then they said, "Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard  it from his own lips."    Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. And they  began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man subverting  our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to  be Christ, a king."    **So Pilate asked Jesus,** **"Are you the king of the Jews?"**    >**"Yes, it is as you say,"**<**Jesus replied.**    **Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd,** **"I find**  **No**>**basis for a charge against**<**this man."**    But they insisted, "**He stirs up the people** all over Judea **by his**  **teaching.** He started in Galilee and has come all the way here."    On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. When he  learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him  to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.    When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long  time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard  about him, he hoped to see him perform some miracle. He plied  him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. The  chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there,  vehemently accusing him. Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed  and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him  back to Pilate. That day Herod and Pilate became  friends--before this they had been enemies.    Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the  people, and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who  was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in  your presence and have found no basis for your charges against  him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can  see, he has done nothing to deserve death. Therefore, I will  punish him and then release him."    With one voice they cried out, "Away with this man! Release  Barabbas to us!" (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an  insurrection in the city, and for murder.)    Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. But they  kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"    For the third time he spoke to them: "Why? What crime has this  man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death  penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release  him."    But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be  crucified, and their shouts prevailed. So Pilate decided to  grant their demand. He released the man who had been thrown  into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked  for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.    As they led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on  his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made  him carry it behind Jesus. A large number of people followed  him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. Jesus  turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep  for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time  will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the barren women, the  wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' Then  "'they will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the  hills, "Cover us!" ' For if men do these things when the tree  is green, what will happen when it is dry?"    Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be  executed. **When they came to the place called the Skull, there**  **they crucified him, along with the criminals--one on his right,**  **the other on his left.** **Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for**  **they do not know what they are doing."** And they divided up his  clothes by casting lots.    The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him.  They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the  Christ of God, the Chosen One."    The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine  vinegar and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save  yourself."    There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE  KING OF THE JEWS.    One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him:  "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"    But **the other criminal rebuked him.** **"Don't you fear God,"** he  said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished  justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man  has done nothing wrong."    **Then he said,** **"Jesus, remember me when you come into your**  **kingdom."**    Jesus answered him, **"I tell you the truth, today you will be with**  **me in paradise."**    **It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole**  **land until the ninth hour, for the sun stopped shining. And the   curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a**  **loud voice,** **"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."** **When**  **he had said this, he breathed his last.**    **The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said,**  **"Surely this**>**was a righteous man."** When all the people who had  gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat  their breasts and went away. But all those who knew him,  including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at  a distance, watching these things.    Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, **a good**  **and upright man,** who had not consented to their decision and  action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was  **waiting for the kingdom of God.** Going to Pilate, he asked for  Jesus' body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth  and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one  had yet been laid. It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was  about to begin.    The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph  and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they  went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on  the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.    **On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the**  **women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.**  **They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they**  **entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While**  **they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes**  **that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright**  **the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the**  **men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the**  **dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you,**  **while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be**  **delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the**  **third day be raised again.'" Then they remembered his words.**    When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to  the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene,  Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who  told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women,  because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter,  however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the  strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away,  wondering to himself what had happened.    Now that same day two of them were going to a village called  Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking  with each other about everything that had happened. As they  talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus  himself came up and walked along with them; **but they were kept**  **from recognizing him.**    He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk  along?"    They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named  Cleopas, asked him, "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do  not know the things that have happened there in these days?"    "What things?" he asked.    "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. **"He was a prophet,**  **powerful** in **word** **and deed** before God and all the people. The  chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to  death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the  one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the  third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our  women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but  didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen  a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our  companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had  said, but him they did not see."    ff He said to them, "**How foolish you are,** and **how slow of heart to**  **believe** **all that the prophets have spoken!** **Did not the Christ**  **have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And**  **beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them**  **what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.**    As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus  acted as if he were going farther. **But they urged him strongly,**  **"Stay with us,** for it is nearly evening; the day is almost  over." So he went in to stay with them.    When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks,  broke it and began to give it to them. **Then their eyes were**  **opened** and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their  sight. They asked each other, **"Were not our hearts burning**  **within us while he talked with us** on the road and opened the  Scriptures to us?"    They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found  the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying,  "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon."  Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus  was recognized by them when he broke the bread. While they were still  talking about this, **Jesus himself stood among them and said to them,**   **"Peace be with you."**    They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He  ff said to them, **"Why are you troubled,** **and why do doubts rise in**  **your minds?** **Look at my hands and my feet.** **It is I myself!** **Touch**  **me and see;** a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I  have."    When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. **And**  **while they still did not believe it**>**because of**<**joy and**  >**amazement**<**,** he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?"  They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate  it in their presence.    He said to them, **"This is what I told you while I was still with**  **you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me** **in**  **the Law of Moses,** **the Prophets and the** **Psalms."**    **Then he opened their minds so they could understand the**  **Scriptures.** He told them, **"This is what is written: The Christ**  **will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and**  rr **repentance and forgiveness of sins** **will be preached in his name**  **to all nations,** beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of  these things. **I am going to send you what my Father has**  ss **promised;** but **stay in the city until you have been clothed with**  **power from on high."**    When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up  his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left  them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and  returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed  continually at the temple, praising God.  **============**  **In the beginning** was the **Word,** and **the Word was with God,** and **the**  **Word was God.** **He** **was with God in the beginning.**    **Through him all things were made;** without him nothing was made  that has been made. **In him was life, and that life was the**  **light of men.** **The** **light** **shines in the darkness, but** **the**  **darkness has not**>**understood**<**it.**    **There came a man who was sent from God;** his name was **John. He**  **came as a witness to testify** **concerning that** **light,** **so that**  ff **through him all men might believe.** He himself was not the  **light;** **he came only as** **a witness to the** **light.** **The true light**  **that gives light to every man was coming into the world.**    He was in the world, and **though the world was made through him,**  **the world did not recognize him.** He came to that which was his  own, but **his own** **did not receive him.** Yet **to all who received**  ff **him,** **to those who believed in his name,** **he gave the right to**  **become children of God**--children born not of natural descent,  nor of human decision or a husband's will, but **born of God.**    **The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.** We have  seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from  the Father, **full of grace and truth.**    John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he  of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because  he was before me.'" **From the fullness of his grace we have all**  **received one blessing after another.** For the law was given  through Moses; **grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.** **No**  **one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the**  **Father's side, has made him known.**    Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent  priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to  confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Christ."    They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"    He said, "I am not."    **"Are you the Prophet?"**    He answered, "No."    Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back  to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"    **John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice**  **of one calling in the desert,** **'Make straight the way**>**for**<**the**  **Lord.'"**    Now some Pharisees who had been sent questioned him, "Why then do  you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the  Prophet?"    "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one  you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the thongs  of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."    This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan,  where John was baptizing.    **The next day** **John saw Jesus coming toward him and said,** **"Look,**  **the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!** This is  the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has  surpassed me because he was before me.' I myself did not know  him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he  might be **revealed** to Israel."    **Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from**  **heaven as a dove and remain on him.** **I would not have known him,**  **except** **that** **the one who sent me** **to baptize with water** **told me,**  ss **'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he**  **who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'** I have seen and I  testify that this is the Son of God."    John was there again with two of his disciples. When  he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"    When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus.  Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do  you want?"    They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you  staying?"    "Come," he replied, "and you will see."    So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day  with him. It was about the tenth hour.    Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what  John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing  Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, **"We have**  **found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).** And he brought him to  Jesus.    Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You  will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).    **The next day** Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip,  he said to him, **"Follow me."**    Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida.  Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one  Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also  wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."    "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.    "Come and see," said Philip.    When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, **"Here is a**  **true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false."**    "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked.    Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig  tree before Philip called you."    Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, **you are the Son of God; you are**  **the King of Israel."**    Jesus said, **"You believe** **because** I told you I saw you under the  fig tree. You shall see greater things than that." He then  added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and  the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."    **On the third day** a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus'  mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been  invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother  said to him, "They have no more wine."    "Dear woman, **why do you involve me?"** Jesus replied. **"My time has**  **not yet come."**    His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."    Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for  ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.    Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they  filled them to the brim.    Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master  of the banquet."    They did so, and **the master of the banquet tasted the water that**  **had been turned into wine.** He did not realize where it had come  from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he  called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the  choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests  have had too much to drink; but **you have saved the best till**  **now."**    **This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana**  ff in Galilee. **He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put**  **their faith in him.**    After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers  and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.    When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to   Jerusalem. **In the temple courts** **he found men selling cattle,**  **sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money.**  **So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple**  **area, both sheep and cattle;** **he scattered the coins of the**  **money changers and overturned their tables.** To those who sold  doves he said, **"Get these out of here! How dare you turn my**  **Father's house into a market!"**  **His disciples remembered that** **it is written: "Zeal for your house**  **will consume me."**    Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show  us to prove your authority to do all this?"    Jesus answered them, **"Destroy this temple, and I will raise it**  **again in three days."**    The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this  temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" But the  temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from  the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. **Then they**  **believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.**    Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, **many people**  ff **saw the miraculous signs he was doing** **and believed in his name.**  >**But** **Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all**  **men.** **He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew**  **what was in a man.**<    Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of  the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said,  "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher **who has come from God.** For no  one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God  were not with him."    In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, **no one can see**  **the kingdom of God unless he is born again."**    "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely  he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be  born!"    Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, **no one can enter the**  **kingdom of God unless he is born of water and** **the Spirit.** **Flesh**  ss **gives birth to flesh, but**>>**the Spirit gives birth to spirit.**<<You  should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'  **The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you**  **cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going.** **So it is**  ss **with everyone born of the Spirit.**"    "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.    "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and **do you not**  **understand** **these things?** I tell you the truth, we speak of what  we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you  people do not accept our testimony. **I have spoken to you of**  ff **earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you**  **believe if I speak of heavenly things?** No one has ever gone  into heaven except the one who came from heaven--the Son of  Man. **Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the**  ff  **Son of Man must be lifted up, that** **everyone who believes in him**  **may have eternal life.**    **"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,**  ff **that** **whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal**  **life.** **For God did** not **send his Son** into the world to condemn  ff the world, but **to save the world** through him. **Whoever believes**  **in him is not condemned,** but **whoever does not believe stands**  **condemned** already **because he has** **not believed in the name of**  **God's one and only Son.** This is the verdict: **Light has come**  **into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because**  **their**>**deeds**<**were evil.** **Everyone who**>**does evil**<**hates the light**,  **and**>**will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will**  **ee be exposed**<**. But whoever**>**lives by the truth comes into the**  **light**<**, so that it may be**>**seen plainly that what he has done has**  **been done through God."**<    After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean  countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized.  Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there  was plenty of water, and **people were constantly coming to be**  **baptized.** (This was before John was put in prison.) An argument  developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew  over the matter of ceremonial washing. They came to John and  said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other  side of the Jordan--the one you testified about--well, he is  baptizing, and everyone is going to him."    To this **John replied,** "A man can receive only what is given him  from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not  the Christ but am sent ahead of him.' The bride belongs to the  bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and  listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the  bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete.  He must become greater; I must become less.    "The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from  the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the  earth. **The one who comes from heaven is above all.** **He testifies**  **to what he has seen and heard, but** **no one accepts his**  **testimony**. The man who has accepted it has certified that God  is truthful. For **the one whom God has sent speaks the words of**  **God,** **for** **God gives the Spirit without limit.** **The Father loves**  ff **the Son** **and has placed everything in his hands.** **Whoever**  **believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever**>>>**rejects**<<<**the**  **Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."**    The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more  disciples than John, although **in fact it was not Jesus who**  **baptized, but his disciples.** When the Lord learned of this, he  left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.    Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria  called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his  son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was  from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth  hour.    When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her,  "Will you give me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into the  town to buy food.)    The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a  Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do  not associate with Samaritans.)    Jesus answered her, **"If you knew the gift of God and who it is**  ss **that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and** **he**  **would have given you living water."**    "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the  well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you  greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank  from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and  herds?"    Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty  again, but **whoever drinks the water I give him will never**  ss **thirst.** **Indeed,** **the water I give him will become in him a**  **spring of water welling up to eternal life."**    The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't  get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."    He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."    "I have no husband," she replied.    Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no  husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man  you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is  quite true."    "Sir," the woman said, "**I can see that you are a prophet.** Our  fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the  place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."    Jesus declared, "**Believe me,** woman, a time is coming when you  will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in  Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we  worship what we do know, for **salvation is from the Jews.** Yet a  time is coming and has now come when **the true worshipers will**  **worship the Father in spirit and truth,** **for they are** **the kind**  **of worshipers the Father seeks.** **God is spirit, and his**  **worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth**."    The woman said, **"I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming.**  **When he comes, he will explain everything to us."**    Then Jesus declared, **"I who speak to you am he."**    Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him  talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or  "Why are you talking with her?"    Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and  said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I  ever did. Could this be the Christ?" They came out of the town  and made their way toward him.    Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something."    But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing  about."    Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have  brought him food?"    **ee "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and**  **to finish his work.** Do you not say, 'Four months more and then  the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the  fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now **the reaper draws**  **his wages,** even now **he** **harvests the crop for eternal life,** so  that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the  saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. I sent you to reap  what you have not worked for. **Others have done** **the hard work,**  and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."  **Many** of the Samaritans from that town **believed in him** because of  the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." So  when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with  them, and he stayed two days. **And because of his words many**  **more became believers.**    They said to the woman, "We no longer **believe** just because of  ff what you said; now **we have heard for ourselves,** and **we know**  **that this man really is the Savior of the world."**    After the two days he left for Galilee**. (Now Jesus himself had**  **pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country.)**  When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They  had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover  Feast, for they also had been there.    Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the  water into wine. And there was a certain royal official **whose**  **son lay sick** at Capernaum. When this man heard that Jesus had  arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to  come and heal **his son, who was close to death.**    ff **"Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders,"** Jesus told  him, **"you will never believe."**    The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies."    Jesus replied, **"You may go. Your son will live."**    ff **The man**>**took Jesus at his word**<**and departed. While he was still**  **on the way,** **his servants met him with the news** that his boy was  living. When he inquired as to the time when his son got  better, they said to him, **"The fever left him yesterday at the**  **seventh hour."**    Then the father realized that **this was the exact time** at which  ff **Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live."** **So he and all his**  **household believed.**    This was the second miraculous sign that Jesus performed, having  come from Judea to Galilee.    Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the  Jews. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool,  which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by  five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people  used to lie--the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. **One who was**  **there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.** When **Jesus**  saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this  condition for a long time, he **asked him,** "**Do you want to get**  **well?**"    "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the  pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in,  someone else goes down ahead of me."    Then Jesus said to him, **"Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." At**  **once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.**    The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, and so the Jews  said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the  law forbids you to carry your mat."    But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up  your mat and walk.'"    So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up  and walk?"    The man who was healed had no idea who it was, **for Jesus had**  **slipped away into the crowd** that was there.    Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, **"See, you**  **are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to**  **you."** The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who  had made him well.    So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews  **ee** persecuted him. Jesus said to them,^^^**"My Father is always at his**  **work to this very day, and I, too, am working."**<<<For this reason  the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he  breaking the Sabbath, but **he was even calling God his own**  **Father, making himself equal with God.**    Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth**, the Son can**  **do nothing by himself;** **he can do only what he sees his Father**  **doing,** **because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For**  **the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does**. Yes, to  your amazement he will show him even greater things than these.  **For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life,**  **even so**>>>**the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.**<<<  **Moreover,** **the Father judges no one,** **but has** **entrusted all**  **judgment to the Son,** **that all may honor the Son just as they**  **honor the Father.** **He who does not honor the Son does not honor**  **the Father, who sent him.**    ff  **"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who**  **sent me has eternal life and will not**>**be condemned**<**; he has**  >**crossed over**<**from death to life.** I tell you the truth, a time  is coming and has now come when **the dead will hear the voice of**  **the Son of God and those who hear will** **live.** **For as the Father**  **has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in**  **himself. And** **he has given him** **authority to judge** **because he is**  **the Son of Man.**    "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are  **ee** in their graves will hear his voice and come out--**those who**  **have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil**  **will rise to be condemned.** **By myself I can do nothing;** **I judge**  **only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to**  **please myself but him who sent me.**    "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid. There is  another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his  testimony about me is valid.    "You have sent to **John** and he **has testified to the truth.** Not  that I accept human testimony; but **I mention it that you may be**  **saved.** **John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you**  **chose for a time to enjoy his light.**    "I have testimony weightier than that of John. For **the very work**  **that the Father has given me to finish,** **and which I am doing,**  **testifies that the Father has sent me.** And the Father who sent  me has himself testified concerning me. **You have never heard**  **his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you,**  ff **for you do not believe the one he sent.** **You diligently study**  **the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess**  **eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me,**  **yet you refuse to come to me to have life.**    "I do not>**accept praise**<from men, but I know you. **I know that you**  **do not have the love of God in your hearts.** I have come in my  Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else  ff comes in his own name, you will accept him.>>>>**How can you believe**  **if you** accept praise from one another, yet **make no effort to**  **obtain the praise that comes from the only God?**<<<<    "But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. **Your**  ff **accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed**  **Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.** **But since**  **you do not believe what he wrote,** **how are you going to believe**  **what I say?"**    Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea  of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), and **a great crowd of**  **people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs** he  had performed on the sick. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside  and sat down with his disciples. The Jewish Passover Feast was  near.    When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he  said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to  eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in  mind what he was going to do.    Philip answered him, "Eight months' wages would not buy enough  bread for each one to have a bite!"    Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke  up, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small  fish, but how far will they go among so many?"    Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass  in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand of  them. Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed  to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the  same with the fish.    When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples,  "Gather the pieces that are left over. **Let nothing be wasted."**  So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces  of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.    After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they  began to say, **"Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into**  **the world."** Jesus, knowing that **they intended to come and make**  **him king by force,** withdrew again to a mountain by himself.    When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, where  they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum.  By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. A strong  wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. When they had rowed  three or three and a half miles, **they saw Jesus** approaching the  boat, **walking on the water;** **and they were terrified.** But he  said to them, **"It is I;** **don't be afraid."** Then they were  willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat  reached the shore where they were heading.    The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of  the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that  Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had  gone away alone. Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the  place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had  given thanks. Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor  his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to  Capernaum in search of Jesus.  When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked  him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"    Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me,  not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the  loaves and had your fill. **Do not work for food that spoils, but**  **for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man**  **will give you.** **On him God the Father has placed**>>**his seal of**  **approval**<<**."**    Then they asked him, **"What must we do to do**>>>**the works God**  **requires**<<<**?"**    **ee**ff Jesus answered, **"The work of God is this: to believe in the one**  **he has sent."**    So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that  we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our  forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He  gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"    Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who  has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who  gives you the true bread from heaven. **For the bread of God is**  **he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."**    "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread."    ss Then Jesus declared, **"I am the bread of life.** **He who comes to me**  **will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be**  **thirsty.** But as I told you, **you have seen me and still** **you do**  **not believe.** **All that the Father gives me will come to me,** **and**  **whoever comes to me I will never drive away.** **For I have come**  **down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him**  **who sent me.** And **this is the will of him who sent me, that I**  **shall lose**>**none**<**of all that he has given me,** **but raise**>**them**<**up**  ff **at the last day.** **For my Father's will is that everyone who**  **looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life,**  **and I will raise him up at the last day."**    At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, "I  am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is this  not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?  How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?"    "Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. "**No one can**  **come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him,** **and I will**  **raise him up at the last day.** **It is written in the Prophets:**  **'They will all be** **taught by God**.' **Everyone who listens to the**  **Father and learns from him comes to me. No one has seen the**  **Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the**  ff **Father.** **I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting**  **life. I am the bread of life.** Your forefathers ate the manna in  the desert, yet they died. But **here is** **the bread that comes**  **down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die.** **I am the**  **living bread that came down from heaven.** **If anyone eats of this**  **bread, he will live forever. This bread is** **my flesh, which** **I**  **will give for the life of the world."**    Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can  this man give us his flesh to eat?"    Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, **unless you eat the**  **flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no** **life**  ff **in you.** **Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal**  **life, and I will raise him up at the last day.** For my flesh is  real food and my blood is real drink. **Whoever eats my flesh and**  **drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.** Just as **the living**  ee **Father** sent me and **I live because of the Father,** so **the one who**  **feeds on me will live because of me**. **This is the bread that**  **came down from heaven.** **Your forefathers ate manna and died, but**  **he who feeds on this bread will live forever." He said this**  **while teaching in the synagogue** in Capernaum.    On hearing it, **many of his disciples said, "This is a hard**  **teaching. Who can accept it?"**    **Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said** to  them, "Does this offend you? What if you see the Son of Man  ascend to where he was before!>>>**The Spirit gives life; the flesh**  **counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit**  ff **and they are life.**<<<**Yet there are some of you who do not**  **believe."** For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them  did not believe and who would betray him. He went on to say,  **"This is why I told you that**>>>**no one can come to me unless the**  **Father has enabled him."**<<<    **From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer**  >**followed him.**<    **"You do not want to leave too, do you?"** Jesus asked the Twelve.    ff **Simon Peter answered** him, **"Lord, to whom shall we go?** **You have**  **the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the**  **Holy One of God."**    Then Jesus replied, "**Have I not chosen you**, **the Twelve?** **Yet one**  **of you is a devil!**" **(He meant Judas,** the son of Simon Iscariot,  **who,** though one of the Twelve, **was later to betray him.)**    After this, Jesus went around in Galilee, purposely staying away  from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take his  life. But when the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near, Jesus'  brothers said to him, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea,  so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. No one who  wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are  doing these things, show yourself to the world." For **even his**  **own brothers did not believe in him**.    Therefore Jesus told them, **"The right time for me has not yet**  **come; for you any time is right.** **The world** cannot hate you, but  **it hates me because I testify that**>**what it does is evil.** You go  to the Feast. **I am not yet going up to this Feast, because** **for**  **me the right time has not yet come."** Having said this, he  stayed in Galilee.    However, after his brothers had left for the Feast, he went also,  not publicly, but in secret. Now at the Feast the Jews were  watching for him and asking, "Where is that man?"    Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some  said, **"He is a good man."**    Others replied, **"No, he deceives the people."** But no one would  say anything publicly about him for fear of the Jews.    Not until halfway through the Feast did Jesus go up to the temple  courts and begin to teach. The Jews were amazed and asked, **"How**  **did this man get such learning without having studied?"**    Jesus answered, **"My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who**  rr **sent me.** **If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out**  **whether my teaching comes from God** or whether I speak on my  own. He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for  himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him  is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. Has not  Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why  are you trying to kill me?"    "You are demon-possessed," the crowd answered. "Who is trying to  kill you?"    Jesus said to them, "**I did one miracle, and you are all**  **astonished.** Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though  actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs),  you circumcise a child on the Sabbath. **Now if a child can be**  **circumcised on the Sabbath** so that the law of Moses may not be  broken, **why are you angry with me for healing the whole man on**  **the Sabbath?** **Stop judging by**>**mere**<**appearances, and make a right**  **judgment."**    At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask,  "Isn't this the man they are trying to kill? Here he is,  speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have  the authorities really concluded that he is the Christ? But we  know where this man is from; when the Christ comes, no one will  know where he is from."    Then **Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out,** "Yes,  you know me, and you know where I am from**. I am not here on my**  **own,** **but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but** **I**  **know him because I am from him and he sent me.**"    **At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him,**  **because his time had not yet come. Still,** **many in the crowd** **put**  **their faith in him.** **They said, "When the Christ comes, will he**  **do more miraculous signs than this man?"**    The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him.  Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to  arrest him.    Jesus said, "I am with you for only a short time, and then I go  to the one who sent me. You will look for me, but you will not  find me; and where I am, you cannot come."    The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go  that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live  scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? What did he  mean when he said, 'You will look for me, but you will not find  me,' and 'Where I am, you cannot come'?"    **On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said**  **in a loud voice,** "**If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and**  ff **drink. Whoever believes in me**, as the Scripture has said,  ss **streams of living water will flow from within him**." By this he  meant **the Spirit,** whom **those who believed in him** **were later to**  **receive.** **Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since**  **Jesus had not yet been glorified.**    **On hearing his words, some of the people said, "Surely this man**  **is the Prophet."**    **Others said, "He is the Christ."**    Still others asked, "How can the Christ come from Galilee? Does  not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David's  family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?" Thus  the people were divided because of Jesus. Some wanted to seize  him, but no one laid a hand on him.    Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and  **Pharisees, who asked them, "Why didn't you bring him in?"**    "**No one ever spoke the way this man does**," the guards declared.    "You mean he has deceived you also?" the Pharisees retorted. "Has  any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? No! But  this mob that knows nothing of the law--there is a curse on  them."    Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their  own number, asked, "Does our law condemn anyone without first  hearing him to find out what he is doing?"    They replied, "Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you  will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee." The  earliest and most reliable manuscripts and other ancient  witnesses do not have John 7:53-8:11.    Then each went to his own home.    But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn he appeared again  in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him,  and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the  Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her  stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman  was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded  us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using  this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing  him.    But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his  finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up  and said to them, **"If any one of you is without sin, let him be**  **the first to throw a stone at her."** Again he stooped down and  wrote on the ground.    At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the  older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman  still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her,  **"Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"**    **"No one, sir,"** she said.    rr **"Then neither do I condemn you,"** Jesus declared. **"Go now and**  **leave your life of sin."**    ss When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, **"I am the light of**  **the world. Whoever follows me will**>**never**<**walk in darkness, but**  **will have the light of life."**    The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your  own witness; your testimony is not valid."    Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony  is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going.  **But you have no idea** where I come from or where I am going. You  judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one**. But if I**  **do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone.** I  stand with the Father, who sent me. In your own Law it is  written that the testimony of two men is valid. I am one who  testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent  me."    Then they asked him, "Where is your father?"    **"You do not know me or my Father,"** Jesus replied. **"If you knew**  **me, you would know my Father also."** He spoke these **words** while  teaching in the temple area near the place where the offerings  were put. Yet no one seized him, because his time had not yet  come.    Once more Jesus said to them, "I am going away, and you will look  for me, and **you will die in your sin.** Where I go, you cannot  come."    This made the Jews ask, "Will he kill himself? Is that why he  says, 'Where I go, you cannot come'?"    But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. **You are**  **of this world;** **I am not of this world.** I told you that you  ff would die in your sins; **if you do not believe that I am the one**  **I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins."**    **"Who are you?"** **they asked.**    "**Just what I have been claiming all along**," Jesus replied**. "I**  **have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is**  **reliable, and what I have heard from him I tell the world."**    They did not understand that he was telling them about his  Father. So Jesus said, **"When you have lifted up the Son of Man,**  **then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that** **I**  **do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught**  **HSMS me.** The one who sent me is with me; **he has not left me alone,**  **for I always do what pleases him."** **Even as he spoke, many put**  **their faith in him**.    ff**ee** To the Jews **who had believed him,** Jesus said, **"If you**>**hold to my**  **teaching**<**, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the**  **truth, and the truth will set you free**."    They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never  been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set  free?"    Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, **everyone who sins is a**  **slave to sin.** Now a slave has no permanent place in the family,  but a son belongs to it forever. So **if the Son sets you free,**  **you will be free indeed.** **I know you are Abraham's descendants.**  **Yet**>>>**you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my**  **word.**<<<**I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's**  **presence,** and **you do what you have heard from your father."**    "Abraham is our father," they answered.    **"If you were Abraham's children,"** said Jesus, **"then you would do**  **the things Abraham did.** **As it is, you are determined to kill**  **me,** a man who has told you **the truth that I heard from God**.  Abraham did not do such things. You are doing the things your  own father does."    "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only  Father we have is God himself."    Jesus said to them, **"If God were your Father, you would love me,**  **for I came from God and now am here.** I have not come on my own;  but he sent me. **Why is my language not clear to you?**>>>**Because**  **you are unable to hear what I say.**<<<**You belong to your father,**  **the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire.** **He**  **was a murderer from the beginning,** **not holding to the truth,**  **for there is no truth in him.** **When he lies,**>**he speaks his**  **native language**<**, for he is a liar and the father of lies.** Yet  ff **because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!** **Can any of you**  **prove me guilty of sin?** **If I am telling the truth, why don't**  **you believe me?** **He who**>**belongs to**<**God hears what God says. The**  **reason you do not hear is that you do not**>**belong to**<**God."**    The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a  Samaritan and demon-possessed?"    "I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but **I honor my**  **Father** **and you dishonor me.** I am not seeking glory for myself;  but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. **I tell you**  **HSMS the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."**    At this the Jews exclaimed, "Now we know that you are  demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you  say that if anyone keeps your word, he will never taste death.  Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did  the prophets. Who do you think you are?"    Jesus replied, "**If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing.** **My**  **Father,** whom you claim as your **God,** **is the one who glorifies**  **me.** **Though you do not know him,** **I know him. If I said I did**  hh**HSMS** **not, I would be a liar like you, but** **I do know him and keep his**  **word.** Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my  day; he saw it and was glad."    "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you  have seen Abraham!"    **"I tell you the truth,"** Jesus answered, **"before Abraham was born,**  **I am!"** **At this, they picked up stones**>**to stone him**<**, but** **Jesus**  **hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.**    **As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth.** His disciples  asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he  was born blind?"    "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this  happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his  life. **As long as it is day, we must do the work** **of him who sent**  **me.** **Night is coming, when no one can work.** While I am in the  world, **I am the light of the world."**    Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the  saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. **"Go," he told him, "wash**  **in the Pool of Siloam"** (this word means Sent). **So the man went**  **and washed, and came home seeing.**    His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked,  "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" Some claimed  that he was.    Others said, "No, he only looks like him."    But he himself insisted, "I am the man."    "How then were your eyes opened?" they demanded.    He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on  my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and  washed, and then I could see."  "Where is this man?" they asked him.    "I don't know," he said.    They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. Now the  day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes  was a Sabbath. Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he  had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man  replied, "and I washed, and now I see."    Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he  does not keep the Sabbath."    But others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" So  they were divided.    Finally they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say  about him? It was your eyes he opened."    **The man replied, "He is a prophet."**    The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had  received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. "Is  this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born  blind? How is it that now he can see?"    "We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he  was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes,  we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for  himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the  Jews, for already **the Jews had decided that anyone who**  **acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the**  **synagogue.** That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask  him."    A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give  glory to God," they said. "We know this man is a sinner."    He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One  thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"    Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your  eyes?"    He answered, **"I have told you already and you did not listen.** Why  do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his  disciples, too?"    Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's  disciple! We are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to  Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he  comes from."    **The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where**  **he comes from, yet he opened my eyes.** **We know that God does not**  hh **listen to sinners. He listens to**>**the godly man**<**who does his**  **will.** **Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born**  **blind.** **If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."**    To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare  you lecture us!" And they threw him out.    **Jesus** heard that they had thrown him out, and **when he found him,**  he **said,** **"Do you believe in the Son of Man?"**    **"Who is he, sir?"** the man asked. **"Tell me so that I may** **believe**  **in him."**    Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact**, he is the one**  **speaking with you."**    ff Then the man said, **"Lord, I believe,"** **and he worshiped him.**    Jesus said, **"For judgment I have come into this world, so that**  **the blind will see and those who see will become blind."**    Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked,  "What? Are we blind too?"    Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin;  **but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.**    "I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen  by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a  robber. **The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd** of his  sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and **the sheep**  **listen to his voice.** **He calls** his own sheep **by name** and **leads**  **them out.** When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead  of them, and **his sheep follow him** because **they know his voice.**  But **they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run**  **away from him** because they do not recognize a stranger's  voice." Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not  understand what he was telling them.    Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate  for the sheep. **All who ever came before me** **were** **thieves and**  **robbers**, **but the sheep did not listen to them.** **I am the gate;**  **whoever enters through me will be saved.** He will come in and go  out, and find pasture. **The thief comes only to steal and kill**  **and destroy;** **I have come that they may have life, and have it**  **to the full.**    **"I am the good shepherd.** **The good shepherd lays down his life for**  **the sheep.** The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the  sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep  and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it.  The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing  for the sheep.    "I am the good shepherd; **I know my sheep and my sheep know**  **me--just as the Father knows me and I know the Father--and I**  **lay down my life for the sheep.** **I have other sheep** **that are not**  **of this sheep pen.** I must bring them also. **They too** **will listen**  **to my voice,** and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. **The**  **reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life--only to**  **take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of**  **my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to**  **take it up again.** **This command I received from my Father."**    At these words the Jews were again divided. Many of them said,  "He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?"    But others said, "These are not the sayings of a man possessed by  a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"    Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter,  and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon's  Colonnade. The Jews gathered around him, saying, **"How long will**  **you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us**  **plainly."**    ff Jesus answered, **"I did tell you, but you do not believe. The**  **miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not**  **believe because you are not my sheep.** My sheep **listen** to my  rr voice; **I know them**, and **they follow me**. **I give them eternal**  **life,** **and they shall never perish;** **no one can snatch them out**  **of my hand.** My Father, who has given them to me, is greater  than all; **no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.** **I and**  **the Father are one."**    Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to  them, "I have shown you many great miracles from the Father.  For which of these do you stone me?"    "We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but  for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."    Jesus answered them, **"Is it not written** in your Law, **'I have said**  **you are gods'?** **If** **he called them 'gods,' to whom** **the** **word of**  **God** **came**--and the Scripture cannot be broken--**what about** **the**  **one whom the Father**>**set apart as his very own**<**and sent into the**  **world?** Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because **I said,**  ff **'I am God's Son'?** Do not **believe** me unless **I do what my Father**  **does.** But if I do it, even though you do not **believe** me,  **believe the miracles,** **that you may know and understand** **that the**  **Father is in me, and I in the Father."** **Again they tried to**  **seize him, but he escaped their grasp.**    **Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John**  **had been baptizing in the early days.** Here he stayed and many  people came to him. **They said, "Though John never performed a**  rr **miraculous sign,** **all that John said about this man was true."**  ff **And in that place many believed in Jesus.**    Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the  village of Mary and her sister Martha. This Mary, whose brother  Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on  the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair. So the sisters sent  word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you **love** is sick."    When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in  death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be  glorified through it." Jesus **loved** Martha and her sister and  Lazarus. Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed  where he was two more days.    Then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."    "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews tried to  stone you, and yet you are going back there?"    Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? A man  who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by this world's  light. It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he  has no light."    After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend  Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him  up."    His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better."  Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought  he meant natural sleep.    So then he told them plainly, **"Lazarus is dead,** and for your sake  ff **I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe.** But let us  go to him."  Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples,  **"Let us also go, that we may die with him."**    On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the  tomb for four days. Bethany was less than two miles from  Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort  them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus  was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.    "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother  would not have died. But **I know that even now God will give you**  **whatever you ask.**"    Jesus said to her, **"Your brother will rise again."**    Martha answered, **"I know he will rise again in the resurrection**  **at the last day."**    Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life.** He who  ff **believes in me** will **live,** even though he dies; and **whoever**  **lives and believes in me will never die.** **Do you believe** this?"    **"Yes, Lord,"** she told him, **"I believe that you are the Christ,**  **the Son of God, who was to come into the world."**    And after she had said this, she went back and called her sister  Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for  you." When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him.  Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the  place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who had been with  Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got  up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to  the tomb to mourn there.    When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell  at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother  would not have died."    When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with  her also weeping, **he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.**  "Where have you laid him?" he asked.    "Come and see, Lord," they replied.    Jesus wept.    Then the Jews said, "See how he **loved** him!"    But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the  blind man have kept this man from dying?"    Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave  with a stone laid across the entrance. "Take away the stone,"  he said.    "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this  time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days."    ff Then Jesus said, **"Did I not tell you that if you believed, you**  **would see the glory of God?"**    So they took away the stone. Then **Jesus looked up and said,**  **"Father, I thank you that you have heard me.** **I knew that you**  **always hear me, but** **I said this for the benefit of the people**  ff **standing here,** **that they may believe** **that you sent me."**    When he had said this, **Jesus called in a loud voice,** **"Lazarus,**  **come out!" The dead man came out,** his hands and feet wrapped  with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.    Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."    **Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had**  ff **seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him.** But some of them  went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. Then  **the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the**  **Sanhedrin.**    **"What are we accomplishing?"** they asked. "Here is this man  ff performing many miraculous signs. **If we let him go on like**  **this, everyone will believe in him,** and then the Romans will  come and take away both our place and our nation."    Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year,  spoke up, "You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it  is better for you that one man die for the people than that the  whole nation perish."    He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he  prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not  only for that nation but also for the scattered children of  God, to bring them together and make them one. **So from that day**  **on they plotted to take his life.**    Therefore Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the Jews.  Instead he withdrew to a region near the desert, to a village  called Ephraim, where he stayed with his disciples.    When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up  from the country to Jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing  before the Passover. They kept looking for Jesus, and as they  stood in the temple area they asked one another, "What do you  think? Isn't he coming to the Feast at all?" But the chief  priests and Pharisees had given orders that if anyone found out  where Jesus was, he should report it so that they might arrest  him.    **Six days before the Passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany,** where  Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here **a**  **dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus**  **was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took**  **about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it**  **on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house**  **was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.**    But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray  him, objected, "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money  given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." He did not say  this because he cared about the poor but because he was a  thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to  what was put into it.    "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she  should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will  always have the poor among you, but you will not always have  me."    Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there  and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom  he had raised from the dead. So **the chief priests made plans to**  ff **kill Lazarus as well,** **for on account of him many of the Jews**  **were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in him.**    The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard  that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches  and went out to meet him, shouting, **"Hosanna!" "Blessed is he**  **who comes in the name of the Lord!"** **"Blessed is the King of**  **Israel!"** Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is  written, "Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king  is coming, seated on a donkey's colt."    At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after  Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been  written about him and that they had done these things to him.    Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the  tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word.  Many people, because they had heard that he had given this  miraculous sign, went out to meet him. So the Pharisees said to  one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. **Look how the**  **whole world has gone after him!"**    Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at  the Feast. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in  Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to  see Jesus." Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in  turn told Jesus.    **Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be**  **glorified.** **I tell you the truth,** **unless a kernel of wheat falls**  **to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if**  **it dies, it produces many seeds.** The man who **loves** his life  hh will lose it, while **the man who hates his life in this world**  **ee will keep it for eternal life.** **Whoever serves me must follow**  **me;** **and where I am, my servant also will be.** **My Father will**  **honor the one who serves me.**    **"Now my heart is troubled, and** **what shall I say? 'Father, save me**  **from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this**  **hour.** **Father, glorify your name!**"    **Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will**  **glorify it again."** The crowd that was there and heard it said  it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.    Jesus said, **"This voice was for your benefit, not mine.** Now is  the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this  world will be driven out. **But I,** **when I am lifted up from the**  **earth,** **will draw all men to myself."** He said this to show the  kind of death he was going to die.    The crowd spoke up, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ  will remain forever, so how can you say, 'The Son of Man must  be lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of Man'?"    Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have **the light** just a  little while longer. **Walk while you have** **the light,** **before**  **darkness overtakes you.** The man who walks in the dark does not  ff know where he is going. **Put your trust in the light while you**  **have it, so that you may become sons of light."** When he had  finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.    ff **Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their**  **presence, they still would not believe in him.** **This was to**  **fulfill the word of Isaiah** **the prophet: "Lord,** **who has believed**  **our message** and **to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"**    ff **For this reason** **they could not believe,** **because, as Isaiah says**  **elsewhere: "He has blinded their eyes and deadened their**  **hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand**  **with their hearts, nor turn--and I would heal them."** **Isaiah**  **said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.**    ff **Yet at the same time** **many even among the leaders** **believed in him.**  But because of the Pharisees **they would not confess their faith**  **for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for** **they loved**  **praise from men more than praise from God.**    ff Then Jesus cried out, "When a man **believes in me,** **he does not**  **believe in me only, but in the one who sent me.** When he looks  at me, he sees the one who sent me. I have come into the world  as a **light,** **so that no one who believes in me should stay in**  **darkness.**    **ee**  "As for the person who **hears my words but does not keep them,** I  do not **judge** him. **For I did not come to judge the world, but to**  **save it.** **There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does**  **not accept my** **words;** **that very word which I spoke will**>**condemn**<  **him at the last day.** **For I did not speak of my own accord, but**  **the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and**>>**how to say**  **it.**<<**I know that** **his command**>>**leads to eternal life.**<<**So whatever**  **I say is just what the Father has told me to say."**    It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time  had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father.  **Having loved his own** who were in the world, he now showed them  the **full extent of his** **love.**    The evening meal was being served, and **the devil had already**  **prompted** Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. **Jesus**  **knew that the Father had put all things under his power,** and  that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got  up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a  towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a  basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with  the towel that was wrapped around him.    He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to  wash my feet?"    Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later  you will understand."    "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."    Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."    "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands  and my head as well!"    Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash  his feet;>**his whole body is clean**<**.** And you are clean, though  not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him,  and that was why he said not every one was clean.    When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes  and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done  for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and  rightly so, for that is what I am. **Now that I, your Lord and**  **Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one**  **another's feet.** I have set you an example that you should do as  I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is  greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the  one who sent him. **Now that you know these things, you will be**  **blessed if you do them.**    "I am not referring to all of you; **I know those I have chosen.**  But this is to fulfill the scripture: 'He who shares my bread  has lifted up his heel against me.'    "I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does  ff happen **you will believe that I am He.** I tell you the truth,  **whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me;** **and whoever accepts**  **me accepts the one who sent me."**    After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and  testified, "I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray  me."    His disciples stared at one another, **at a loss to know** which of  them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus **loved,** was  reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple  and said, "Ask him which one he means."    Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?"    Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of  bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the  piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. **As**  **soon as Judas took the bread,** **Satan entered into him.**    "What you are about to do, **do quickly,"** Jesus told him, but no  one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. Since  Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling  him to buy what was needed for the Feast, or to give something  to the poor. As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out.  And it was night.    When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified  and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God  will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.    "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will  look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now:  Where I am going, you cannot come.    **ee**  **"A new command I give you:** **Love one another.** **As I have loved you,**  **so you must love one another.** By this all men will know that  you are my disciples, if you **love** one another."    Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?"    Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you  will follow later."    Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down  my life for you."    Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me?  I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown  me three times!    ff "**Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in**  **me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I**  **would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for**  **you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back**  **and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.** You  know the way to the place where I am going."    Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so  how can we know the way?"    Jesus answered,"**I am the way and the truth and the life. No one**  **comes to the Father except through me.** If you really knew me,  you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him  and have seen him."    Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough  for us."    Jesus answered: "**Don't you know me, Philip,** **even after I have**  **been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has**  ff **seen the Father.** **How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?** **Don't**  **you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in**  **me?** The **words** I say to you are not just my own. Rather,>**it is**  ss **the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.**<**Believe me**  when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or  ff **at least** **believe** **on the evidence of the miracles** themselves. **I**  ss**ee tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I**  **have been doing. He will do even greater things than these,**  **because I am going to the Father.** And **I will do whatever you**  **ask** in my name, **so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.**  **You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.**    **ee** **"If you love me, you will**>**obey**<**what I command.** And **I will ask the**  **Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you**  **forever--the Spirit of truth.** The world cannot accept him,  because it neither sees him nor knows him. But **you know him,**  **for he lives with you and will be in you.** I will not leave you  as orphans; **I will come to you.** Before long, the world will not  see me anymore, but **you will see me. Because I live, you also**  **will live.** On that day you will realize that **I am in my Father,**  **ee and** **you are in me, and I am in you.** **Whoever has my commands and**  >**obeys**<**them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be**  **loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to**  **him."**    Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, **Lord, why do you**  **intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?"**    **ee** Jesus replied, **"If anyone loves me, he will**>**obey my teaching**<**. My**  **Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home**  **with him. He who does not love me will not**>**obey my teaching**<**.**  **These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father**  **who sent me.**    "All this I have spoken while still with you. But **the Counselor,**  ss **the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name,** **will**  **teach you all things** **and will remind you of everything I have**  **said to you.** **Peace** **I leave with you;** **my peace I give you.** I do  ff not give to you as the world gives. **Do not let your hearts be**  **troubled and do not be afraid.**    "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.'  If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the  ff Father, for **the Father is greater than I.** **I have told you now**  **before it happens, so that when it does happen you will**  **believe.** I will not speak with you much longer, for **the prince**  **of this world is coming.** **He has no hold on me,** **but the world**  **HSMS** **must learn that** **I love the Father and that I do exactly what my**  **Father has commanded me.**    "Come now; let us leave.    **ee**  **"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.** **He**>**cuts off**<  **every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that**  **does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more**  **fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have**  **ee spoken to you.**>**Remain in me, and I will remain in you.**<No  branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine.  **Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.**    **ee** **"I am the vine; you are the branches.** **If a man remains in me and**  **I in him, he will bear much fruit**; apart from me you can do  nothing. **If anyone does not remain in me, he is** like a branch  that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up,  **thrown into the fire and burned.** **If you remain in me and my**  **words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be**  **given you.** **This is to my Father's glory,** **that you bear much**  **fruit, showing yourselves** **to be my disciples.**    **"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.** **Now remain in**  **ee my** **love.** **If you**>**obey**<**my commands, you will remain in my love,**  **just as** **I have**>**obeyed**<**my Father's commands and remain in his**  **love.** **I have told you this so that** **my joy may be in you and**  **ee that your joy may be**>>>**complete.**<<<**My command is this:** **Love each**  **other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this,**  **that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends**  **if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants,**  **because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead,**  **I have called you friends,** **for** **everything that I**>**learned**<**from**  **my Father I have made known to you.** **You did not choose me, but**  **ee I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that**  **will**>>>**last.** **Then**<<<**the Father will give you whatever you ask in my**  **name.** **This is my command:** **Love each other.**    **"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If**  **you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own.** As it  is, you do not belong to the world, **but I have chosen you out**  **of the world. That is why the world hates you.** Remember the  words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.'  **If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.** If they  obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. **They will treat**  **you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One**  **who sent me.** If I had not come and spoken to them, they would  not be guilty of sin. Now, however, **they have no excuse for**  **their sin.** **He who hates me hates my Father as well.** If I had  not done among them what no one else did, they would not be  guilty of sin. But now **they have seen these miracles, and yet**  **they have hated both me and my Father**. **But this is to fulfill**  **what is written in their Law:** **'They hated me without reason.'**    **"When** **the Counselor** **comes,** **whom I will send to you from the**  **Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father,** **he**  **will testify about me.** **And you also must testify,** for you have  been with me from the beginning.    **"All this I have told you**>**so that you will not go astray.**<**They**  **will put you out of the synagogue; in fact,** **a time is coming**  **when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service**  **to God.** **They will do such things because they have not known**  **the Father or me.** I have told you this, so that when the time  comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you  this at first because I was with you.    "Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me,  'Where are you going?' Because I have said these things, you  are filled with grief. But I tell you the truth: It is for your  good that I am going away. Unless I go away, **the Counselor** will  not come to you; but if I go, **I will send him to you.** When he  comes, **he will convict the** world of guilt **in regard to sin and**  ff **righteousness and judgment:** **in regard to sin, because men do**  **not believe in me;** in regard to **righteousness, because I am**  **going to the Father,** where you can see me no longer; and in  regard to **judgment, because** **the prince of this world now stands**  **condemned.**    **"I have much more to say to you,** **more than you can now bear.** But  ss when he, **the Spirit of truth, comes,** **he will guide you into all**  **truth.** **He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he**  **hears,** and he will tell you what is yet to come. **He will bring**  **glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to**  **you.** **All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said**  **the Spirit** **will take from what is mine and make it known to**  **you.**    "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a  little while you will see me."    Some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by  saying, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then  after a little while you will see me,' and 'Because I am going  to the Father'?" They kept asking, "What does he mean by 'a  little while'? **We don't understand** what he is saying."  Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to  them, "Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, 'In  a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little  while you will see me'? I tell you the truth, **you will weep and**  **mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief**  **will turn to joy.** A woman giving birth to a child has pain  because her time has come; but when her baby is born she  forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born  into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I  will see you again and you will rejoice, and **no one will take**  **away your joy.**>**In that day you will no longer ask me anything.**<  **I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask**  **in my name.** Until now you have not asked for anything in my  name. **Ask and you will receive,** **and your joy will be complete**.    **"Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when**  **I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you**  **plainly about my Father. In that day you will ask in my name. I**  **am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No,**  ff **the Father himself loves you** **because** **you have loved me and have**  **believed that I came from God.** **I came from the Father and**  **entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to**  **the Father."**    Then Jesus' disciples said, **"Now you are speaking clearly and**  **without figures of speech. Now we can see that you know all**  **things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you**  ff **questions. This makes us believe that you came from God."**    ff **"You believe at last!"** Jesus answered. **"But a time is coming, and**  **has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You**  **will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is**  **with me.**    **"I have told you these things, so that** **in me you may have peace.**  **In this world you will have trouble.** **But take heart!** **I have**  **overcome the world."**    After **Jesus** said this, he **looked toward heaven and prayed:**    **"Father, the time has come.** **Glorify your Son, that your Son may**  **glorify you. For** **you granted him authority over all people** **that**  **he might** **give eternal life to all those you have given him.** Now  **this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true**  **God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.** **I have brought you**  **ee glory on earth**>>>**by**<<<**completing the work you gave me to do.** **And**  **now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had**  **with you before the world began.**    **"I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world.**  **ee** **They were yours; you gave them to me** and **they have**>**obeyed**<**your**  **word.** Now they know that everything you have given me comes  from you. For **I gave them the words** **you gave me** and **they**  ff>>**accepted**<<**them.** **They** **knew with certainty that I came from you,**  **and they believed that you sent me**. **I pray for them.** **I am not**  **praying for the world,** **but for** **those you have given me,** **for**  **they are yours.** **All I have is yours, and all you have is mine.**  **And glory has come to me through them**. I will remain in the  world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am  coming to you. **Holy Father, protect them by the power of your**  **name--the name you gave me--so that they may be one as we are**  **one.** **While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe**  **by that name you gave me.** **None has been lost except the one**  **doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.**    "I am coming to you now, but **I say these things** **while I am still**  **in the world,** **so that they may have** **the full measure of my joy**  **within them.** **I have** **given them your word** **and the world has**  **hated them,** **for** **they are not of the world any more than I am of**  **the world.** **My prayer is** **not that you take them out of the world**  **but** **that** **you** **protect them from the evil one.** **They are not of**  ss **the world, even as I am not of it.** **Sanctify** **them by the truth;**  **your word is truth.** **As you sent me into the world,** **I have sent**  **them into the world.** **For them** **I**>**sanctify**<**myself,** **that they too**  **may be**>**truly sanctified.**<    **"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will**  ff **believe in me through their message,** **that all of them may be**  **one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.** **May they**  ff **also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent**  **me.** **I have given them the glory that you gave me,** **that they may**  **be one as we are one:** **I in them and you in me.** **May they be**  **brought to complete unity** **to let the world know that you sent**  **me and have loved them even as you have loved me.**    **"Father,** **I want those you have given me to be with me where I am,**  **and to see** **my glory, the glory you have given me because you**  **loved me before the creation of the world.**    **"Righteous Father,** **though the world does not know you,** **I know**  ffss **you,** **and** **they know** **that** **you have sent me**.>>>>**I have made you known**  **to them, and will continue to make you known**<<<<**in order that the**  ss **love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in**  **them."**    When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and  crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was an olive  grove, and he and his disciples went into it.    Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had  often met there with his disciples. So Judas came to the grove,  guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the  chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches,  lanterns and weapons.    Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and  asked them, "Who is it you want?"    "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied.    "I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there  with them.) When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell  to the ground.    Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?"    And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."    "I told you that I am he," Jesus answered. "If you are looking  for me, then let these men go." **This happened so that the words**  **he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one of those**  **you gave me."**    Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high  priest's servant, cutting off **his right ear.** (The servant's  name was Malchus.)    **Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away!** **Shall I not drink**  **the cup the Father has given me?"**    Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish  officials arrested Jesus. They bound him and brought him first  to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high  priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews  that it would be good if one man died for the people.    Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because  this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus  into the high priest's courtyard, but Peter had to wait outside  at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high  priest, came back, spoke to the girl on duty there and brought  Peter in.    "You are not one of his disciples, are you?" the girl at the door  asked Peter.    He replied, "I am not."    It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire  they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them,  warming himself.    Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples  and his teaching.    "I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus replied. "**I always**  **taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come**  **together.** I said nothing in secret. Why question me? Ask those  who heard me. Surely they know what I said."    When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby struck him in  the face. "Is this the way you answer the high priest?" he  demanded.    "If I said something wrong," Jesus replied, "testify as to what  is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?"  Then Annas sent him, still bound, to Caiaphas the high priest.    As Simon Peter stood warming himself, he was asked, "You are not  one of his disciples, are you?"    He denied it, saying, "I am not."    One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose  ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, "Didn't I see you with  him in the olive grove?" Again Peter denied it, and at that  moment a rooster began to crow.    Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman  governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial  uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to  be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and  asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?"    "If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have  handed him over to you."    Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law."    "But we have no right to execute anyone," the Jews objected. **This**  **happened so that the words Jesus had spoken indicating the kind**  **of death he was going to die would be fulfilled.**    Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked  him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"    "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you  about me?"    "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "It was your people and your chief  priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"    **Jesus said,** **"My kingdom** is not **of this world**. If it were, my  servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now  **my kingdom** is from another place."    "**You are a king, then!" said Pilate.**  Jesus answered, **"**>**You are right in saying**<**I am a king.** In fact,  **for this reason I was born,** and **for this I came into the world,**  **to testify to the truth.** **Everyone**>**on the side of**<**truth listens**  **to me."**    **"What is truth?" Pilate asked. With this he went out again** to the  Jews and said, **"I find no basis for a charge against him.** But  it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the  time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of  the Jews'?"    They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas  had taken part in a rebellion.    Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted  together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed  him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again,  saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they struck him in the  face.    Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews, "Look, I am  bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis  for a charge against him." When Jesus came out wearing the  crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here  is the man!"    As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they  shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!"    But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I  find no basis for a charge against him."    The Jews insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he  must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God."    When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back  inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus,  but Jesus gave him no answer. "Do you refuse to speak to me?"  Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you  or to crucify you?"    Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not  given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over  to you is guilty of a greater sin."    From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jews kept  shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar.  Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar."    When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the  judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in  Aramaic is Gabbatha). It was the day of Preparation of Passover  Week, about the sixth hour.    "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews.    But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!"    "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked.    "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered.    Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.    So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he  went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called  Golgotha). Here they crucified him, and with him two  others--one on each side and Jesus in the middle.    **Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read:**  **JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Many of the Jews read**  **this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the**  **city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The**  **chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write**  **'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of**  **the Jews."**    **Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."**    **When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes,**  **dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the**  **undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one**  **piece from top to bottom.**    "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by  lot who will get it."    This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said,  "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my  clothing." So this is what the soldiers did.    Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister,  Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his  mother there, and the disciple whom he **loved** standing nearby,  he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to  the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this  disciple took her into his home.    Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the  Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar  of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put  the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to  Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, **Jesus said, "It is**  **finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.**    Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a  special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left  on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have  the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers  therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been  crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when  they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did  not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus'  side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.  The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is  true**. He knows that he tells the truth, and** **he testifies so**  ff **that you also may believe.** These things happened so that the  scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be  broken," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the  one they have pierced."    Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus.  **Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he**  **feared the Jews.** With Pilate's permission, he came and took the  body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier  had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of  myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body,  the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of  linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At  the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in  the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid.  Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb  was nearby, they laid Jesus there.    Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary  Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been  removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter  and the other disciple, the one Jesus **loved,** and said, "They  have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where  they have put him!"    **So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were**  **running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the**  **tomb first. He bent over and** **looked in at the strips of linen**  **lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter, who was behind**  **him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen**  **lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around**  **Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from**  **the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb**  ff  **first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did**  **not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the**  **dead.)**    Then the disciples went back to their homes, but Mary stood  outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look  into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus'  body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.    They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"    "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where  they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus  standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.    "Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking  for?"    Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried  him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."    Jesus said to her, "Mary."    She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which  means Teacher).    **Jesus said,** **"Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to**  **the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them,** **'I am**  **returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your**  **God.'"**    Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen  the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to  her.    On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples  were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews,  Jesus came and stood among them and said, **"Peace be with you!"**  After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The  disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.    Again Jesus said, **"Peace be with you!** **As the Father has sent me,**  **I am sending you.**" **And with that** **he breathed on them and said,**  ss "**Receive the Holy Spirit.** **If you forgive anyone his sins, they**  **are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not**  **forgiven."**    Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the  disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We  have seen the Lord!"    But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands  and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into  his side, I will not believe it."    A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas  was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and  stood among them and said, **"Peace be with you!"** Then he said to  Thomas, **"Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your**  ff **hand and put it into my side.**>**Stop doubting**<**and believe.**"    **Thomas said to him,** **"My Lord and my God!"**    Then Jesus told him, **"Because you have seen me, you have**  ff **believed;** **blessed are those who have not seen and yet have**  **believed."**    **Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his**  **disciples, which are not recorded in this book.** **But these are**  ff **written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son**  **of God,** **and that by believing you may have life** **in his name.**    Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of  Tiberias. It happened this way: Simon Peter, Thomas (called  Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee,  and two other disciples were together. "I'm going out to fish,"  Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So  they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught  nothing.    Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples  did not realize that it was Jesus.    He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?"    "No," they answered.    He said, "Throw your net **on the right side** of the boat and you  will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the  net in because of the large number of fish.    Then the disciple whom Jesus **loved** said to Peter, "It is the  Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord,"  he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it  off) and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in  the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far  from shore, about a hundred yards. When they landed, they saw a  fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.    Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just  caught."    Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was  full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not  torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of  the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was  the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and  did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus  appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.    When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon  son of John, **do you truly love me** more than these?"    "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I **love** you."    **ee**  Jesus said, **"Feed my lambs."**    Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, **do you truly love me?"**    He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I **love** you."    **ee** Jesus said, **"Take care of my sheep."**    The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, **do you love**  **me?"**    Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you  **love** me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I  **love** you."    **ee** Jesus said, **"Feed my sheep.** I tell you the truth, when you were  younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but  when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone  else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."  Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter  would glorify God. Then he said to him, **"Follow me!"**    Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus **loved** was  following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against  Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray  you?") When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?"    Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return,  what is that to you? **You must follow me.**" Because of this, the  rumor spread among the brothers that this disciple would not  die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said,  "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to  you?"    This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote  them down. We know that his testimony is true.    **Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were**  **written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not**  **have room for the books that would be written.**  **============**  In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that **Jesus** began  to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven,  after **giving instructions through the Holy Spirit** **to the**  **apostles** **he had chosen**. **After his suffering,** **he showed himself**  **to these men** and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive.  **He appeared to them over a period of forty days and** **spoke about**  **the kingdom of God.** On one occasion, while he was eating with  them, he gave them this command: "**Do not leave Jerusalem, but**  **wait for the gift my Father promised,** **which you have heard me**  **speak about.** For John baptized with water, but **in a few days**  ss **you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."**    So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this  time going to restore **the kingdom** to Israel?"    He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates  ss the Father has set by his own authority. **But you will receive**  **power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my**  **witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and **to**  **the ends of the earth."**    After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a  cloud hid him from their sight.    They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when  suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of  Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the  sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven,  will come back in the same way you have seen him go into  heaven."    Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of  Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. When they arrived,  they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those  present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas,  Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the  Zealot, and Judas son of James. They all joined together  constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother  of Jesus, and with his brothers.    In those days Peter stood up among **the believers (a group**  **numbering about a hundred and twenty)** and said, "Brothers, the  Scripture had to be fulfilled which **the Holy Spirit spoke long**  **ago through the mouth of David** concerning Judas, who served as  guide for those who arrested Jesus--he was one of our number  and shared in this ministry."    (With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field;  there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his  intestines spilled out. Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this,  so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is,  Field of Blood.)    "For," said Peter, "it is written in the book of Psalms, "'May  his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,'  and, "'May another take his place of leadership.' Therefore it  is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the  whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning  from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from  us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his  resurrection."    So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as  Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, "Lord, you know  everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to  take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where  he belongs." Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias;  so he was added to the eleven apostles.    When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one  place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came  from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.  They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and  came to rest on each of them. **All of them were filled with the**  **Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit**  **enabled them.**    Now there were staying in Jerusalem **God-fearing Jews from every**  **nation under heaven.** When they heard this sound, a crowd came  together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking  in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all  these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each  of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes  and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia,  Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of  Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts  to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs--we hear them declaring the  wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they  asked one another, "What does this mean?"    Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much  wine."    Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and  addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in  Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what  I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine  in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet  ss Joel: **"'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit**  **on all people.** **Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your**  **young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.**  **Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my**  **Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.** I will show  wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood  and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to  darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great  ff and glorious day of the Lord. And **everyone who calls on the**  **name of the Lord will be saved**.**'**    "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man  accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which  God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man  was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge;  and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by  nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead,  freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible  ff for death to keep its hold on him. **David said about him: "'I**  **saw the Lord always before me.**>>>**Because he is at my right hand,**  **I will not be shaken.**<<<Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue  rejoices; my body also will live in hope, because you will not  abandon me to the grave, nor will you let **your Holy One** see  decay. **You have made known to me the paths of life;**>>>>**you will**  **fill me with joy in your presence.**'<<<<    "Brothers, I can tell you confidently that **the patriarch David**  died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But **he**  **was a prophet** and knew that God had promised him on oath that  he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing  what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ,  that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see  decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all  witnesses of the fact. **Exalted to the right hand of God,** **he has**  **received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit** **and has**  **poured out** **what you now see and hear.** For David did not ascend  to heaven, and yet he said, "'The Lord said to my Lord: **"Sit at**  **my right hand** until I make your enemies a footstool for your  feet." '    **"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this**  **Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."**    When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said  to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"    rr Peter replied, "**Repent** **and be baptized, every one of you, in the**  **name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you**  ss **will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** **The promise** **is** for  you and your children and for all who are far off--**for all whom**  **the Lord our God will call."**    **With many other words** **he warned them; and he pleaded with them**,  **"Save yourselves from this**>**corrupt**<**generation." Those who**  **accepted his message** **were baptized, and about three thousand**  **were added to their number that day.**    **ee** **They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching** **and to the**  **fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.** **Everyone**  **was filled with awe,** and many wonders and miraculous signs were  done by the apostles. **All the believers were together** and had  everything in common. **Selling their possessions and goods,** they  gave to anyone as he had need. **Every day they continued to meet**  **together** in the temple courts. **They broke bread in their homes**  and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and  **enjoying the favor of all the people.** And **the Lord added** to  their number **daily those who were being saved.**    One day **Peter and John** were going up to the temple at the time of  prayer--at three in the afternoon. Now a man crippled from  birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful,  where he was put every day to beg from those going into the  temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he  asked them for money. **Peter looked straight at him,** as did  John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" So the man gave them his  attention, expecting to get something from them.    Then **Peter** said, "Silver or gold I do not have, **but what I have** **I**  **give you**. **In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."**  Taking him by **the right hand,** he helped him up, and instantly  the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet  and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple  courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. When all the  people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as  the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called  Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at  what had happened to him.    While the beggar held on to **Peter and John,** all the people were  astonished and came running to them in the place called  Solomon's Colonnade. When **Peter** saw this, he said to them: "Men  of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us  as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?  The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers,  has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be  killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had  decided to let him go. You disowned **the Holy and Righteous One**  and asked that a murderer be released to you. **You killed the**  **author of life, but God raised him from the dead.** **We are**  ff **witnesses of this.** **By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom**  **you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the**  **faith that comes through him that has given this**>**complete**  **healing**<**to him,** **as you can all see.**    "Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your  leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold  through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer.  rr **Repent, then, and**>**turn to God**<**, so that your sins may be wiped**  **out,** that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that  **he may** **send the Christ,** who has been appointed for you--even  Jesus. **He must remain in heaven until** **the time comes for** **God to**  **restore everything,** **as he promised long ago through** **his holy**  **prophets. For Moses said, 'The Lord your** **God will raise up for**  **you a prophet like me** **from among your own people;** **you must**  **ee listen to everything he tells you.** **Anyone who does not listen**  **to him will be**>**completely cut off**<**from among his people.'**    **"Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken,**  **have foretold these days.** And you are heirs of the prophets and  of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham,  'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.'  **When God raised up his servant,** **he sent him first to you** **to**  ss**ee** **bless you by** **turning each of you from your**>**wicked ways**<."    The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees  came up to **Peter and John** while they were speaking to the  people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were  teaching the people and **proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection**  **of the dead.** They seized Peter and John, and because it was  evening, they put them in jail until the next day. **But many who**  **heard the message believed,** **and the number of men grew to about**  **five thousand.**    The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in  Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were  Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high  priest's family. They had **Peter and John** brought before them  and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you  do this?"    ss Then **Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit,** **said** to them: "Rulers  and elders of the people! If we are being called to account  today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked  how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of  Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you  crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man  stands before you healed. He is "'the stone you builders  rejected, which has become the capstone.' **Salvation is found in**  **no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to**  **men by which we must be saved.**"    **When they saw the courage of Peter and John** and realized that  they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and  they took note that these men had been with Jesus. But since  they could see the man who had been healed standing there with  them, there was nothing they could say. So they ordered them to  withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. "What  are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everybody  living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding  miracle, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from  spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men  to speak no longer to anyone in this name."    Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or  teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied,  **"Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to**  **obey you rather than God.** **For we cannot help speaking about**  **what we have seen and heard.**"    After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how  to punish them, because all the people were praising God for  what had happened. For the man who was miraculously healed was  over forty years old.    On their release, **Peter and John** went back to their own people  and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to  them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together  in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the  heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. **You**  ss **spoke by the Holy Spirit** **through the mouth of your servant, our**  **father David:** "'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in  vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers  gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.'  Indeed **Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles**  **and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against** **your**  **holy servant Jesus,** whom you anointed. **They did what your power**  **and will had decided beforehand should happen.** **Now, Lord,**  ss **consider their threats and** **enable your servants to speak your**  **word with great boldness.** **Stretch out your hand to heal and**  **perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of** **your**  **holy servant Jesus."**  **After they prayed,** **the place where they were meeting was shaken.**  ss And **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the**  **word of God boldly.**    **All the believers were one in heart and mind.** **No one claimed that**  **any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything**  ss **they had.** **With great power** **the apostles continued to testify** **to**  **the resurrection of the Lord Jesus,** and **much grace was upon**  **them all**. There were no needy persons among them. For from time  to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the  money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it  was distributed to anyone as he had need.    Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas  (which means Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned and  brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.    Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also  sold a piece of property. With his wife's full knowledge he  kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest  and put it at the apostles' feet.    Then Peter said, **"Ananias,**>>>**how is it**<<<**that Satan has so filled**  **your heart** that **you have lied to the Holy Spirit** and have kept  for yourself some of the money you received for the land?  Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was  sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of  doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."    When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And **great fear**  **seized all who heard** what had happened. Then the young men came  forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried  him.    About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had  happened. Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and  Ananias got for the land?"    "Yes," she said, "that is the price."    Peter said to her, **"How could you agree to test the Spirit of the**  **Lord?** Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at  the door, and they will carry you out also."    At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young  men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried  her beside her husband. **Great fear seized the whole church** and  all who heard about these events.    **The apostles** performed many miraculous signs and wonders among  the people. And all **the believers** used to meet together in  Solomon's Colonnade. **No one else dared join them, even though**  **they were highly regarded by the people.** Nevertheless, **more and**  **more men and women believed in the Lord** and were added to their  number. As a result, **people brought the sick into the streets**  **and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow**  **might fall on some of them as he passed by.** Crowds gathered  also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and  those tormented by evil spirits, and **all of them were healed.**    Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of  the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They  arrested **the apostles** and put them in the public jail. But  **during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the**  **jail and brought them out. "Go,** **stand in the temple courts,"** he  said, **"and** **tell the people the full message of this new life**."    **ee** **At daybreak** **they entered the temple courts, as they had been**  **told, and began to teach the people**.    When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called  together the Sanhedrin--the full assembly of the elders of  Israel--and sent to the jail for the apostles. But on arriving  at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went  back and reported, "We found the jail securely locked, with the  guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found  no one inside." On hearing this report, the captain of the  temple guard and the chief priests were puzzled, wondering what  would come of this.    Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are  standing in the temple courts teaching the people." At that,  the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles.  They did not use force, because they feared that the people  would stone them.    Having brought **the apostles,** they made them appear before the  Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. "We gave you  strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you  have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to  make us guilty of this man's blood."    Peter and the other apostles replied: **"We must obey God rather**  **than men!** **The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the**  **dead--whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree.** **God exalted**  rr **him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that** **he might**  **give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.** **We are**  ss **witnesses of these things, and so is** **the Holy Spirit, whom God  ee has given to those who obey him**."    When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to  death. But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who  was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and  ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. Then he  addressed them: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you  intend to do to these men. Some time ago Theudas appeared,  claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to  him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it  all came to nothing. After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in  the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He  too was killed, and all his followers were scattered.  Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men  alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of  human origin, it will fail. **But if it is from God, you will not**  **be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves**  **fighting against God."**    His speech persuaded them. **They called the apostles in and**^**had**  **them flogged**<**. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name**  **of Jesus, and let them go.**    **The apostles left** the Sanhedrin**,** **rejoicing because they had been**  **ee counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after**  **day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never**  **stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is**  **the Christ.**    **In those days when the number of disciples was increasing,** the  Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews  because their widows were being overlooked in the daily  distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples  together and said, **"It would not be right for us to neglect the**  **ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.**  Brothers, **choose seven men** from among you who are known to be  ss  **full of the Spirit and wisdom.** **We will** turn this responsibility  over to them and will **give our attention to prayer and the**  **ministry of the** **word."**    This proposal pleased the whole group. **They chose** **Stephen, a man**  ffss **full of faith and of the Holy Spirit**; also Philip, Procorus,  Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert  to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who  prayed and laid their hands on them.    So **the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem**  **ee increased rapidly,** and **a large number of priests** **became**  **obedient to the faith**.    ss Now **Stephen,** a man **full of God's grace and power, did great**  **wonders and miraculous signs** **among the people.** Opposition  arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen  (as it was called)--Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as  the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These **men began to argue**  ss **with Stephen, but they could not stand up against his wisdom or**  **the Spirit by whom he spoke.**    Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard  Stephen speak words of blasphemy against Moses and against  God."    So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of  the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the  Sanhedrin. They produced false witnesses, who testified, "This  fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against  the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth  will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed  down to us."    All who wer**e** sitting in **the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen,**  **and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.**    Then the high priest asked him, "Are these charges true?"    To this he replied: "Brothers and fathers, **listen to me!** The God  of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in  Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran. **'Leave your country and**  **your people,'** God said, 'and go to the land I will show you.'    "So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After  the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you  are now living. He gave him no inheritance here, not even a  foot of ground. But God promised him that he and his  descendants after him would possess the land, even though at  that time Abraham had no child. God spoke to him in this way:  'Your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own,  and **they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years.**  But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves,' God said,  'and afterward they will come out of that country and worship  me in this place.' Then he gave Abraham the covenant of  circumcision. And Abraham became the father of Isaac and  circumcised him eight days after his birth. Later Isaac became  the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve  patriarchs.    "Because the patriarchs were jealous of **Joseph,** they sold him as  a slave into Egypt. But **God was with him** **and** **rescued him from**  **all his troubles.** **He gave Joseph wisdom** **and** **enabled him to gain   the goodwill of Pharaoh** **king of Egypt;** so he made him ruler  over Egypt and all his palace.    "Then a famine struck all Egypt and Canaan, bringing great  suffering, and our fathers could not find food. When Jacob  heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers on  their first visit. On their second visit, Joseph told his  brothers who he was, and Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family.  After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole  family, seventy-five in all. Then Jacob went down to Egypt,  where he and our fathers died. Their bodies were brought back  to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought from  the sons of Hamor at Shechem for a certain sum of money.    "As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham,  the number of our people in Egypt greatly increased. Then  another king, who knew nothing about Joseph, became ruler of  Egypt. He dealt treacherously with our people and oppressed our  forefathers by forcing them to throw out their newborn babies  so that they would die.    "At that time Moses was born, and>**he was no ordinary child.**<For  three months he was cared for in his father's house. When he  was placed outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him and brought him  up as her own son. **Moses was** **educated in all the wisdom of the**  **Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.**    "When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his fellow  Israelites. He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian,  so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the  Egyptian. **Moses thought that his own people would realize that**  **God was using him to rescue them, but they did not.** The next  day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried  to reconcile them by saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why do you  want to hurt each other?'    "But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and  said, 'Who made you ruler and judge over us? Do you want to  kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' When Moses heard  this, he fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and  had two sons.    **"After forty years had passed,** an angel appeared to Moses in the  **flames of a burning bush** in the desert near Mount Sinai. When  he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to  look more closely, he heard the Lord's voice: **'I am the God of**  **your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.'** **Moses**  **trembled with fear** and did not dare to look.    "Then the Lord said to him, **'Take off your sandals; the place**  **where you are standing is** **holy ground.** I have indeed seen the  oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning  and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will send you  back to Egypt.'    "This is the same Moses whom they had rejected with the words,  **'Who made you ruler and judge?' He was sent to be their ruler**  **and deliverer by God himself,** through the angel who appeared to  him in the bush. He led them out of Egypt and did wonders and  miraculous signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea and for forty years  in the desert.    **"This is that Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will send you a**  **prophet like me** from your own people.' He was in the assembly  in the desert, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai,  and with our fathers; and **he received living words to pass on**  **to us.**    **"But our fathers refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him**  **and in their hearts turned back to Egypt.** **They told Aaron,**  **'Make us gods who will go before us. As for**>**this fellow Moses**<  **who led us out of Egypt--we don't know what has happened to**  **him!'** **That was the time they made an idol in the form of a**  **calf. They brought sacrifices to it and held a celebration in**  **honor of what their hands had made. But** **God turned away and**  **gave them over to the worship of the heavenly bodies.** This  agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets: "'Did  you bring me sacrifices and offerings forty years in the  desert, O house of Israel? You have lifted up the shrine of  Molech and the star of your god Rephan, the idols you made to  worship. Therefore I will send you into exile' beyond Babylon.    "Our forefathers had the tabernacle of the Testimony with them in  the desert. It had been made as God directed Moses, according  to the pattern he had seen. Having received the tabernacle, our  fathers under Joshua brought it with them when they took the  land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in  the land until the time of David, who enjoyed God's favor and  asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of  Jacob. But it was Solomon who built the house for him.    "However, **the Most High does not live in houses made by men.** As  the prophet says: **"'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my**  **footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the**  **Lord.** **Or where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made**  **all these things?'**    **"You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears!** **You**  **are just like your fathers:** **You always resist the Holy Spirit!**  Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They  even killed those who predicted the coming of **the Righteous**  **One.** And now you have betrayed and murdered him--**you who have**  **received the law that was put into effect through angels but**  **have not obeyed it**."    When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth  at him. But Stephen, **full of the Holy Spirit,** looked up to  heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the  **right hand of God.** "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the  Son of Man standing at **the right hand of God."**    At this **they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their**  **voices, they all rushed at him,** **dragged him out of the city and**  **began to stone him.** Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes  at the feet of a young man named Saul.    While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, **"Lord Jesus, receive**  **my spirit."** Then he fell on his knees and cried out, **"Lord, do**  **not hold this sin against them."** When he had said this, he fell  asleep.    And Saul was there, giving approval to his death.    **On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at**  **Jerusalem,** and all except the apostles were scattered  throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and  mourned deeply for him. But Saul began to destroy the church.  Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put  them in prison.    **Those who had been scattered** **preached the word wherever they**  **went. Philip** **went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the**  **Christ there.** When the crowds heard Philip and saw the  miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what  he said. With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many  paralytics and cripples were healed. So there was great joy in  that city.    Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the  city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he  was someone great, and all the people, both high and low, gave  him their attention and exclaimed, "This man is the divine  power known as the Great Power." They followed him because he  had amazed them for a long time with his magic. But **when they**  **believed Philip** as he preached **the good news of** **the kingdom of**  **God and the name of Jesus Christ,** they were baptized, both men  and women. Simon himself **believed** and was baptized. And he  followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and  miracles he saw.    ff When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that **Samaria** **had accepted**  **the word of God,** they sent Peter and John to them. When they  ss arrived, **they prayed for them that they might receive** **the Holy**  **Spirit,** because **the Holy Spirit** had not yet come upon any of  them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord  Jesus. Then **Peter and John** placed their hands on them, and **they**  **received the Holy Spirit.**    **When Simon saw that** **the Spirit was given** at the laying on of the  apostles' hands, **he offered them money** and said, "Give me also  this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may  receive **the Holy Spirit."**    **Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you**  **thought you could buy the gift of God with money!** **You have no**  **part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right**  **before God.** **Repent of this wickedness** and pray to the Lord.  Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your  heart. For I see that **you are** **full of bitterness** and **captive to**  **sin**."    Then Simon answered, "**Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you**  **have said may happen to me.**"    **When** **they had testified and proclaimed the** **word of the Lord,**  **Peter and John** **returned to Jerusalem,** **preaching the gospel in**  **many Samaritan villages.**    Now **an angel of the Lord said to Philip,** "Go south to the  road--the desert road--that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza."  So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch,  an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace,  queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to  worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading  the book of Isaiah the prophet. **The Spirit told Philip, "Go to**  **that chariot and stay near it."**    Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading  Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?"  Philip asked.    "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he  invited Philip to come up and sit with him.    The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: **"He was led**  **like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer**  **is silent, so he did not open his mouth.** **In his humiliation he**  **was deprived of justice.** Who can speak of his descendants? For   **his life was taken from the earth."**    The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet  talking about, himself or someone else?" Then Philip began with  that very passage of Scripture and **told him the good news about**  **Jesus.**    As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the  eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be  baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both  Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip  baptized him. When they came up out of the water, **the Spirit of**  **the Lord suddenly took Philip away,** and the eunuch did not see  him again, but went on his way rejoicing. **Philip, however,**  **appeared at Azotus and traveled about,** **preaching the gospel in**  **all the towns** until he reached Caesarea.    Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against  the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him  for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found  any there who belonged to **the Way,** whether men or women, he  might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. As he neared  Damascus on his journey, **suddenly a light from heaven flashed**  **around him.** He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him,  **"Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"**    "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.    "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up  and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."    The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard  the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground,  but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led  him by the hand into Damascus. For **three days he was blind, and**  **did not eat or drink anything.**    In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called  to him in a vision, "Ananias!"    "Yes, Lord," he answered.    The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street  and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In  a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his  hands on him to restore his sight."    "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this  man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem.  And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to  arrest all who call on your name."    But the Lord said to Ananias, **"Go!** **This man is my chosen**  **instrument** **to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings**  **and before the people of Israel.** **I will show him how much he**  **must suffer for my name.**"    Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. **Placing his hands**  **on Saul,** **he said,** "Brother Saul, the Lord--Jesus, who appeared  to you on the road as you were coming here--has sent me so that  ss you may see again and **be filled with the Holy Spirit."**  Immediately, something like scales fell from **Saul**'s eyes, and  he could see again. **He got up and was baptized,** and after  taking some food, he regained his strength.    **ee** Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. **At once**  **he began to preach in the synagogues** **that Jesus is the Son of**  **God.** All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't  he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call  on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners  ss to the chief priests?" Yet **Saul grew more and more powerful** **and**  **baffled the Jews** living in Damascus **by** **proving that Jesus is**  **the Christ.**    After many days had gone by, the Jews conspired to kill him, but  Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch  on the city gates **in order to kill him**. But his followers took  him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in  the wall.    When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but  they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a  disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the  apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the  Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus  **he** had **preached fearlessly** **in the name of Jesus.** So **Saul** stayed  with them and **moved about freely** **in Jerusalem,** **speaking boldly**  **in the name of the Lord.** **He talked and debated** with the Grecian  Jews, **but they tried to kill him**. When the brothers learned of  this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to  Tarsus.    **Then the church** throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria **enjoyed a**  ss **time of peace.** **It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy**  **Spirit, it grew in numbers,** **living in the fear of the Lord.**    As **Peter** traveled about the country, he went to visit the saints  in Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, **a paralytic who**  **had been bedridden for eight years.** "Aeneas," Peter said to   him, **"Jesus Christ heals you. Get up** and take care of your  mat." Immediately Aeneas got up. **All** those who lived in Lydda  and Sharon saw him and **turned to the Lord.**    In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when  translated, is Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping  the poor. About that time she became sick and died, and her  body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. Lydda was near  Joppa; so when the disciples heard that **Peter** was in Lydda,  they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!"    **Peter** went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs  to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and  showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made  while she was still with them.    **Peter** sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his  knees and prayed. **Turning toward the dead woman, he said,**  **"Tabitha, get up."** She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she  sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet.  Then he called **the believers** and the widows and presented her  to them alive. This became known all over Joppa, and **many**  **people** **believed in the Lord.** Peter stayed in Joppa for some  time with a tanner named Simon.    At Caesarea there was a man named **Cornelius, a centurion** in what  was known as the Italian Regiment. **He and all his family were**  ff**ee** **devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and**  **prayed to God regularly.** One day at about three in the  afternoon he had a vision. **He distinctly saw an angel of God,**  who came to him and said, "Cornelius!"    **Cornelius stared at him in fear.** "What is it, Lord?" he asked.    The angel answered, **"Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come**  **up as a memorial offering before God.** Now send men to Joppa to  bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. He is staying  with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea."    When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of  his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his  attendants. He told them everything that had happened and sent  them to Joppa.    About noon the following day as they were on their journey and  approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He  became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal  was being prepared, he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened  and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its  four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as  well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. Then a  voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."    "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything  impure or unclean."    The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything  impure that **God has made clean."**    This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken  back to heaven.    While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the  men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and  stopped at the gate. They called out, asking if Simon who was  known as Peter was staying there.    While Peter was still thinking about the vision, **the Spirit said**  **to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go**  **downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent**  **them."**    Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking  for. Why have you come?"    ff**ee** The men replied, "We have come from **Cornelius the centurion.** **He**  **is a righteous and God-fearing man,** who is respected by all the  Jewish people. **A holy angel** told him to have you come to his  house so that he could hear what you have to say." Then Peter  invited the men into the house to be his guests.    The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the  brothers from Joppa went along. The following day he arrived in  Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together  his relatives and close friends. As Peter entered the house,  Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. But Peter  made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."    Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering  of people. He said to them: "You are well aware that it is  against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit  him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure  or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any  objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"    Cornelius answered: "Four days ago I was in my house praying at  this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining  clothes stood before me and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard  your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. Send to   Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home  of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' So I sent for you  immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all  here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord  has commanded you to tell us."    Then **Peter began to speak:** "I now realize how true it is that **God**  ff**ee** **does not show favoritism but** **accepts men** from every nation **who**  **fear him and do what is right.** You know **the message God sent** to  the people of Israel, telling **the good news of peace through**  **Jesus Christ,** who is Lord of all. You know what has happened  throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that  ss John preached--how **God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy**  **Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing**  **all who were**>**under the power of**<**the devil, because God was with**  **him.**    "We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews  and in Jerusalem. **They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but**  **God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to**  **be seen.** He was not seen by all the people,but **by witnesses**  **whom** **God had** already **chosen--by us who ate and drank with him**  **after he rose from the dead.** **He commanded us to preach to the**  **people and to testify that** **he is the one whom God appointed as**  **judge** **of the living and the dead.** **All the prophets testify**  ff **about him that** **everyone who believes in him** **receives**  **forgiveness of sins through his name."**    **While Peter was still speaking** these words, **the Holy Spirit came**  **on all who heard the message.** The circumcised believers who had  come with Peter were astonished that **the gift of the Holy**  **Spirit** **had been poured out** even **on the Gentiles. For they heard**  **them speaking in tongues and praising God.**    Then **Peter said,** "Can anyone keep these people from being  baptized with water? **They have received the Holy Spirit** just as  we have." **So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of**  **Jesus Christ.** Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few  days.    The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the  Gentiles also had **received the word of God.** So when Peter went  up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him and  said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate  with them."    Peter began and explained everything to them **precisely** as it had  happened: "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance  I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let  down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where  I was. I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the  earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds of the air. Then I  heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.'    "I replied, 'Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever  entered my mouth.'    "The voice spoke from heaven a second time, 'Do not call anything  impure that **God has made clean.'** This happened three times, and  then it was all pulled up to heaven again.    "Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea  stopped at the house where I was staying. **The Spirit told me to**  **have no hesitation about going with them.** These six brothers  also went with me, and we entered the man's house. He told us  how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, 'Send to  Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. **He will bring you a**  **message through which** **you and all your household will be**  **saved.'**    **"As I began to speak,** **the Holy Spirit came on them** as he had come  on us at the beginning. **Then I remembered what the Lord had**  **said:** **'John baptized with water, but** **you will be baptized with**  **the Holy Spirit.'** So if **God gave them the same gift as he gave**  ff **us,** **who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ,** who was I to think  that I could oppose God?"    When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised  ssrr God, saying, "So then, **God has granted** even the Gentiles  **repentance**>**unto**<**life."**    Now **those who had been scattered by the persecution** **in connection**  **with Stephen** **traveled** as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch,  **telling the message** only to Jews. Some of them, however, men  from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch **and began to speak to**  **Greeks also,** **telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.**  **The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people**  ffrr **believed and turned to the Lord.**    News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and  they sent **Barnabas** to Antioch. When he arrived and **saw the**  **evidence of the grace of God,** he was glad **and encouraged them**  **HSMS all to**>>**remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.**<<**He was a**  ssff **good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number**  **of people were brought to the Lord.**    Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found  him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year **Barnabas**  **and Saul** met with the church and **taught great numbers of   people.** The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.    During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to  Antioch. One of them, named Agabus, stood up and **through the**  **Spirit** predicted that a severe famine would spread over the  entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of  Claudius.) The disciples, each according to his ability,  decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. This  they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and  Saul.    It was about this time that **King Herod arrested some** who belonged  to the church, intending to persecute them. **He had James, the**  **brother of John, put to death with the sword.** When he saw that  this pleased the Jews, **he proceeded to seize Peter also.** This  happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. After arresting  him, he **put him in prison,** handing him over to be **guarded by**  **four squads of four soldiers each.** Herod intended to bring him  out for public trial after the Passover.    **So Peter was kept in prison,** but the church was earnestly praying  to God for him.    The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was  sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and  sentries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly **an angel of the**  **Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell.** He struck Peter on  the side and woke him up. **"Quick, get up!" he said, and the**  **chains fell off Peter's wrists.**    Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals."  And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,"  the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but  he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really  happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the  first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to  the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through  it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the  angel left him.    Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt  that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's  clutches and from everything the Jewish people were  anticipating."    When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of **Mary the**  **mother of John, also called Mark,** where many people had  gathered and were praying. Peter knocked at the outer entrance,  and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. When  she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back  without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!"    "You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting  that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel."    **But Peter kept on knocking,** and when they opened the door and saw  him, they were astonished. Peter motioned with his hand for  them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out  of prison. **"Tell James** and the brothers about this," he said,  and **then he left for another place.**    In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers  as to what had become of Peter. **After Herod had a thorough**  **search made for him and did not find him, he cross-examined the**  **guards and ordered that they be executed.**    Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there a while.  He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they  now joined together and sought an audience with him. Having  secured the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of  the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the  king's country for their food supply.    On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his  throne and delivered a public address to the people. They  shouted, **"This is the voice of a god, not of a man."**  **Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel**  **of the Lord struck him down,** and he was eaten by worms and  died.    But **the word of God continued to increase and spread.**    When **Barnabas and Saul** had finished their mission, they returned  from Jerusalem, taking with them **John, also called Mark.**    In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers:  **Barnabas,** Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who  had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) **and Saul.** **While**  **they were worshiping the Lord** and **fasting,** **the Holy Spirit**  **said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which**  **I have called them."** So **after they had fasted and prayed,** they  placed their hands on them and sent them off.    The two of them, **sent on their way by the Holy Spirit,** went down  to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. When they arrived  at Salamis, **they proclaimed the** **word of God** in the Jewish  synagogues. John was with them as their helper.    They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos.   There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named  Bar-Jesus, who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius  Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas  and Saul because **he wanted to hear the** **word of God.** But Elymas  the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and  **tried to turn the proconsul from the faith.** Then Saul, who was  also called Paul, **filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight**  **at Elymas** and said, **"You are a child of the devil and an enemy**  **of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of**  **deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right**  **ways of the Lord?** Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You  are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see  the light of the sun."    Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about,  seeking someone to lead him by the hand. When the proconsul saw  ff what had happened, **he believed,** **for he was amazed at the**  **teaching about the Lord.**    From Paphos, **Paul** and his companions sailed to Perga in  Pamphylia, **where John left them** to return to Jerusalem. From  Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they  entered the synagogue and sat down. After the reading from the  Law and the Prophets, **the synagogue rulers sent word to them,**  **saying, "Brothers, if you have a message of encouragement for**  **the people, please speak."**    Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: "Men of Israel  and **you Gentiles who worship God,** listen to me! The **God** of the  people of Israel **chose our fathers**; he made the people prosper  during their stay in Egypt, with **mighty power** he led them out  of that country, **he endured their conduct for about forty years**  in the desert, **he overthrew seven nations** in Canaan and **gave**  **their land to his people** as their inheritance. All this took  about 450 years.    "After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the  prophet. Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them  Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty  years. After removing Saul, he made David their king. He  testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse **a**  **HSMS**hh  **man after my own heart;** **he will do everything I want him to**  **do.'**    "From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel **the Savior**  **Jesus,** as he promised. **Before the coming of Jesus, John**  **preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel.** As  John was completing his work, he said: 'Who do you think I am?  I am not that one. No, but he is coming after me, whose sandals  I am not worthy to untie.'    "Brothers, children of Abraham, and you **God-fearing Gentiles,** it  is to us that this **message of salvation** has been sent. The  people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus,  yet in condemning him they **fulfilled the words** **of the prophets**  that are read every Sabbath. Though they found no proper ground  for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed.  When they had carried out all that was written about him, they  took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. **But God**  **raised him from the dead,** and for many days he was seen by  those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They  are now his witnesses to our people.    "We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers he has  fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is  written in the second Psalm: "'You are my Son; today I have  become your Father.' The fact that God raised him from the  dead, never to decay, is stated in these words: "'I will give  you the **holy** and sure blessings promised to David.' So it is  stated elsewhere: "'You will not let **your Holy One** see decay.'    "For when David had **served God's purpose** in his own generation,  he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body  decayed. But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see  decay.    "Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that **through Jesus**  **the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed** **to you.** **Through him**  ff **everyone who believes is justified** **from everything you could**  **not be justified from by the law of Moses.** Take care that **what**  **the prophets have said** does not happen to you: **"'Look, you**  **scoffers, wonder and perish,** for I am going to do something in  your days that **you would never believe,** even if someone told  you.'"    As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, **the people**  **invited them to speak further about these things on the next**  **Sabbath.** When the congregation was dismissed, **many of the Jews**  **and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas,** who  talked with them and **urged them to** **continue in the grace of**  **God.**    **On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the**  **word of the Lord.** When the Jews saw the crowds, they were  filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was  saying.    Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: **"We had to speak the**  **word of God to you first. Since you reject it** **and do not   consider yourselves worthy of eternal life,** **we now turn to the**  **Gentiles.** **For this is what the Lord has commanded us:** **"'I have**  **made you a light** for the Gentiles, **that you may bring salvation**  **to the ends of the earth.'"**    **When the Gentiles heard this,** **they were glad and honored the** **word**  ff **of the Lord**; and **all who were appointed for eternal life**  **believed.**    **The** **word of the Lord** **spread through the whole region.** But the  Jews incited the **God-fearing** women of high standing and the  leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against  Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. So they  shook the dust from their feet **in protest against them** and went  ss to Iconium. And **the disciples were filled with joy and with the**  **Holy Spirit.**    At Iconium **Paul and Barnabas** **went as usual into the Jewish**  **synagogue.** There **they spoke so effectively that a great number**  **of Jews and Gentiles believed.** **But** **the Jews who refused to**  **believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds**  **against the brothers. So Paul and Barnabas** **spent considerable**  **ee** **time there,** **speaking boldly for the Lord**, **who** **confirmed the**  **message** **of his grace** **by enabling them to do miraculous signs**  **and wonders.** The people of the city were divided; some sided  with the Jews, others with the apostles. There was a plot afoot  among the Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to  mistreat them and stone them. But they found out about it and  fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the  surrounding country, where **they continued to preach the good**  **news.**    **In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from**  **birth and had never walked.** He listened to Paul as he was  speaking. **Paul looked directly at him,** **saw that** **he had faith to**  **be healed** **and called out,** **"Stand up on your feet!" At that, the**  **man jumped up and began to walk.**    **When the crowd saw what Paul had done,** they shouted in the  Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human  form!" **Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes**  because he was the chief speaker. The priest of Zeus, whose  temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to  the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer  sacrifices to them.    But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore  their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: "Men,  why are you doing this? **We** too **are only men, human** like you. We  rr are bringing you good news, telling you to **turn from these**  **worthless things to the living God,** who made heaven and earth  and sea and everything in them. **In the past,** **he let all nations**  **go their own way.** **Yet** **he has not left himself without**  **testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven**  **and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food**  **and fills your hearts with joy."** Even with these words, they  had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.    **Then some Jews came** from Antioch and Iconium **and won the crowd**  **over.** **They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city,**  **thinking he was dead.** But after the disciples had gathered  around him, **he got up and went back into the city.** The next day  he and Barnabas left for Derbe.    **They preached the good news in that city and won a large number**  **of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and**  **Antioch, strengthening the disciples** **and** **encouraging them to**  **ee** **remain true to the faith.**>>>>**"We must go through many hardships to**  **enter the kingdom of God,"**<<<<**they said.** **Paul and Barnabas**  **appointed elders for them** in each church **and,** **with prayer and**  ff **fasting,** **committed them to** **the Lord, in whom they had put their**  **trust.** After going through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia,  and when **they** had **preached the** **word in Perga,** they went down to  Attalia.    From Attalia **they sailed back to** **Antioch, where** **they had been**  **committed to the grace of God for the work they had now**  **completed.** On arriving there, **they** gathered the church together  and **reported all that God had done**>**through**<**them** and how **he had**  ff **opened** **the door of faith** to the Gentiles. **And they stayed there**  **a long time with the disciples.**    Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the  brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom  taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." This brought Paul and  Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and  Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go  up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this  question. The church sent them on their way, and as they  traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the  Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the brothers  very glad. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by  the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported  everything God had done through them.    Then some of the **believers** **who belonged to the party of the**  **Pharisees** stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised  and required to obey the law of Moses."  The apostles and elders met to consider this question. After much  discussion, **Peter got up and addressed them:** "Brothers, you  know that some time ago **God made a choice** among you **that the**  **Gentiles might** hear from my lips the message of the gospel and  ff**HSMS** **believe.** **God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them**  ss **by giving the Holy Spirit to them,** just as he did to us. He  ffhh made no distinction between us and them, for **he purified their**  **hearts by faith.** Now then, why do you try to test God by  putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we  ff nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! **We believe it is**  **through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we**>**are**<**saved,** just as  they are."    The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and  Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had  done among the Gentiles through them. When they finished, James  spoke up: "Brothers, listen to me. Simon has described to us  how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles  a people for himself. The **words of the prophets** are in  agreement with this, as **it is written:** **"'After this** **I will**  **return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will**  ss**ee** **rebuild,** and **I will restore it, that the remnant of men may**  **seek the Lord,** **and** **all** **the Gentiles who bear my name,** says **the**  **Lord,**>>>**who does these things' that have been known for ages.**<<<    "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it  rr difficult for **the Gentiles who are** **turning to God**. Instead **we**  **should write to them, telling them to** **abstain from** food  polluted by idols, from **sexual immorality,** from the meat of  strangled animals and from blood. For **Moses has been preached**  **in every city from the earliest times** and is read in the  synagogues on every Sabbath."    Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to  choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul  and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas,  two men who were leaders among the brothers. With them they  sent the following letter: The apostles and elders, your  brothers, To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and  Cilicia: Greetings.    We have heard that some went out from us without our  authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what  they said. So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to  you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul--**men who have**  **risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.**  Therefore **we are sending Judas and Silas** to confirm by word of  mouth what we are writing. **It seemed good to the Holy Spirit**  **and to us** **not to burden you with anything beyond the following**  **requirements:** You are to **abstain from** food sacrificed to idols,  from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from **sexual**  **immorality.** You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.    The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they  gathered the church together and delivered the letter. The  people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. **Judas**  **and Silas,** who themselves were **prophets, said much to encourage**  **and strengthen the brothers.** After spending some time there,  they were sent off by the brothers with **the blessing of peace**  to return to those who had sent them. But **Paul and Barnabas**  **remained in Antioch,** where **they and many others taught and**  **preached the** **word of the Lord.**    Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit  the brothers in all the towns where **we preached the** **word of the**  **Lord** and **see how they are doing."** **Barnabas** wanted to take **John,**  **also called Mark,** with them, but **Paul did not think it wise to**  **take him, because he had deserted them** in Pamphylia and had not  continued with them in the work. **They had such a sharp**  **disagreement that they parted company.** **Barnabas took Mark** and  sailed for Cyprus, but **Paul chose Silas** and left, commended by  the brothers to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria  and Cilicia, **strengthening the churches.**    He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named  **Timothy** lived, whose mother was a Jewess and **a believer,** but  whose father was a Greek. The brothers at Lystra and Iconium  spoke well of him. Paul wanted to take him along on the  journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in  that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. As  they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions  reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people  to obey. So **the churches were strengthened in the faith and**  **grew daily in numbers.**    Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia  and Galatia, having been kept by **the Holy Spirit** from preaching  the **word** in the province of Asia. When they came to the border  of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, **but the Spirit of Jesus**  **would not allow them to.** So they passed by Mysia and went down  to Troas. **During the night Paul had a vision** of a man of  Macedonia standing and begging him, **"Come over to Macedonia and**  **help us."** After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once  to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to  preach the gospel to them.    From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace,  and the next day on to Neapolis. From there we traveled to  Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district   of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.    On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where  we expected to find a place of prayer. **We sat down and began to**  **speak to the women** who had gathered there. One of those  listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth  ss from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. **The Lord**  **opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.** When she and the  members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her  ff home. "If you consider me **a believer in the Lord,"** **she said,**  **"come and stay at my house."** And she persuaded us.    Once when we were going to the place of prayer, **we were met by a**  **slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future.**  She earned a great deal of money for her owners by  fortune-telling. **This girl followed Paul and the rest of us,**  **shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are**  **telling you the way to be saved."** She kept this up for many  days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and  said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you  to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.    When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of  making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged  them into the marketplace to face the authorities. They brought  them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and  are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs  unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."    **The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas,** and the  magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. **After they**  **had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison,** and  the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. Upon  receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and  fastened their feet in the stocks.    **About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to**  **God,** and the other prisoners were listening to them. **Suddenly**  **there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the**  **prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and**  **everybody's chains came loose.** The jailer woke up, and when he  saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to  kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But  Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"    **The jailer called for lights,** **rushed in and fell trembling** before  Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, **what**  **must I do to be saved?**"    ff They replied, **"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be**  **saved**--you and your household." **Then they spoke** **the word of the**  **Lord to him** **and to all the others in his house.** **At that hour of**  **the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds;** **then**  **immediately he and all his family were baptized.** **The jailer**  **brought them into his house and set a meal before them;** **he was**  **filled with joy because** **he had come to believe in God--he and**  **his whole family.**    When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the  jailer with the order: "Release those men." The jailer told  Paul, "The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be  released. Now you can leave. Go in peace."    But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a  trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into  prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let  them come themselves and escort us out."    The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they  heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were  alarmed. They came to appease them and escorted them from the  prison, requesting them to leave the city. After Paul and Silas  came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they  met with the brothers and encouraged them. Then they left.    When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came  to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. **As his**  **custom was, Paul went into the synagogue,** **and on three Sabbath**  **days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,** **explaining and**  **proving** that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead.  **"This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ,"** he said.  Some of the Jews **were persuaded** **and joined Paul and Silas, as**  **did a large number of** **God-fearing** **Greeks and not a few**  **prominent women.**    But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters  from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the  city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas  in order to bring them out to the crowd. But when they did not  find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before  the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused  trouble all over the world have now come here, and Jason has  welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's  decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus."  When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were  thrown into turmoil. Then they made Jason and the others post  bond and let them go.    As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to   Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue.  hh Now the Bereans were of **more noble character** than the  **ee** Thessalonians, for **they received the message with great**  **eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what**  ff **Paul said was true.** **Many of the Jews believed,** **as did also a**  **number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.**    When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that **Paul was** **preaching the**  **word of God** at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds  and stirring them up. The brothers immediately **sent Paul to the**  **coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea.** The men who  escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with  instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as  possible.    While **Paul was** waiting for them **in Athens,** hewas greatly  distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So **he**  **reasoned in the synagogue** with the Jews and the>**God-fearing**  **Greeks**<**,** as well as **in the marketplace day by day with those who**  **happened to be there.** A group of Epicurean and Stoic  philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked,  **"What is this babbler trying to say?"** Others remarked, **"He**  **seems to be advocating foreign gods."** They said this because  **Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the**  **resurrection.** Then they took him and brought him to a meeting  of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what  this new teaching is that you are presenting? You are bringing  some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they  mean." **(All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there**  **spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening**  **to**>**the latest ideas**<**.)**    Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "Men  of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For  as I walked around and **looked carefully** at your objects of  worship, **I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN**  **UNKNOWN GOD.** Now what you worship as something unknown I am  going to proclaim to you.    "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of  heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands.  And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything,  because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything  else. **From one man he made every nation of men, that they**  **should inhabit the whole earth; and** **he determined the times set**  rr **for them and the exact places where they should live.** **God did**  **this**>>>**so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him**  **and find him,**<<<**though he is not far from each one of us.** **'For in**  **him we live and move and have our being.'** As some of your own  poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'    "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that  the divine being is like gold or silver or stone--an image made  by man's design and skill. In the past God overlooked such  rr ignorance, but **now** **he commands all people everywhere to repent.**  **For** **he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice**  **by the man he has appointed.** He has given proof of this to all  men by raising him from the dead."    When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them  sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this  subject." At that, Paul left the Council. **A few men** **became**  ff **followers of Paul and believed.** Among them was Dionysius, a  member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a  number of others.    After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a  Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come  from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had  ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. **Paul** went to see them, and  because he **was a tentmaker** as they were, he stayed and worked  with them. **Every Sabbath** **he reasoned in the synagogue, trying**  **to persuade** **Jews and Greeks.**    **When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia,** Paul **devoted himself**  **exclusively to preaching,** **testifying to the Jews that Jesus was**  **the Christ.** But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive,  he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your  blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility.  From now on I will go to the Gentiles."    Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of  Titius Justus, **a worshiper of God.** Crispus, **the synagogue**  ff **ruler, and** **his entire household** **believed in the Lord;** and many  of the Corinthians who heard him **believed** and were baptized.    One night **the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision:** "**Do not be afraid;**  **keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you,** and no  one is going to attack and harm you, because **I have many people**  **in this city."** So **Paul stayed for a year and a half,** teaching  them **the word of God.**    While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, **the Jews made a united**  **attack on Paul** **and brought him into court.** "This man," they  charged, "is persuading the people to worship God in ways  contrary to the law."    Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, "If you  Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious   crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. But  since it involves questions about words and names and your own  law--settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of  such things." So he had them ejected from the court. Then they  all turned on Sosthenes the synagogue ruler and beat him in  front of the court. But Gallio showed no concern whatever.    Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the  brothers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and  Aquila. Before he sailed, **he had his hair cut off at Cenchrea**  **because of a vow he had taken.** They arrived at **Ephesus,** where  **Paul** left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself **went into the**  **synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.** **When they asked him to**  **spend more time with them, he declined.** But as he left, he  promised, **"I will come back if it is God's will."** Then he set  sail from Ephesus. When he landed at Caesarea, he went up and  greeted the church and then went down to Antioch.    After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and  traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia  and Phrygia, **strengthening all the disciples.**    Meanwhile **a Jew named** **Apollos,** a native of Alexandria, came to  **ee** Ephesus. **He was a learned man, with** **a thorough knowledge of the**  **Scriptures.** He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and  **ee** **he** **spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately,**  though **he knew only the baptism of John.** He began to **speak**  **ee boldly in the synagogue.** When Priscilla and Aquila heard him,  they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of  God more adequately.    When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him  and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On arriving,  ff **he was a great help** to **those who by grace had believed.** For **he**  **ee vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate,** **proving from the**  **Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.**    While Apollos was at Corinth, **Paul** took the road through the  interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he **found some disciples**  **and asked them,** **"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you**  **believed?"**    They answered, **"No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy**  **Spirit."**    So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"    "John's baptism," they replied.    Paul said, **"John's baptism was a baptism of repentance.** **He told**  ff **the people** **to believe in the one coming after him,** that is, **in**  **Jesus."** On hearing this, **they were baptized into the name of**  ss **the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy**  **Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.**  **There were about twelve men in all.**    **ee** **Paul entered the synagogue and** **spoke boldly** **there** **for three**  **months,**>**arguing persuasively**<**about** **the kingdom of God.** **But some**  ff **of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly**  **maligned the Way. So Paul left them.** **He took the disciples with**  **him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall** of Tyrannus.  **This went on for two years,** **so that** **all the Jews and Greeks** **who**  **lived in the province of Asia** **heard the word of the Lord.**    **God did extraordinary miracles through Paul,** **so that even**  **handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the**  **sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left**  **them.**    Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits **tried to**  **invoke the name of the Lord Jesus** over those who were  demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom  Paul preaches, I command you to come out." Seven sons of Sceva,  a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit  answered them, **"Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who**  **are you?"** Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them  and overpowered them all. **He gave them such a beating that they**  **ran out of the house naked and bleeding.**    When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus,  they were all^**seized with fear**<**,** **and the name of the Lord Jesus**  ffrr **was held in high honor.** **Many of those who believed now came and**  **openly confessed their evil deeds.** A number who had practiced  sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them  publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the  total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way **the word of**  **the Lord spread widely and grew in power.**    After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem,  passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been  there," he said, "I must visit Rome also." He sent two of his  helpers, **Timothy** and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in  the province of Asia a little longer.    About that time **there arose a great disturbance about the Way.** A  silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of  Artemis, brought in no little business for the craftsmen. He  called them together, along with the workmen in related trades,  and said: "Men, you know we receive a good income from this   business. **And you see and hear how this fellow** Paul has  convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in  Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says  that man-made gods are no gods at all. There is danger not only  that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the  temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and  the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province  of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty."    When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting:  "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" Soon the whole city was in  an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's  traveling companions from Macedonia, and rushed as one man into  the theater. Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the  disciples would not let him. Even some of the officials of the  province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not  to venture into the theater.    The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some  another. **Most of the people did not even know why they were**  **there.** The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and some of the  crowd shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in  order to make a defense before the people. But when they  realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two  hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"    The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: "Men of Ephesus,  doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the  guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image,  which fell from heaven? Therefore, since these facts are  undeniable, you ought to be quiet and not do anything rash. You  have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed  temples nor blasphemed our goddess. If, then, Demetrius and his  fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts  are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. If  there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be  settled in a legal assembly. As it is, we are in danger of  being charged with rioting because of today's events. In that  case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since  there is no reason for it." After he had said this, he  dismissed the assembly.    When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after  encouraging them, said good-by and set out for Macedonia. He  traveled through that area, speaking many words of  encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece,  where he stayed three months. Because the Jews made a plot  against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided  to go back through Macedonia. He was accompanied by Sopater son  of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from  Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and  Trophimus from the province of Asia. These men went on ahead  and waited for us at Troas. But we sailed from Philippi after  the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the  others at Troas, where we stayed seven days.    On the first day of the week we came together to break bread.  **Paul** spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the  next day, **kept on talking until midnight.** There were many lamps  in the upstairs room where we were meeting. Seated in a window  was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep  sleep as^**Paul talked on and on.**<When he was sound asleep, he  fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead.  Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms  around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!" Then he  went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. **After talking**  **until daylight, he left.** The people took the young man home  alive and were greatly comforted.    We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were  going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because  he was going there on foot. When he met us at Assos, we took  him aboard and went on to Mitylene. The next day we set sail  from there and arrived off Kios. The day after that we crossed  over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus.  Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in  the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem,  if possible, by the day of Pentecost.    From Miletus, **Paul** sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church.  **ee** When they arrived, he **said to them:** **"You know** **how I lived** **the**  **whole time** **I was with you,** from the first day I came into the  province of Asia. **I served the Lord with great humility and**  **with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the**  **Jews.** **You know that** **I**^**have not hesitated**<**to preach anything**  **That**^**would be helpful**<**to you** **but have** **taught you** **publicly and**  rrff **from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks**  **that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our**  **Lord Jesus.**    ss **"And now,** **compelled by the Spirit,** **I am going to Jerusalem,** **not**  **knowing what will happen to me there.** **I only know that in every**  **city the Holy Spirit warns me** **that prison and hardships are**  **HSMS facing me.** **However,** **I consider my life worth nothing to me, if**  **only I may finish**>**the race and complete the task**<**the Lord Jesus**  **has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's**  **grace.**    "Now I know that none of you among whom **I have gone about**  **preaching** **the kingdom** will ever see me again. Therefore, **I**  **ee**  **declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all**  **men. For I**^**have not hesitated to proclaim**<**to you the whole will**  **of God.** Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which  **the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.** **Be shepherds of** **the**  **church of God, which he bought with his own blood.** I know that  after I leave, **savage wolves will come in among you** and will  not spare the flock. Even **from your own number men will arise**  **and**>>**distort the truth**<<**in order to draw away disciples after**  **them. So be on your guard!** Remember that **for three years I**  **never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.**    **"Now I commit you to God and to** **the word of his grace, which can**  **build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who**  hh  **are sanctified.** I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or  **ee** clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have  supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In  everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of **hard work**  we must help the weak, remembering the **words** the Lord Jesus  himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"    When he had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed.  They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. What grieved  them most was his statement that they would never see his face  again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.    After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and  sailed straight to Cos. The next day we went to Rhodes and from  there to Patara. We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia,  went on board and set sail. After sighting Cyprus and passing  to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre,  where our ship was to unload its cargo. Finding the disciples  there, we stayed with them seven days. **Through the Spirit they**  **urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.** But when our time was up,  we left and continued on our way. All the disciples and their  wives and children accompanied us out of the city, and there on  the beach we knelt to pray. After saying good-by to each other,  we went aboard the ship, and they returned home.    We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where  we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for a day. Leaving  the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of  Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. He had four unmarried  daughters who prophesied.    After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus  came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt,  tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "**The Holy Spirit**  **says,** 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of  this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"    When we heard this, we and **the people there pleaded with Paul not**  **to go up to Jerusalem.** Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping  and breaking my heart? **I am ready not only to be bound, but**  **also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."** When  he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's  will be done."    After this, we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. Some of the  disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the  home of Mnason, where we were to stay. He was a man from Cyprus  and one of the early disciples.    When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers received us warmly.  The next day **Paul and the rest of us went to see James,** and all  the elders were present. Paul greeted them and reported in  detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his  ministry.    When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul:  "You see, brother, **how many thousands of Jews** **have believed,**  **and all of them are zealous for the law.** They have been  informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the  Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to  circumcise their children or live according to our customs.  What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come,  so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have  made a vow. Take these men, join in their purification rites  and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads  shaved. Then everybody will know there is no truth in these  reports about you, but that you yourself are living in  obedience to the law. As for the Gentile believers, we have  written to them our decision that they should abstain from food  sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled  animals and from sexual immorality."    The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with  them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date  when the days of purification would end and the offering would  be made for each of them.    When the seven days were nearly over, **some Jews from the province**  **of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd**  **and seized him, shouting, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the**  **man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our**  **law and this place.** And besides, he has brought Greeks into the  temple area and defiled this holy place." (They had previously  seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed  that Paul had brought him into the temple area.)  The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all  directions. **Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple,** and  immediately the gates were shut. **While they were trying to kill**  **him,** news reached **the commander of the Roman troops** that the  whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. He at once took some  officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the  rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped  beating Paul.    **The commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be**  **bound with two chains.** Then he asked who he was and what he had  done. Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and  since the commander could not get at the truth because of the  uproar, he ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. When  Paul reached the steps, the violence of the mob was so great he  had to be carried by the soldiers. The crowd that followed kept  shouting, "Away with him!"    As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks, he  asked the commander, "May I say something to you?"    "Do you speak Greek?" he replied. "Aren't you the Egyptian who  started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the  desert some time ago?"    Paul answered, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of  no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people."    Having received the commander's permission, Paul stood on the  steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he  said to them in Aramaic: "Brothers and fathers, listen now to  my defense."    When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very  quiet.    Then Paul said: "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but  brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly  trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for  God as any of you are today. I persecuted the followers of this  Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing  them into prison, as also the high priest and all the Council  can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their  brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as  prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.    "About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from  heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a  voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'    "'Who are you, Lord?' I asked.    "'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied.  My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the  voice of him who was speaking to me.    **"'What shall I do, Lord?' I asked.**    **"'Get up,'** the Lord said, **'and go** into Damascus. There **you will**  **be told all that you have been assigned to do**.' My companions  led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the  light had blinded me.    "A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of  the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. He  stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!'  And at that very moment I was able to see him.    "Then he said: **'The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his**  **will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his**  **mouth.** You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen  and heard. **And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be**  **baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'**    "When I returned to Jerusalem and was **praying at the temple,** **I**  **fell into a trance and saw the Lord speaking.** **'Quick!'** he said  to me. **'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because** **they will not**  **accept your testimony about me.'**    "'Lord,' I replied, 'these men know that I went from one  synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in  you. And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I  stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of  those who were killing him.'    "Then the Lord said to me, **'Go; I will send you far away to the**  **Gentiles.'"**    The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised  their voices and shouted, **"Rid the earth of him! He's not fit**  **to live!"**    As **they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging**  **dust into the air,** the commander ordered Paul to be taken into  the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and questioned in  order to find out why the people were shouting at him like  this. As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the  centurion standing there, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman   citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?"    When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and  reported it. "What are you going to do?" he asked. "This man is  a Roman citizen."    The commander went to Paul and asked, "Tell me, are you a Roman  citizen?"    "Yes, I am," he answered.    Then the commander said, "I had to pay a big price for my  citizenship."    "But I was born a citizen," Paul replied.    Those who were about to question him withdrew immediately. The  commander himself was alarmed when he realized that he had put  Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains.    The next day, since the commander wanted to find out exactly why  Paul was being accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered  the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he  brought Paul and had him stand before them.    **Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers,** **I**  **have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this**  **day."** **At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing**  **near Paul** **to strike him on the mouth.** Then Paul said to him,  "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to  judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law  by commanding that I be struck!"    Those who were standing near Paul said, "You dare to insult God's  high priest?"    Paul replied, "Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high  priest; for it is written: 'Do not speak evil about the ruler  of your people.'"    Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the  others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I  am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because  of my hope in the resurrection of the dead." When he said this,  a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees,  and the assembly was divided. (The Sadducees say that there is  no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits,  but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.)    There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who  were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. "We find nothing  wrong with this man," they said. "What if a spirit or an angel  has spoken to him?" The dispute became so violent that the  commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He  ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by  force and bring him into the barracks.    **The following night** **the Lord stood near Paul and said,** **"Take**  **courage!** **As you have testified about me** **in Jerusalem, so you**  **must also testify** **in Rome."**    The next morning the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound  themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had  killed Paul. More than forty men were involved in this plot.  They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have  taken a solemn oath not to eat anything until we have killed  Paul. Now then, you and the Sanhedrin petition the commander to  bring him before you on the pretext of wanting more accurate  information about his case. We are ready to kill him before he  gets here."    But when the son of Paul's sister heard of this plot, he went  into the barracks and told Paul.    Then Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young  man to the commander; he has something to tell him." So he took  him to the commander.    The centurion said, "Paul, the prisoner, sent for me and asked me  to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell  you."    The commander took the young man by the hand, drew him aside and  asked, "What is it you want to tell me?"    He said: "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul before  the Sanhedrin tomorrow on the pretext of wanting more accurate  information about him. Don't give in to them, because more than  forty of them are waiting in ambush for him. They have taken an  oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are  ready now, waiting for your consent to their request."    The commander dismissed the young man and cautioned him, "Don't  tell anyone that you have reported this to me."    Then he called two of his centurions and ordered them, "Get ready  a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two  hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight**. Provide**  **mounts for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor   Felix."**    He wrote a letter as follows: Claudius Lysias, To His Excellency,  Governor Felix: Greetings.    This man was seized by the Jews and they were about to kill him,  but I came with my troops and rescued him, for I had learned  that he is a Roman citizen. I wanted to know why they were  accusing him, so I brought him to their Sanhedrin. I found that  the accusation had to do with questions about their law, but  there was no charge against him that deserved death or  imprisonment. When I was informed of a plot to be carried out  against the man, I sent him to you at once. I also ordered his  accusers to present to you their case against him.    So the soldiers, carrying out their orders, took Paul with them  during the night and brought him as far as Antipatris. The next  day they let the cavalry go on with him, while they returned to  the barracks. When the cavalry arrived in Caesarea, they  delivered the letter to the governor and handed Paul over to  him. The governor read the letter and asked what province he  was from. Learning that he was from Cilicia, he said, "I will  hear your case when your accusers get here." Then he ordered  that Paul be kept under guard in Herod's palace.    Five days later the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea  with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they  brought their charges against Paul before the governor. When  Paul was called in, Tertullus **presented his case before Felix:**  "We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your  foresight has brought about reforms in this nation. Everywhere  and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this  with profound gratitude. But in order not to weary you further,  I would request that you be kind enough to hear us briefly.    "We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots  among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the  Nazarene sect and even tried to desecrate the temple; so we  seized him. By examining him yourself you will be able to  learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against  him."    The Jews joined in the accusation, asserting that these things  were true.    When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: "I  know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this  nation; so I gladly make my defense. You can easily verify that  no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship.  My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple,  or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in  the city. And they cannot prove to you the charges they are now  making against me. However, I admit that I worship the God of  our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I  believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written  in the Prophets, and **I have the same hope in God as these men,**  **that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the**  **wicked.** **So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before**  **God and man.**    "After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring  my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings. I was  ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts  doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in  any disturbance. But there are some Jews from the province of  Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they  have anything against me. Or these who are here should state  what crime they found in me when I stood before the  Sanhedrin--unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in  their presence: 'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead  that I am on trial before you today.'"    Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the  proceedings. "When Lysias the commander comes," he said, "I  will decide your case." He ordered the centurion to keep Paul  under guard but to give him some freedom and permit his friends  to take care of his needs.    Several days later **Felix came** with his wife Drusilla, who was a  Jewess. He sent for **Paul** and listened to him as he **spoke about**  **faith in Christ Jesus.** **As Paul** **discoursed on righteousness,**  **self-control and the judgment to come,**>>**Felix was afraid**<<**and**  **said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it**  **convenient, I will send for you."** At the same time he was  hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him  frequently and talked with him.    **When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus,**  but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left  Paul in prison.    Three days after arriving in the province, Festus went up from  Caesarea to Jerusalem, where the chief priests and Jewish  leaders appeared before him and presented the charges against  Paul. They urgently requested Festus, as a favor to them, to  have Paul transferred to Jerusalem, for they were preparing an  ambush to kill him along the way. Festus answered, "Paul is  being held at Caesarea, and I myself am going there soon. Let  some of your leaders come with me and press charges against the  man there, if he has done anything wrong."    After spending eight or ten days with them, he went down to  Caesarea, and the next day he convened the court and ordered  that Paul be brought before him. When Paul appeared, the Jews  who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing  many serious charges against him, which they could not prove.    Then Paul made his defense: "I have done nothing wrong against  the law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar."    Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, "Are you  willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there  on these charges?"    Paul answered: "I am now standing before Caesar's court, where I  ought to be tried. I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as  you yourself know very well. If, however, I am guilty of doing  anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the  charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one  has the right to hand me over to them. **I appeal to Caesar!"**    After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: **"You**  **have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!"**    A few days later **King Agrippa and Bernice arrived** at Caesarea to  pay their respects to Festus. Since they were spending many  days there, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king. He  said: "There is a man here whom Felix left as a prisoner. When  I went to Jerusalem, the chief priests and elders of the Jews  brought charges against him and asked that he be condemned.    "I told them that it is not the Roman custom to hand over any man  before he has faced his accusers and has had an opportunity to  defend himself against their charges. When they came here with  me, I did not delay the case, but convened the court the next  day and ordered the man to be brought in. When his accusers got  up to speak, they did not charge him with any of the crimes I  had expected. Instead, they had some points of dispute with him  about their own religion and about a dead man named Jesus who  Paul claimed was alive. I was at a loss how to investigate such  matters; so I asked if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem  and stand trial there on these charges. When Paul made his  appeal to be held over for the Emperor's decision, I ordered  him held until I could send him to Caesar."    **Then Agrippa said to Festus,** "I would like to hear this man  myself."    He replied, "Tomorrow you will hear him."    The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered  the audience room with the high ranking officers and the  leading men of the city. At the command of Festus, Paul was  brought in. Festus said: "King Agrippa, and all who are present  with us, you see this man! The whole Jewish community has  petitioned me about him in Jerusalem and here in Caesarea,  shouting that he ought not to live any longer. I found he had  done nothing deserving of death, but because he made his appeal  to the Emperor I decided to send him to Rome. But I have  nothing definite to write to His Majesty about him. Therefore I  have brought him before all of you, and especially before you,  King Agrippa, so that as a result of this investigation I may  have something to write. For I think it is unreasonable to send  on a prisoner without specifying the charges against him."    Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for  yourself."    So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: "King  Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today  as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews,  and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the  Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to  listen to me patiently.    "The Jews all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child,  from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in  Jerusalem. They have known me for a long time and can testify,  if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of  our religion, I lived as a Pharisee. And now it is because of  **my hope in what God has promised** our fathers that I am on trial  today. **This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see**  **fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night.** O king, it  is because of this hope that the Jews are accusing me. Why  should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the  dead?    "I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to  oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I  did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put  many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death,  I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one  synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to  force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even  went to foreign cities to persecute them.    "On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the  authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, O  king, as I was on the road, **I saw a light from heaven, brighter**  **than the sun, blazing around me** and my companions. We all fell  to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic,  'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to  kick against the goads.'    "Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?'    "'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. 'Now  get up and stand on your feet. **I have appeared to you to**  **appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen**  **of me and what I will show you.** I will rescue you from your own  people and from the Gentiles. **I am sending you to them to open**  rr **their eyes** and **turn them** **from darkness to light, and from the**  **power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of**  ffhh **sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in**  **me.'**    "So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from  heaven. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem  and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, **I preached that**  rr  **they should** **repent and turn to God and**>>>**prove their repentance**  **by their deeds.**<<<That is why the Jews seized me in the temple  courts and tried to kill me. But I have had God's help to this  very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great  alike. **I am saying nothing beyond** **what the prophets and Moses**  **said would happen--that** **the Christ would suffer and, as the**  **first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own**  **people and to the Gentiles."**    **At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of**  **your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving**  **you insane."**    **"I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I**  **am saying is true and reasonable.** The king is familiar with  these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced  that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not  done in a corner. **King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I**  **know you do."**    Then Agrippa said to Paul, **"Do you think that in such a short**  **time you can persuade me to be a Christian?"**    Paul replied, "Short time or long--I pray God that not only you  but all who are listening to me today may become what I am,  except for these chains."    The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those  sitting with them. They left the room, and while talking with  one another, they said, "This man is not doing anything that  deserves death or imprisonment."    Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he  had not appealed to Caesar."    When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some  other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius,  who belonged to the Imperial Regiment. We boarded a ship from  Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the  province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a  Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us.    The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul,  allowed him to go to his friends so they might provide for his  needs. From there we put out to sea again and passed to the lee  of Cyprus because the winds were against us. When we had sailed  across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we  landed at Myra in Lycia. There the centurion found an  Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy and put us on board. We made  slow headway for many days and had difficulty arriving off  Cnidus. When the wind did not allow us to hold our course, we  sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone. We moved along  the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair  Havens, near the town of Lasea.    Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous  because by now it was after **the Fast.** So Paul warned them,  "Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and  bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also."  But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said,  followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship.  Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority  decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and  winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest  and northwest.    When a gentle south wind began to blow, they thought they had  obtained what they wanted; so they weighed anchor and sailed  along the shore of Crete. Before very long, a wind of hurricane  force, called the "northeaster," swept down from the island.  The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the  wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. As we passed  to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able  to make the lifeboat secure. When the men had hoisted it  aboard, they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it  together. Fearing that they would run aground on the sandbars  of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be  driven along. **We took such a violent battering from the storm**  **that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. On**  **the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with**  **their own hands.** When neither sun nor stars appeared for many  days and the storm continued raging, **we finally gave up all**  **hope of being saved.**    After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up  before them and said: **"Men, you should have taken my advice not**  **to sail from Crete;** then you would have spared yourselves this  damage and loss. But now I urge you to **keep up your courage,**  because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be  destroyed. Last night **an angel** **of the God whose I am** and whom I  serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul**. You**  **must stand trial before Caesar;** and God has graciously given  you the lives of all who sail with you.' **So keep up your**  ff  **courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just**  **as he told me.** Nevertheless, we must run aground on some  island."    On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the  Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were  approaching land. They took soundings and found that the water  was a hundred and twenty feet deep. A short time later they  took soundings again and found it was ninety feet deep. Fearing  that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four  anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. In an attempt  to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into  the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from  the bow. Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers,  "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved." So  the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it  fall away.    Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. "For the last  fourteen days," he said, "you have been in constant suspense  and have gone without food--you haven't eaten anything. Now I  urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of  you will lose a single hair from his head." After he said this,  he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all.  Then he broke it and began to eat. They were all encouraged and  ate some food themselves. Altogether there were 276 of us on  board. When they had eaten as much as they wanted, **they**  **lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.**    When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw  a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship  aground if they could. **Cutting loose the anchors, they left**  **them in the sea** and at the same time untied the ropes that held  the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and  made for the beach. But the ship struck a sandbar and ran  aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern  was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf.    **The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners** to prevent any of them  from swimming away and escaping. But the centurion wanted to  spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan.  He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get  to land. The rest were to get there on planks or on pieces of  the ship. In this way everyone reached land in safety.    Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called  Malta. The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a  fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. Paul  gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a  viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand.  When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they  said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he  escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live." But  Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill  effects. The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall  dead, but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual  happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.    There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief  official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and for  three days entertained us hospitably. His father was sick in  bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see  him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him.  When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came  and were cured. They honored us in many ways and when we were  ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.    **After three months** we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered  in the island. It was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead  of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. We put in at Syracuse and  stayed there three days. From there we set sail and arrived at  Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the  following day we reached Puteoli. There we found some brothers  who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to  Rome. The brothers there had heard that we were coming, and  they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three  Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these men Paul thanked God  and was encouraged. **When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to**  **live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.**    Three days later he called together the leaders of the Jews. When  they had assembled, Paul said to them: "My brothers, although I  have done nothing against our people or against the customs of  our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to   the Romans. They examined me and wanted to release me, because  I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. But when the  Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar--not that I  had any charge to bring against my own people. For this reason  I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the  hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain."    They replied, "We have not received any letters from Judea  concerning you, and none of the brothers who have come from  there has reported or said anything bad about you. But we want  to hear what your views are, for we know that **people everywhere**  **are talking against this sect**."    They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even  **ee** larger numbers to the place where he was staying. **From morning**  **till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of**  **God and tried to convince them about Jesus** **from the Law of**  **Moses and from the Prophets.** **Some were convinced** by what he  said, **but** **others would** **not believe.** They disagreed among  themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final  statement: **"The Holy Spirit spoke the truth** to your forefathers  **when he said through Isaiah the prophet:** "'Go to this people  and say, **"You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you**  **will be ever seeing but never perceiving." For this people's**  **heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears,**  **and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with**  **their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts**  **and turn, and I would heal them.'**    "Therefore I want you to know that **God's salvation has been sent**  **to the Gentiles, and they will listen!"**    **For two whole years Paul stayed there** in his own rented house and  **ee** welcomed all who came to see him. **Boldly and without hindrance**  **he preached** **the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus**  **Christ.**  **============**  **Paul,** **a servant of Christ Jesus,** **called to be an apostle and set**  **apart for the gospel of God**--**the gospel he promised** beforehand  **through his prophets in** **the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son,**  who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and **who**  >**through**<**the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be**  **the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ**  **our Lord.** Through him and for his name's sake, **we received**  **grace** and apostleship **to call people** **from among** **all the**  **ffee Gentiles** **to**>**the obedience that comes from faith.**<And **you also**  **are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.**  **To all** in Rome **who are loved by God and called to be saints:**    **Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord**  **Jesus Christ.**    First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you,  ff because **your faith** **is being reported all over the world. God,**  **HSMS whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his**  **Son,** is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers  at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way  may be opened for me to come to you.    I long to see you so that **I may** **impart to you** **some spiritual gift**  **to make you strong**--that is, that you and I may be mutually  ff **encouraged by** **each other's faith.** I do not want you to be  unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you  (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that  I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the  other Gentiles.    **I am obligated** both to Greeks and non-Greeks, **both to the wise**  **and the foolish.** That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel  also to you who are at Rome.    I am not ashamed of **the gospel**, because it **is the** **power of God**  ff **for the salvation of everyone who believes:** first for the Jew,  then for the Gentile. For **in the gospel a righteousness from**  **God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to**  ffhh **last,** just as it is written: **"The righteous will live by**  **faith."**    **The wrath of God is being revealed** from heaven **against all the**  **godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by**  **their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to**  **them, because God has**>**made it plain**<**to them.** For since the  creation of the world God's invisible qualities--**his eternal**  **power** **and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being**  **understood from what has been made, so that men are without**  **excuse.**    For **although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor**  **gave thanks to him,** but **their thinking became futile and their**  **foolish hearts were darkened.** Although they claimed to be wise,  **they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God**  **for images made to look like mortal man** and birds and animals  and reptiles.    Therefore **God** **gave them over** **in the sinful desires of their**  **hearts to sexual impurity for the**>**degrading**<**of their bodies**  with one another. **They exchanged the truth of God for a lie,**  and **worshiped and served created things rather than the   Creator**--who is forever praised. Amen.    **Because of this,** **God gave them over to**>**shameful lusts**<**.** Even their  **women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.** In the  same way the **men** also **abandoned natural relations with** **women**  **and were**>**inflamed with lust**<**for one another. Men committed**  >**indecent**<**acts with other men, and received in themselves the**  **due penalty for their**>**perversion**<**.**    Furthermore, **since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the**  **knowledge of God,** **he gave them over to a**>>**depraved mind**<<**, to do**  **what ought not to be done.** **They have become** **filled with**>**every**  **kind of wickedness**<**, evil,**>**greed and depravity**<**.** They are **full of**  **envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice.** They are **gossips,**  **slanderers, God-haters, insolent,**>**arrogant**<**and boastful; they**  **invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are**  >**senseless**<**, faithless, heartless, ruthless.** **Although they know**  **God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve**  **death,** **they not only continue to do these very things but also**  **approve of those who practice them.**    **You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone**  **else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are**  **condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same**  **things.** Now we know that **God's judgment** against those who do  such things **is based on truth.** So **when you, a mere man, pass**  **judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you**  **will escape God's judgment?**>>**Or do you show contempt for** **the**  **riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience,** not realizing  rr that **God's kindness leads you toward repentance**?<<    rr **But** **because of your**>**stubbornness**<**and your unrepentant heart,** you  are storing up wrath against yourself for **the day of God's**  **wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.** **God "will**  >**give to each person according to what he has done**<**."** To those  **ee** who by>**persistence in doing good**<seek glory, honor and  immortality, **he will give eternal life.** But for those who are  **self-seeking** and who>**reject the truth and follow evil**<**,** **there**  **will be wrath and anger.** There will be trouble and distress for  every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for  the Gentile; but glory, honor and **peace** for everyone who does  good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not  show favoritism.    All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the  law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law.  For it is not those who hear the law who are **righteous in God's**  **sight,** but it is those who obey the law who will be **declared**  **righteous.** (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do  by nature things required by the law, they are a law for  themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they  show that the requirements of the law are written on their  hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their  thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) This will take  place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through  Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.    Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and  brag about your relationship to God; if you know his will and  approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the  law; if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a  light for those who are in the dark, an instructor of the  foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the  embodiment of knowledge and truth--you, then, who teach others,  do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do  you steal? You who say that people should not commit adultery,  do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob  temples? You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by  breaking the law? As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed  among the Gentiles because of you."    Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break  the law, you have become as though you had not been  circumcised. If those who are not circumcised keep the law's  requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were  circumcised? **The one who is not circumcised physically and yet**  **obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the**  **written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker.**    A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is  circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if  ss he is one inwardly; and **circumcision is circumcision of the**  **heart, by the Spirit,** not by the written code. **Such a man's**  **praise is not from men, but from God.**    What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is  there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, they  have been **entrusted with** **the very words of God.**    What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify  **God's faithfulness**? Not at all! **Let God be true, and** **every man**  **a liar.** As it is written: "So that **you may be proved right when**  **you speak and prevail when you judge."**    But if our unrighteousness brings out **God's righteousness** more  clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his  wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.) Certainly not! If  that were so, how could God judge the world? Someone might  argue, "If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so   increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?" Why  not say--as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as  **some claim that we say--"Let us do evil that good may result"?**  **Their condemnation is deserved.**    What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We  have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are  all under sin. **As it is written:** **"There is no one righteous,**  **not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks**  **God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless;**  **there is no one who does good, not even one."** **"Their throats**  **are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of**  **vipers is on their lips." "Their mouths are full of cursing and**  **bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and**  **misery mark their ways,** **and the way of peace they do not know."**  **"There is no fear of God before their eyes."**    Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are  under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the  whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be  **declared righteous** in his sight by observing the law; rather,  through the law we become conscious of sin.    **But** **now a righteousness**>f**rom**<**God,** apart from law**, has been made**  **known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.** This  ffss **righteousness**>**from God comes**<**through faith in Jesus Christ to**  **all who believe.** There is no difference, for **all have sinned**  **and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified**>**freely**<**by**  **his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.** **God**  ff **presented him as a**>**sacrifice of atonement**<**,** **through faith** **in his**  **blood.** He did this to>**demonstrate his justice,**<because in his  forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand  unpunished--he did it to>**demonstrate his justice**<at the present  time, so as to be just and **the one who justifies those who have**  ff **faith in Jesus.**    Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded.>**On what principle?**<On  that of observing the law? No, but on that of **faith.** For we  ff maintain that **a man is** **justified by faith** apart from observing  the law. Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of  Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one  God, who will justify the circumcised **by** **faith** and the  uncircumcised through that **same** **faith.** **Do we, then, nullify the**  **law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.**    What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered  in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he  had something to boast about--but not before God. What does the  ff Scripture say? **"Abraham believed God, and it was**>**credited**<**to**  **him as righteousness."**    Now when a man works, his wages are not>**credited**<to him as a  gift, but as an obligation. However, **to the** **man who does not**  ff **work but** **trusts God** **who justifies the**>**wicked**<**,** **his faith is**  >**credited**<**as righteousness.** David says the same thing when he  speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom **God**>**credits**<  **righteousness apart from works:** **"Blessed are they whose**  **transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is**  **the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."**    Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the  uncircumcised? We have been saying that **Abraham's faith was**  >**credited**<**to him as righteousness.** Under what circumstances was  it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was  not after, but before! And he received the sign of  circumcision, a seal of **the righteousness that he had by faith**  while he was still uncircumcised. So then, **he is the father of**  **all who believe** but have not been circumcised, **in order that**  **righteousness might be**>**credited**<**to them.** And he is also the  ff father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who  also **walk in the footsteps of the faith** **that our father Abraham**  **had** before he was circumcised.    It was not through law that **Abraham** and his offspring **received**  **the promise** that he would be heir of the world, but **through**>>**the**  ff **righteousness**>>>**that comes by**<<<**faith.**<<For if those who live by law  are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless,  because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no  transgression.    ff Therefore, **the promise comes by faith, so that it**>>>**may be by grace**<<<  **and may be guaranteed** to all Abraham's offspring--not only to  those who are of the law but also **to those who are of the faith**  **of Abraham.** He is the father of us all. As it is written: "I  have made you a father of many nations." **He is our father in**  ff **the sight of** **God, in whom he believed--the God who gives life**  **to the dead** **and calls things that are not as though they were.**    ff **Against all hope, Abraham** **in hope believed** and so became the  father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So  shall your offspring be." **Without weakening in his faith,** he  faced the fact that his body was as good as dead--since he was  about a hundred years old--and that Sarah's womb was also dead.  ff Yet **he did not waver through unbelief** **regarding the promise of**  **God, but**>**was strengthened**<**in his faith**>**and**<**gave glory to God,**  **being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had**  **promised.** **This is why** **"it was**>**credited**<**to him as**  **righteousness."** The words "it was credited to him" were written  not for him alone, but **also for us, to whom God will**>**credit**<ff **righteousness--for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our**  **Lord from the dead.** He was delivered over to death for our sins  and was raised to life for our justification.    ff Therefore, since **we have been justified through faith,** **we have**  **peace with God** **through our Lord Jesus Christ,** **through whom** **we**  **have gained access by faith into this grace** **in which we now**  **stand.** And **we rejoice in** **the hope of the glory of God.** Not only  so, but **we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that**  **suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and**  ss **character, hope.** And **hope** **does not**>**disappoint us**<**, because God**  **has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit,**  **whom he has given us.**    You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless,  Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a  **righteous** man, though for a good man someone might possibly  dare to die. **But God demonstrates his own love for us in this:**  **While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**    Since **we have now been justified by his blood,** how much more  shall we be **saved from God's wrath through him!** For if, **when we**  **were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death**  **of his Son,** how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be  **saved** **through his life!** Not only is this so, but we also  rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we  have now received reconciliation.    Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and  death through sin, and in this way death came to all men,  because all sinned--for before the law was given, sin was in  the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no  law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the  time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a  command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.    But **the gift** is not like the trespass. For if the many died by  the trespass of the one man, how much more did **God's grace and**  **the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ,**  **overflow to the many**! Again, **the gift** **of God** is not like the  result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and  brought condemnation, but **the gift** followed many trespasses and  **brought justification.** For if, by the trespass of the one man,  death reigned through that one man, **how much more will those**  ss **who receive** **God's abundant provision of grace** **and of** **the gift**  **of righteousness reign** **in life** **through the one man, Jesus**  **Christ.**    Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation  for all men, so also **the result of one act of righteousness was**  **justification that brings life** **for all men.** For just as through  the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so  ss also **through the obedience of the one man** **the many will be made**  **righteous.**    The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where  sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as  ss sin reigned in death, so also **grace might reign through**  **righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our**  **Lord.**    What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may  hh increase? By no means! **We died to sin; how can we live in it**  **any longer?** Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized  into **Christ Jesus** were baptized into his death? **We were**  therefore **buried with him** **through baptism into death** **in order**  **that,** **just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory**  hh **of the Father,** **we too may live a new life.**    **If** **we have been united with him like this in his death,** **we will**  **certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.** For **we**  hh **know that** **our old self was crucified with him so that the body**  **of sin might be**>**done away with**<**, that we should no longer be**  **slaves to sin**--because anyone who has died has been freed from  sin.    **Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live**  **with him.** For we know that since Christ was raised from the  dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over  him. **The death he died, he died to sin once for all;** but **the**  **life he lives, he lives to God.**    In the same way,>**count**<**yourselves dead to sin** but **alive to God in**  hh**ee** **Christ Jesus.** Therefore **do not let sin reign in your mortal**  **body**>**so that you obey its evil desires.** **Do not offer** **the parts**  **of your body**<**to sin, as** **instruments**>**of wickedness,** **but** **rather**  **offer yourselves**<**to God,** **as** **those who have been brought** **from**  **death** **to life;** and **offer the parts of your body to him as**  hh **instruments of righteousness.** For **sin shall**>**not be your master,**<  **because you are** not under law, but **under grace.**    What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under  grace? By no means! Don't you know that **when you offer**  **yourselves** to someone to obey him as **slaves,** you are **slaves** to  the one whom you obey--whether you are **slaves to sin,** which  **ee**hh leads to death, or to **obedience, which leads to righteousness**?  But thanks be to God that, though you used to be **slaves to sin,**  **HSMS** **you**>>>**wholeheartedly obeyed**<<<**the form of teaching to which you**  **were entrusted.** **You have been** **set free from sin** and **have become**  **HSMS**hh **slaves to righteousness.**    I put this in human terms because **you are weak in your natural**  **HSMS**hh **selves.** Just as **you**>>>**used to offer** **the parts of your body** **in**  **slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness**<<<**,** **so** **now**  **offer them** **in slavery** **to righteousness** **leading to**>**holiness.**<  **When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of**  **righteousness.** What benefit did you reap at that time from the  things you are now ashamed of? **Those things result in death!**  **HSMS**hh But now that **you have been set free from sin** and **have become**  **slaves to God**, the>**benefit you reap leads to holiness,** and **the**  **result is**<**eternal life.** For the wages of sin is death, but **the**  **gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**    Do you not know, brothers--for I am speaking to men who know the  law--that the law has authority over a man only as long as he  lives? For example, by law a married woman is bound to her  husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is  released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries  another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an  adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that  law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another  man.    So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of  Christ, that **you might belong to another,** **to him who was raised**  **ee**  **from the dead,** **in order that we might bear fruit to God**. For  when we were>>>**controlled by the sinful nature**<<<**,** **the sinful**  **passions** aroused by the law **were at work in our** **bodies,** so that  **we bore fruit for death.** But now, **by dying to what once bound**  **us**, we have been released from the law so that **we serve in the**  ss **new way of the Spirit,** and not in the old way of the written  code.    What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I  would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I  would not have known what coveting really was if the law had  not said, "Do not covet." **But sin, seizing the opportunity**  **afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of**  **covetous desire.** For apart from law, sin is dead. Once I was  alive apart from law; but **when the commandment came, sin sprang**  **to life and I died.** I found that the very commandment that was  intended to bring life actually brought death. For **sin,** seizing  the opportunity afforded by the commandment, **deceived me,** and  through the commandment **put me to death.** So then, **the law is**  **holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.**    Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means!  But **in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced**  **death in me** through what was good, so that through the  commandment sin might become utterly sinful.    We know that the law is spiritual; but **I am unspiritual,** **sold as**  **a slave to sin.** **I do not understand what I do.** For what I want  to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do  not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is  no longer I myself who do it, but it is **sin living in me.** I  know that **nothing good lives in me, that is, in my**>>>**sinful**  **nature**<<<**.** For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot  carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no,  **the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing.** **Now if I do**  **what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it**  **is sin living in me that does it.**    So I find this law at work: **When I want to do good,**>**evil is right**  **there with me**<**.** For **in my inner being I delight in God's law;**  **but I see** **another law at work in the members of my body,** **waging**  **war against the law of my mind** and **making me a prisoner of the**  **law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am!**  **Who will rescue me from** **this body of death**? **Thanks be to**  **God--through Jesus Christ our Lord!**    So then, **I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the**  >>>**sinful nature**<<<**a slave to the law of sin.**    Therefore, **there is now no condemnation for those who are in**  ss **Christ Jesus, because** **through Christ Jesus the law of the**  **Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.** **For**  **what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the**  >>>**sinful nature,**<<<**God did by sending his own Son** **in the likeness**  **of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in**  hh  **sinful man, in order that** **the righteous requirements of the law**  ss **might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the**  >>>**sinful nature**<<<**but according to the Spirit.**    Those who **live according** to the>>>sinful nature<<<**have their minds**  ee **set** on what that nature desires; **but those who live in**  **accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the**  ss **Spirit desires.**>The mind of sinful man is death, but **the mind**  **controlled by**<**the Spirit is life** and **peace;**>**the sinful mind**<**is**  **hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do**  **so.** **Those**>>>**controlled by the sinful nature**<<<**cannot please God.**    ss **You, however,**>>>>**are controlled**<<<<**not by the**>>>>**sinful nature**<<<<  **but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone**  **does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.**  **But** **if Christ is in you,** **your body is dead because of sin,** yet  >>**your spirit is alive because of righteousness.**<<**And if the**  **Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you,**   **he who raised Christ from the dead** **will also** **give life to your**  ss  **mortal bodies through** **his Spirit, who lives in you.**    **ee** Therefore, brothers, **we**>**have an obligation**<**--but it is not to the**  >**sinful nature**<**, to live according to it. For if you live**  ss**ee according to the**>**sinful nature**<**, you will die; but if by the**  **Spirit you put to death the**>>>>**misdeeds**<<<<**of the body, you will**  **live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons**  **of God.** For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave  again to fear, but **you received** **the Spirit of sonship.** And by  him we cry, "Abba, Father." **The Spirit himself testifies with**  **our spirit that we are God's children.** Now if we are children,  then we are heirs--**heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ,**>**if**  **ee indeed we share in his sufferings**<**in order that we may also**  **share in his glory.**    **I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing**  **with the glory that will be revealed**>>>**in**<<<**us.** The creation waits  in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For  the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own  choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope  that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to  decay and brought into **the glorious freedom of the children of**  **God.**    We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains  of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but **we**  **ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit,** groan  inwardly as **we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons,** **the**  ff  **redemption of our bodies.** For **in this hope we were saved.** But  hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he  already has? But **if we hope for what we do not yet have, we**  **wait for it patiently.**    In the same way, **the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not**  **know what we ought to pray for, but** **the Spirit himself**  **intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And** **he**  **who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit,** **because**  **the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's**  **will.**    And we know that **in all things God works for the good of those**  **who love him,** **who have been called according to his purpose.**  hh **For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to**  **the**>**likeness**<**of his Son,** **that he might be the firstborn among**  **many brothers.** And **those** **he** **predestined,** **he also** **called;** those  he called, he also **justified;** those he justified, he also  **glorified.**    What, then, shall we say in response to this? **If God is for us,**  **who can be against us?** **He who did not spare his own Son, but**  **gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him,**  **graciously give us all things?** Who will bring any charge  against **those whom God has chosen**? It is God who justifies. Who  is he that condemns? **Christ Jesus,** who died--more than that,  who was raised to life--**is at the right hand of God and is also**  **interceding for us.** **Who shall separate us from the love of**  **Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or**  **nakedness or danger or sword?** **As it is written:** **"For your sake**  **we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be**  **slaughtered."** **No, in all these things we are more than**  **conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that**  **neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the**  **present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor**  **depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to**  **separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our**  **Lord.**    **I speak the truth in Christ--I am not lying,** **my conscience**  **confirms it in the Holy Spirit**--I have great sorrow and  unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself  were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my  brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel. Theirs is  the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants,  the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.  Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human  ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.    It is not as though **God's word** had failed. For not all who are  descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his  descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary,  "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." In  other words, it is not the natural children who are God's  children, but **it is the children of the promise who are**  **regarded as Abraham's offspring.** For this was how the promise  was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah  will have a son."    Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same  father, our father Isaac. **Yet, before the twins were born or**  **had done anything good or bad--in order that** **God's purpose in**  **election** might stand: **not by works but by him who calls--she**  **was told, "The older will serve the younger." Just as it is**  **written:** **"Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."**    What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! **For he says to**  **Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have**  **compassion on whom I have compassion."** **It does not, therefore,**  **depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.** For the  Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very  purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name  might be proclaimed in all the earth." **Therefore God has mercy**  **on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to**  **harden.**    One of you will say to me: **"Then why does God still blame us?** **For**  **who resists his will?**" But who are you, O man, to talk back to  God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did  you make me like this?'" **Does not the potter have the right to**  **make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble**  **purposes and some for common use?**    **What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known,**  **bore with great patience the objects of his wrath--prepared for**  **destruction? What if he did this to make the riches of his**  **glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in**  **advance for glory--even us, whom he also called,** not only from  the Jews but also from the Gentiles? As he says in Hosea: "I  will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will  call her **'my loved one'** who is not **my loved one,"** and, **"It will**  **happen** that in the very place where it was said to them, 'You  are not my people,' **they will be called 'sons of the living**  **God.'**"    **Isaiah cries out** concerning Israel: "Though the number of the  Israelites be like the sand by the sea, **only the remnant will**  **be saved.** **For** **the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth**  **with speed and finality."**    It is just **as Isaiah said previously:** **"Unless the Lord Almighty**  **had left us descendants,** **we would have become like Sodom,** we  would have been **like Gomorrah."**    What then shall we say? That **the Gentiles,** **who did not pursue**  sshh **righteousness,** **have obtained it, a** **righteousness that is by**  ff **faith;** but **Israel, who pursued a law**>**of righteousness, has not**  ff **attained it**<**.** **Why not?**>>>**Because they pursued it not by faith but**  **as if it were by works.**<<<They stumbled over the "stumbling  stone." As it is written: "See, I lay in Zion a stone that  causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and **the**  ff **one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."**    Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites  is that they may be **saved.** For I can testify about them that  they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on  knowledge. **Since** **they did not**>>>**know the righteousness that comes**  **from God** **and** **sought to establish their own,**<<<**they did not submit**  **to God's righteousness.** **Christ is the end of the law** **so that**  **ffhh there may be** **righteousness for everyone who believes.**    Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law:  "The man who does these things will live by them." But **the**  ffhh **righteousness**>**that is by**<**faith** says: "Do not say in your heart,  'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down)  "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'" (that is, to bring  Christ up from the dead). But **what does it say?** **"The word is**  **near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,"** that is, **the**  **word of faith** we are proclaiming: That **if you confess with your**  ff **mouth, "Jesus is Lord,"** and **believe in your heart** that God  raised him from the dead, **you will be saved.** For **it is with**  **your heart that you believe** **and are justified,** and **it is with**  **your mouth that you confess and are saved.** As the Scripture  ff says, **"Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."**  For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--**the** same  **Lord is Lord of all and** **richly blesses all who call on him,**  for, **"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be**  **saved."**    **How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in?**  And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not  heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?  And **how can they preach unless they are sent?** As it is written,  "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"    But not all the Israelites **accepted the good news.** For Isaiah  says, **"Lord, who has believed our message?"** Consequently, **faith**  **comes from hearing the message,** and **the message is heard**  **through the word of Christ.** But I ask: Did they not hear? Of  course they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth,  their **words** to the ends of the world." Again I ask: Did Israel  not understand? First, Moses says, "I will make you envious by  those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation  that has no understanding." And **Isaiah boldly says,** **"I was**  **found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those**  **who did not ask for me."** But concerning Israel he says, **"All**  **day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and**  >**obstinate**<**people."**    I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an  Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of  Benjamin. **God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew.**  Don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about  Elijah--how he appealed to God against Israel: "Lord, they have  killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only  one left, and they are trying to kill me"? And what was God's  answer to him? **"I have reserved for myself seven thousand who**  **have not bowed the knee to Baal."** So too, at the present time  there is **a remnant chosen by grace.** And if by grace, then it is   no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.    What then? **What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain,** but  **the elect** **did.** **The others were hardened, as it is written: "God**  **gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see**  **and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day."** And  David says: "May their table become a snare and a trap, a  stumbling block and a retribution for them. May their eyes be  darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever."    Again I ask: **Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not**  **at all!** Rather, because of their transgression, **salvation** has  come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their  transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means  riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their  fullness bring!    I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the  Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may  **somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them.** For  if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what  will their acceptance be but life from the dead? If the part of  the dough offered as firstfruits is **holy,** then the whole batch  is **holy;** if the root is **holy,** so are the branches.    If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a  wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now  share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast  over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not  support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then,  "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in."  ff Granted. But **they were broken off because of unbelief, and you**  **stand by faith.** Do not be arrogant, but **be afraid.** For if God  did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you  either.    Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness  to those who fell, but **kindness to you, provided that you**  **continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.**  ff And **if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted**  **in,** for God is able to graft them in **again.** After all, if you  were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and  contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree,  how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be  grafted into their own olive tree!    I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so  that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a  hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has  come in. And so all Israel will be **saved,** as it is written:  **"The deliverer** will come from Zion; **he will turn godlessness**  **away** from Jacob. And **this is my covenant with them when I take**  **away their sins."**    As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your  account; but as far as **election** is concerned, they are **loved** on  account of the patriarchs, for God's **gifts** and **his call** are  **irrevocable.** Just as **you who were at one time disobedient to**  **God have now received mercy** as a result of their disobedience,  so **they too have now become disobedient in order that they too**  **may now receive mercy** as a result of God's mercy to you. **For**  **God has**>**bound all men over**<**to disobedience so that he may have**  **mercy on them all.** Oh, **the depth of the riches of the wisdom**  **and knowledge of God! How**>>>**unsearchable his judgments**<<<**, and**>**his**  **paths beyond tracing out!**<**"Who has known the mind of the Lord?**  **Or who has been his counselor?"** "Who has ever given to God,  that God should repay him?" For **from him and through him and to**  **him are all things.** **To him be the glory forever! Amen.**    **ee**hh Therefore, I urge you, brothers, **in view of God's mercy,** to **offer**  **your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to**  **God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any**  **longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the**  **renewing of your mind.**>**Then you will be able to test and**  **approve**<**what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect**  **will.**    For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: **Do not think**  **of yourself more highly than you ought,** but rather **think of**  ff **yourself with sober judgment,** **in accordance** **with the measure of**  **faith God has**>**given you.**< Just as each of us has one body with  many members, and these members do not all have the same  function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each  member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts,  according to the grace given us. **If a man's gift is**  **prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.** If it  is **serving,** let him serve; if it is **teaching,** let him teach; if  it is **encouraging,** let him encourage; if it is **contributing to**  **the needs of others,** let him give generously; if it is  **leadership,** let him govern diligently; if it is **showing mercy,**  let him do it cheerfully.    **ee** **Love must be sincere.** **Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.**  ^^^**Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.** **Honor one another**  **ee above yourselves.**<<<**Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your**  **spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.** **Be joyful** **in** **hope,** **patient**  **in affliction,** **faithful** **in prayer.** **Share with God's people who**  **are in need. Practice hospitality.**  **Bless those who persecute you;** bless and do not curse. Rejoice  with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. **Live in**  **harmony with one another.** Do not be proud, but be willing to  associate with people of low position.>**Do not be conceited.**<    **Do not repay anyone evil for evil.** **Be careful to do what is right**  in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it  depends on you, **live at peace with everyone.** Do not take  revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is  written: **"It is mine to avenge; I will repay,"** says the Lord.  On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is  thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will  **ee** heap burning coals on his head." **Do not be overcome by evil,**  but **overcome evil with good**.    Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for  there is no authority except that which God has established.  The authorities that exist have been established by God.  Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling  against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring  judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for **those who**  **do right,** but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free  from fear of the one in authority? Then **do what is right** and he  will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But  if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for  nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring  punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to  submit to the authorities, not only because of possible  punishment but also because of conscience.    This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's  servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone  what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then  revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.    **Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to**  **love one another,** for **he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled**  **the law.** The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not  murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other  commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: **"Love**  **your neighbor as yourself."** **Love does no**^**harm**<**to its neighbor.**  Therefore **love is the fulfillment of the law.**    And **do this, understanding the present time.** **The hour has come**  **for you to wake up from your slumber,** **because** **our salvation is**  **nearer now** **than when we first** **believed.** **The night is nearly**  **ee**hh **over;** **the day is almost here.** **So** let us **put aside the deeds of**  **darkness** and **put on the armor of light.** Let us **behave decently,**  as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, **not in sexual**  **immorality and**^**debauchery**<**,** **not in**^**dissension**<**and jealousy.**  **ee**hh Rather,^**clothe yourselves with**<**the Lord Jesus Christ,** and^^^**do**  **not think about**<<<**how to gratify the desires of the**>**sinful**  **nature**<**.**    **Accept** **him whose faith is weak,**>**without passing judgment** **on**  **disputable matters**<. **One man's faith allows him to eat**  **everything,** but another man, **whose faith is weak,** eats only  vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on  him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must  not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. **Who are**  **you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he**  ss **stands or falls.** **And he will stand,** **for** **the Lord is able to**  **make him stand.**    One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man  considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced  in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to  the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives  thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and  gives thanks to God. For none of us lives to himself alone and  **ee** none of us dies to himself alone. **If we live, we live to the**  **Lord;** **and if we die, we die to the Lord.** So, whether we live or  die, **we belong to the Lord.**    For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he  might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. **You, then,**  **why do you judge your brother? Or why do you**>**look down on**<**your**  **brother? For** **we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It**  **is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee**  **will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'" So**  **then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.**    **Therefore** **let us stop passing judgment on one another.** Instead,  make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in  your brother's way. As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully  convinced that no food is unclean in itself. **But if anyone**  **regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean.** If  your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no  longer acting in **love**. **Do not** by your eating **destroy your**  **brother** **for whom Christ died.** Do not allow what you consider  good to be spoken of as evil. For **the kingdom of God** is not a  hhss matter of eating and drinking, but of **righteousness, peace and**  **joy in the Holy Spirit,** because anyone who serves Christ in  this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.    **ee**  Let us therefore **make every effort** **to do** **what leads to peace** and  to **mutual edification.** **Do not destroy the work of God** for the  sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to  eat anything that causes someone else to **stumble.** It is better   not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else **that will**  **cause your brother to fall.**    >**So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself**  **hh and God.**<**Blessed is the man who does not**>>>**condemn**<<<**himself by**  **what he approves.** **But** **the man who has doubts is condemned** if he  ff eats, because **his eating is not from faith;** and **everything that**  **does not come from faith is sin.**    **We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak** and  not to please ourselves. **Each of us should please his neighbor**  **for his good, to build him up.** **For even Christ did not please**  **himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult**  **you have fallen on me."** For everything that was written in the  ff past was written to teach us, so that **through endurance and the**  **encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.**    ss **May the** **God**>**who gives**<**endurance and encouragement** **give you** **a**  **spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus,** so  that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and  Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.    **Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you,**>**in order**  **to bring praise to**<**God.** For I tell you that **Christ has become a**  **servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth,** to confirm the  promises made to the patriarchs so that the Gentiles may  glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: "Therefore I will  praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name."  Again, it says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people." And  again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and sing praises to  him, all you peoples." And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of  Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the  nations; the Gentiles will hope in him."    ff **May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust**  **in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the**  ss **Holy Spirit.**    I myself am^**convinced**<**,** my brothers, that you yourselves are **full**  **of goodness,** **complete in knowledge** and **competent to instruct**  **one another.** I have written you quite boldly on some points, as  if to remind you of them again, because of **the grace God gave**  **me to be a minister of Christ Jesus** to the Gentiles **with the**  **priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God,** **so that**>**the**  sshh  **Gentiles might become an offering**<**acceptable to God,** **sanctified**  **by the Holy Spirit.**    Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. I will  not venture to speak of anything except **what Christ has**  **ee** **accomplished through me** **in leading the Gentiles to**>**obey God by**  **what I have said and done**<--by the **power** of signs and miracles,  ss **through the power of the Spirit.** So from Jerusalem all the way  around to Illyricum, **I have fully proclaimed the gospel of**  **Christ.** It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel  where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on  someone else's foundation. Rather, as it is written: "Those who  were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard  will understand." This is why I have often been hindered from  coming to you.    But now that there is no more place for me to work in these  regions, and since I have been longing for many years to see  you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you  while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey  there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. Now,  however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the  saints there. For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a  contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. They  were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if  the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they  owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.  So after I have completed this task and have made sure that  they have received this fruit, I will go to Spain and visit you  on the way. **I know that when I come to you, I will come in the**  **full measure of the blessing of Christ.**    I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by **the love of**  **the Spirit,** to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.  Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and  that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints  there, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and  together with you be refreshed. **The God of peace** **be with you**  **all. Amen.**    I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in  Cenchrea. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy  of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you,  for she has been a great help to many people, including me.  ee Greet Priscilla and Aquila, **my** **fellow workers** **in Christ Jesus.**  **They risked their lives for me.** Not only I but all the churches  of the Gentiles are grateful to them. Greet also the church  that meets at their house. Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who  was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia. Greet  ee **Mary,** **who worked very hard for you.** Greet Andronicus and  Junias, **my relatives who have been in prison with me.** They are  outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before  I was. Greet Ampliatus, **whom** **I** **love** **in the Lord.** Greet Urbanus,  **our fellow worker** **in Christ,** and my dear friend Stachys. Greet  **Apelles,**>>>**tested**<<<**and approved in Christ.** Greet those who belong   to the household of Aristobulus. Greet Herodion, my relative.  Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.  ee Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, **those women who work hard in the**  ee **Lord.** Greet my dear friend Persis, **another woman who has worked**  **very hard in the Lord.** Greet Rufus, **chosen in the Lord,** and his  mother, who has been a mother to me, too. Greet Asyncritus,  Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brothers with them.  Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and  all the saints with them. **Greet one another with a holy kiss.**  All the churches of Christ send greetings.    I urge you, brothers, to **watch out for those who cause divisions**  and **put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching**  you have learned. **Keep away from them.** For such people are not  **serving** our Lord Christ, but **their own appetites.** By smooth  talk and flattery **they deceive the minds of naive people**.  **ee** **Everyone has heard about your obedience,** so I am full of joy  over you; but **I want you to be wise about what is good, and**  **innocent about what is evil.**    **The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.**    **The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.**    Timothy, my fellow worker, sends his greetings to you, as do  Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my relatives.    I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord.    Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends  you his greetings.    Erastus, who is the city's director of public works, and our  brother Quartus send you their greetings.    ss Now **to** **him who is able to establish you** **by my gospel** **and the**  **proclamation of Jesus Christ,** according to the revelation of  the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and  made known through the prophetic writings **by** **the command of the**  ff**ee** **eternal God,** **so that all nations might**>>>**believe and obey**<<<**him--to**  **the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.**  **============**  **Paul,** **called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,**  and our brother Sosthenes,    ss To the church of God in Corinth, **to those** **sanctified** **in Christ**  hh **Jesus and called to be holy,** together with all those everywhere  who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ--their Lord and  ours:    **Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus**  **Christ.**    I always thank God for you because of his **grace given you** **in**  **Christ Jesus.** For **in him you have been enriched** **in every**  **way--in all your speaking** and in all your **knowledge**--because  **our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you.** Therefore **you**  **do not lack any spiritual gift** **as you eagerly wait for our Lord**  ss **Jesus Christ to be revealed.** **He will keep you strong to the**  hh **end, so that you will be blameless** **on the day of our Lord Jesus**  **Christ. God**, **who has called you into fellowship with his Son**  ss **Jesus Christ our Lord,** **is faithful.**    I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,  that **all of you agree with one another so that there may be no**  **divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in**  **mind and thought.** My brothers, some from Chloe's household have  informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is  this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow  Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow  Christ."    Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized  into the name of Paul? I am thankful that I did not baptize any  of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you  were baptized into my name. (Yes, I also baptized the household  of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized  anyone else.) **For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to**  **preach the gospel--not with words of human wisdom,** **lest the**  **cross of Christ be emptied of its** **power.**    For **the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are**  **perishing,** but to us who are **being saved** it is **the power of**  **God.** For it is written: **"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;**  **the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."**    Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the  philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of  the world? **For since in the wisdom of God the world through its**  **wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the**  ff **foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.**  Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but **we**  **preach Christ crucified:** a stumbling block to Jews and  foolishness to Gentiles, but **to those whom God has called,** both  Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.**  For **the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the**  **weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.**    Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many  of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential;  not many were of noble birth. But **God chose the foolish** things  of the world to shame the wise; **God chose the weak** things of  the world to shame the strong. **He chose the lowly** things of  this world **and the despised things**--**and the things that are**  **not**--**to nullify the things that are,** so that no one may boast  before him. **It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus,**  **who has become**>**for**<**us wisdom from God**--that is,>**our**<  hh **righteousness, holiness** and **redemption.** Therefore, as it is  written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."    When I came to you, brothers, **I did not come with eloquence or**  **superior wisdom** **as** **I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.**  For **I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except**  **Jesus Christ and him crucified.** **I came to you in weakness and**  **fear, and with much trembling.** **My message and my preaching were**  **not with wise and persuasive words,** **but with** **a demonstration of**  ssff **the Spirit's power,** so that **your faith** might not rest on men's  wisdom, but on **God's** **power.**    We do, however, speak a message of **wisdom** among the mature, **but**  **not the wisdom of this age or of** **the rulers of this age, who**  **are**>**coming to nothing**<**.** **No,** we speak of **God's secret wisdom, a**  **wisdom that has been hidden** **and** **that God destined for our glory**  **before time began.** None of the rulers of this age understood  it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of  glory. However, as it is written: **"No eye has seen, no ear has**  **heard,**>>>>**no mind has conceived**<<<<**what God has prepared for those**  ss **who love him"--but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.**    ss **The Spirit searches all things, even** **the deep things of God.** **For**  **who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's**  **spirit within him?** **In the same way** **no one**>>>>**knows**<<<<**the thoughts of**  **God except the Spirit of God.** We have not received the spirit  ss of the world but **the Spirit who is from God,** **that we may**  **understand what God has freely given us.** **This is what we speak**,  not in words taught us by human wisdom but in **words taught by**  ss **the Spirit,** **expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.** **The**  **man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come**  **from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he**  **cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.**  **The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he**  **himself is not subject to any man's judgment: "For who has**  **known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?"** **But** **we**  **have the mind of Christ.**    **Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as**  **worldly--mere infants in Christ.** I gave you milk, not solid  food, for **you were not yet ready for it.** Indeed, you are still  not ready. **You are still worldly.** For since there is jealousy  and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? **Are you not**  **acting like mere men?** For when one says, "I follow Paul," and  another, "I follow Apollos," **are you not mere men?**    What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants,  **ee**  through whom **you came to believe**--as **the Lord has assigned to**  **each his task.** I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God  made it grow. **So neither he who plants nor he who waters is**  **anything, but only God, who makes things grow.** The man who  ee plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and **each will**  **be rewarded according to his own labor.** For we are God's fellow  workers; you are God's field, God's building.    ss**ee** **By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert**  **builder,** and someone else is building on it. But each one  should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any  foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus  Christ. **If any man builds** on this foundation using gold,  silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, **his work will be**  **shown for what it is,** because the Day will bring it to light.  **ee** It will be revealed with fire, and **the fire will test the**  **quality of each man's work.** If what he has built survives, he  will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer  loss; **he himself will be** **saved,** but only as one escaping  through the flames.    Don't you know that **you yourselves are God's temple** and that  ss **God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God**  hh **will destroy him; for** **God's temple is sacred, and you are that**  **temple.**    **Do not deceive yourselves.** If any one of you thinks he is wise by  the standards of this age, he should become a "fool" so that he  may become **wise.** **For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in**  **God's sight.** As it is written: "He catches the wise in their  craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows that **the thoughts of**  **the wise are futile**." So then, no more boasting about men! **All**  **things are yours,** whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas **or the**  **world or life or death or the present or the future--all are**  **yours,** and **you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.**    So then, men ought to regard us as **servants of Christ** and as  **those entrusted with the secret things of God.** Now **it is**  **required that those who have been given a trust must prove**  **faithful.** **I care very little if I am judged by you** or by any  human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience  is clear, but that does not make me innocent. **It is the Lord**  **who judges me.** Therefore **judge nothing before the appointed**  **time; wait till the Lord comes**. **He will bring to light what is**  **hidden in darkness and will**>**expose the motives**<**of men's hearts.**  **At that time each will receive his praise from God.**    Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos  for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of  the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will  not take pride in one man over against another.>**For who makes**  **you different from anyone else?**<**What do you have that you did**  **not receive?** **And if you did receive it, why do you boast as**  **though you did not?**    Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You  have become kings--and that without us! How I wish that you  really had become kings so that we might be kings with you! For  **it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display** at the  end of the procession, **like men condemned to die in the arena.**  **We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe,** **to angels**  **as well as to men. We are fools for Christ, but** **you are so wise**  **ee in Christ!** **We are weak,** **but you are strong!** **You are honored,** **we**  **are**>**dishonored!**<**To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we**  **are in rags, we are**>>**brutally treated**<<**, we are homeless. We work**  **hard with our own hands.** **When we are**>>**cursed**<<**, we bless; when we**  **are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered,**>>**we answer**  **kindly**<<**. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth,**  **the refuse of the world.**    I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear  children. Even though **you have ten thousand guardians in**  **Christ,** you do not have many fathers, for **in Christ Jesus I**  **became your father through the gospel.** Therefore I urge you to  imitate me. For this reason I am sending to you **Timothy, my son**  whom I **love,** who is **faithful in the Lord.** He will remind you of  my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach  everywhere in every church.    Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you.  But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and  then **I will find out** not only how these arrogant people are  ss talking, but **what power they have.** For **the kingdom of God is**  **not a matter of talk but of power.** What do you prefer? **Shall I**  **come to you with a whip, or in love and with a gentle spirit?**    It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among  you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man  has his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather  have been filled with grief and **have put out of your fellowship**  **the man who did this?** Even though I am not physically present,  I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on  the one who did this, just as if I were present. **When** **you are**  **assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in**  **spirit, and** **the power of our Lord Jesus is present,**>>**hand this**  **man over to Satan, so that the**>**sinful nature**<**may be destroyed**<<  **and his spirit saved** **on the day of the Lord.**    Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that **a little yeast**  **works through the whole batch of dough**? **Get rid of the old**  **yeast** that you may be a new batch without yeast--**as you really**  **are.** For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.  **ee**hh **Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the**  **yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast,**  **the bread of sincerity and truth.**    I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually  immoral people--not at all meaning the **people of this world** who  are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that  hh case you would have to leave this world. **But now I am writing**  **you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a**  **brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a**  **slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not**  **even eat.**    What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church?  **Are you not to judge those inside?** God will judge those  hh outside. **"Expel the wicked man from among you."**    If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before  the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? Do you  not know that **the saints will judge the world**? And if you are  to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial  cases? **Do you not know that we will judge angels?** How much more  the things of this life! Therefore, if you have disputes about  such matters, **appoint as judges even men of little account in**  **the church!** I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there  is nobody among you **wise** enough to judge a dispute between  believers? But instead, one brother goes to law against  another--and this in front of unbelievers!    **The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have**  **been completely defeated already.** Why not rather be wronged?  Why not rather be cheated? Instead, **you yourselves cheat and do**  **wrong, and you do this to your brothers.**    hh Do you not know that **the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of**  **God?** **Do not be deceived:** **Neither the sexually immoral nor**  **idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual**  **offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor**  **slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.** And  ss that is what some of you **were.** But **you were washed, you were**  **sanctified,** you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus  Christ and **by the Spirit of our God.**    "Everything is permissible for me"--but not everything is  beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"--but **I will not**  **be**>**mastered**<**by anything.** "Food for the stomach and the stomach  hh for food"--but God will destroy them both. **The body is not**  **meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for**  **the body.** **By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and**  **he will raise us also.** Do you not know that **your bodies are**  **members of Christ himself**? Shall I then take the members of  Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know  that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in  body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." But **he**  **ee**ss **who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.**    **ee** **Flee** from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are  hh outside his body, but **he who sins sexually sins against his own**  **body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy**  ss **Spirit, who is in you,** whom you have received from God? **You are**  **ee not your own; you were bought at a price.** **Therefore honor God**  **with your body.**    Now for the matters you wrote about: **It is good for a man not to**  **marry.** But **since there is so much immorality,** each man should  have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband  should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the  wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her  alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's  body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not  deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so  that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together  again **so that Satan will not tempt you because of your** **lack of**  **self-control.** I say this as a concession, not as a command. I  wish that all men were as I am. But **each man has his own gift**  **from God; one has this gift, another has that.**    Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to  stay unmarried, as I am. But **if they cannot control themselves,**  they should marry, for it is better to marry than **to burn with**  **passion.**    To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): **A wife**  **must not separate from her husband.** But if she does, she must  remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. **And a**  **husband must not divorce his wife.**    To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a  wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him,  he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is  not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not  divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified  through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified  through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be  unclean, but as it is, **they are holy.**    But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or  woman is not bound in such circumstances; **God has called us to**  **live in peace.** How do you know, wife, whether you will **save**  your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will  **save** your wife?    Nevertheless, **each one should retain** **the place in life that the**  **Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him.** This is  the rule I lay down in all the churches. Was a man already  circumcised when he was called? He should not become  uncircumcised. Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He  should not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and  **ee** uncircumcision is nothing. **Keeping God's commands is what**  **counts.** Each one should remain in the situation which he was in  when God called him. Were you a slave when you were called?  Don't let it trouble you--although if you can gain your  freedom, do so. For **he who was a slave when he was called by**  **the Lord is the Lord's freedman;** similarly, **he who was a free**  **man when he was called is Christ's**>>>**slave**<<<**. You were bought at a**  **price; do not become slaves of men.** Brothers, each man, as  responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called  him to.    Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a  judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. Because  of the **present crisis,** I think that it is good for you to  remain as you are. **Are you married? Do not seek a divorce.** Are  you unmarried? Do not look for a wife. But if you do marry, you  have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned.  But **those who marry will face many troubles in this life,** and I  want to spare you this.    What I mean, brothers, is that **the time is short.** **From now on**  **those who have wives should live as if they had none; those who**  **mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were**  **not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep;**  **those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in**  **them. For** **this world in its present form is passing away.**    I would like you to be free from concern. **An unmarried man is**  **concerned about the Lord's affairs--how he can please the Lord.**  But a married man is **concerned about the affairs of this**  **world**--how he can please his wife--and his interests are  divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is **concerned about the**  **Lord's affairs:** Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both  body and spirit. But a married woman is **concerned about** **the**  **affairs of this world**--how she can please her husband. I am  saying this for **your own good, not to restrict you,** but that  **HSMS** you may **live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.**    If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is  engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels  he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning.  They should get married. But **the man who has settled the matter**  **in his own mind,** **who is under no compulsion but has control**  **over his own will,** and who has **made up his mind** not to marry  the virgin--this man also **does the right thing.** So then, he who  marries the virgin **does right,** but **he who does not marry her**  **does even better.**    A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her  husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he  must belong to the Lord. In my judgment, she is happier if she  stays as she is--and **I think that I too have the Spirit of God.**    Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess  knowledge. **Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.** **The man who**  **thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to**  **ee** **know.** **But** **the man who loves God is known by God.**    So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an  idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God  but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in  heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many  "lords"), yet for us there is but **one God, the Father,** **from**  **ee whom all things came and** **for whom we live;** and there is but **one**  ss **Lord, Jesus Christ,** **through whom all things came and** **through**  **whom we live.**    But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed  to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as  having been sacrificed to an idol, and since **their conscience**  **is weak,** it is defiled. But food does not bring us near to God;  we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.    Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not  become a stumbling block to the weak. For if **anyone with a weak**  **conscience** sees you who have this knowledge **eating in an idol's**  **temple,** won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed  to idols? **So** **this weak brother,** for whom Christ died, **is**  **destroyed** by your knowledge. **When you sin against your brothers**  **in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against**  **Christ.** Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother **to fall into**  **sin,** I will never eat meat again, **so that I will not cause him**  **to fall.**    Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our  Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? Even  though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you!  For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.    This is my defense to those who sit in judgment on me. Don't we  have the right to food and drink? Don't we have the right to  take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles  and the Lord's brothers and Cephas? Or is it only I and  Barnabas who must work for a living?    Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard  and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not  drink of the milk? Do I say this merely from a human point of  view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? For it is written in  the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out  the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned? Surely he  says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us,  because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they  ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. If we  have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a  material harvest from you? If others have this right of support  from you, shouldn't we have it all the more?    But we did not use this right. On the contrary, **we put up with**  **anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ.** Don't you  know that those who work in the temple get their food from the  temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is  offered on the altar? In the same way, **the Lord has commanded**  **that those who preach the gospel should receive their living**  **from the gospel.**    **But I have not used any of these rights.** And I am not writing  this in the hope that you will do such things for me. I would  rather die than have anyone deprive me of this boast. Yet when  I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for **I am compelled to**  **preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!** If I preach  voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply  discharging the trust committed to me. What then is my reward?  **ee** Just this: that **in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of**  **charge,** and so not make use of my rights in preaching it.    **ee** **Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a**^^**slave**<<**to**  **everyone, to win as many as possible.** To the Jews I became like  a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like  one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as  to win those under the law. To those not having the law I  became like one not having the law (**though I am not free from**  **God's law but** **am under Christ's law),** so as to win those not  having the law. **To the weak I became weak, to win the weak.** **I**  **have become all things to all men so that by all possible means**  **I might save some.** **I do all this for the sake of the gospel,**  that I may share in its blessings.    Do you not know that in a race **all the runners run, but only one**  **ee gets the prize**? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone  **ee**hh who competes in the games goes into **strict training.** They do it  to get a crown that will not last; but **we do it** **to get a crown**  **that will last forever.** **Therefore** **I do not run like a man**  **running aimlessly;** **I do not fight like a man beating the air.**  **ee**hh **No,**>>>**I beat my body and make it my slave**<<<**so that after I have**  **preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the**  **prize.**    ForI do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that  our forefathers were **all** under the cloud and that they **all**  passed through the sea. They were **all** baptized into Moses in  the cloud and in the sea. They **all** ate the same spiritual food  and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the  spiritual rock that>**accompanied**<them, and that rock was Christ.  **Nevertheless,**>>>>**God was not pleased with most of them; their**  **HSMS bodies were scattered over the desert.**<<<<    hh Now these things occurred as examples>**to keep us from setting our**  **ee hearts on evil things**<as they did. **Do not be idolaters,** as some  of them were; **as it is written:** **"The people sat down to eat and**  **drink and got up to**>>>**indulge in pagan revelry.**<<<**"** **We should not**  >**commit**<**sexual immorality, as some of them did--and** **in one day**  **twenty-three thousand of them died.** We should not test the  Lord, as some of them did--and were killed by snakes. And **do**  **not grumble,** **as some of them did--and were killed by the**  **destroying angel.**    **These things happened to them as examples and were written down**  **ee as warnings for us,** **on whom** **the fulfillment of the ages has**  **come. So,** **if you think you are standing firm, be careful that**  **you don't fall!** No temptation has **seized you** except what is  ss common to man. And **God is faithful; he will not let you be**  **tempted beyond**>**what you can bear**<**. But when you are tempted, he**  **will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.**    **Therefore,** my dear friends, **flee from idolatry.** I speak to  sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. Is not the  cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in  the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a  participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf,  we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one  loaf.    Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the  sacrifices participate in the altar? Do I mean then that a  sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is  anything? No, but **the sacrifices of pagans are offered to**  **demons,** not to God, and I do not want you to be participants  hh with demons. **You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup**  **of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table**  **ee and the table of demons.** Are we trying to arouse the Lord's  jealousy? Are we stronger than he?    >**"Everything is permissible"--but not everything is beneficial.**  **"Everything is permissible"--but not everything is**  **ee constructive.**<**Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of**  **others.**    Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of  conscience, for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in  it."    If some unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat  whatever is put before you without raising questions of  conscience. But if anyone says to you, "This has been offered  in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the man  who told you and for conscience' sake--the other man's  conscience, I mean, not yours. For why should my freedom be  judged by another's conscience? If I take part in the meal with  thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank  God for?    **HSMS** So whether you eat or drink or **whatever you do, do it all for the**  **glory of God.** Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews,  Greeks or the church of God--even as **I try to please everybody**  **ee in**>**every way**<. **For** **I am not seeking my own**>**good**<**but the good of**  **many, so that they may be saved.** Follow my example, as **I follow**  **the example of Christ.**    I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to  the teachings, just as I passed them on to you.    **Now I want you to realize** that **the head of every man is Christ,**  and **the head of the woman is man,** and **the head of Christ is**  **God.** Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered  dishonors his head. And every woman who prays or prophesies  with her head uncovered dishonors her head--it is just as  though her head were shaved. If a woman does not cover her  head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace  for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should  cover her head. A **man** ought not to cover his head, since **he is**  **the image and glory of God; but** **the woman is the glory of man.**  For man did not come from woman, but woman from man**; neither**  **was man created for woman, but woman for man.** For this reason,  and because of the angels, **the woman ought to have a sign of**  **authority on her head.**    In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man  independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man  is born of woman. But everything comes from God. Judge for  yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her  head uncovered? Does not **the very nature of things** teach you  that **if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him,** but that  **if a woman has long hair, it is her glory**? For long hair is  given to her as a covering. **If anyone wants to be contentious**  **about this, we have no other practice--nor do the churches of**  **God.**    In the following directives I have no praise for you, for **your**  **meetings do more harm than good.** In the first place, I hear  that when you come together as a church, **there are divisions**  **among you,** and to some extent I believe it. **No doubt there have**  **to be differences among you**^**to show which of you have God's**  **approval.**<When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper  you eat, for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting  for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. Don't  you have homes to eat and drink in? Or **do you despise the**  **church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?** What shall  I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not!    For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The  Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when  he had given thanks, he broke it and said, **"This is my body,**  **which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."** In the same  way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "**This cup is the new**  **covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in**  **remembrance of me."** For whenever you eat this bread and drink  this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.    Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord  in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against **the**  **body and blood of the Lord.** A man ought to examine himself  before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone  who eats and drinks without **recognizing the body of the Lord**  eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you  are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But  ss**ee** if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. **When**  **we are judged by the Lord, we are**>**being**<**disciplined so that we**  **will not be condemned with the world.**    So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for  each other. If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that  when you meet together it may not result in judgment.    And when I come I will give further directions.    Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be  ignorant. You know that **when you were pagans,** **somehow or other**  **you were influenced and led astray** **to** mute **idols.** Therefore I  tell you that **no one who is** **speaking by the Spirit of God** **says,**  **"Jesus be cursed,"** and **no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except**  **by the Holy Spirit.**    There are different kinds of gifts, but **the same** **Spirit**. There  are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are  **different kinds of working,** **but** **the same God works all of them**  **in all men.**    Now to each one **the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the**  **common good.** To one **there is given** **through the Spirit** **the**  **message of wisdom,** to another **the** **message of knowledge** **by means**  **of the same** **Spirit,** to another **faith by the same Spirit,** to  another **gifts of healing by that one Spirit,** to another  **miraculous powers,** to another **prophecy,** to another  **distinguishing between spirits,** to another **speaking in**  **different kinds of tongues,** and to still another **the**  **interpretation of tongues.** **All these are** **the work of one and**  **the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one,** **just as he**  **determines.**    The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and  though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is  with Christ. For **we were all baptized by one Spirit into one**  **body**--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and **we were all**  **given the one Spirit to drink.**    Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot  should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the  body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the  body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do  not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to  be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would  the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where  would the sense of smell be? But in fact **God has arranged the**  **parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to**  **be.** If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it  is, there are many parts, but one body.    The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head  cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary,  those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are  indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable  we treat with special honor. And the parts that are  unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our  presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has  combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to  the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division  in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for  each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if  one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.    Now **you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of**  **it.** And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles,  second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also  those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those  with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different  kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all  teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing?  **ee** Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But **eagerly desire**  **the greater gifts.**    And now I will show you **the most excellent way.**    hh If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not  **love,** I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. **If I**  **have the gift of prophecy and**>**can fathom**<**all mysteries and all**  **knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but**  **have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the**  **poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I**  **gain nothing.**    **Love** is patient, **love** is kind. It **does not envy,** it **does not**  **boast,** it **is not proud.** It **is not rude,** it>**is not self-seeking**<**,**  it **is not**>**easily angered**<**,** it>**keeps no record of wrongs**<. **Love**  hh **does not**>**delight in evil**<**but rejoices with the truth.**>>>>**It** **always**  ff**ee** **protects,** **always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.**<<<<    **Love** **never**>**fails**<**.** But where there are prophecies, they will  cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where  there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and  we prophesy in part, but **when perfection comes,** the imperfect  disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I  thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a  man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor  reflection as in a mirror; then **we shall see face to face.** Now  I know in part; **then** **I shall know fully, even as I am fully**  **known.**    And now **these three**>>>>**remain**<<<<**: faith, hope and love.** But **the**  **greatest** of these **is** **love.**    **ee** **Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts,**  **especially the gift of prophecy.** For anyone who speaks in a  tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one  understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. But  **everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening,**  **encouragement and comfort.** He who speaks in a tongue edifies  himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. I would like  every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have  you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks  in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be  edified.    Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good  will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or  knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction? Even in the case  of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the flute or harp,  how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is  a distinction in the notes? Again, if the trumpet does not  sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? So it is  with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue,  how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be  speaking into the air. Undoubtedly there are all sorts of  languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. If  then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am  a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me. So it  is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, **try**  **to excel in gifts** **that build up the church.**    For this reason anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he  may interpret what he says. For if I pray in a tongue, my  spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I  will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I  will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. If  you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds  himself among those who do not understand say "Amen" to your  thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? You  may be giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not  edified.    I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in  the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to  instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.    hh Brothers, stop thinking like children. **In regard to evil be**  **infants, but in your thinking be adults.** In the Law it is  written: "Through men of strange tongues and through the lips  of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they  will not listen to me," says the Lord.    Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers;  prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers. So if  the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues,  and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in,  will they not say that you are out of your mind? But **if an**  **unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while**  **everybody is prophesying,**>>>**he will be**>**convinced**<**by all** **that he**  **is a sinner and**>**will be judged**<**by all,** **and** **the secrets of his**  **heart will be laid bare.**<<<**So** **he will fall down and worship God,**  **exclaiming, "God is really among you!"**    What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together,  everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a  tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for **the**  **strengthening of the church.** If anyone speaks in a tongue,  two--or at the most three--should speak, one at a time, and  someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker  should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God.    Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh  carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone  who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can  all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and  encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control  of prophets. For **God is not a God of**>**disorder**<**but of peace.**    **As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain**  **silent in the churches.** **They are not allowed to speak,** **but must**  **be in submission,** as the Law says. If they want to inquire  about something, they should ask their own husbands at home;  for **it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.**    Did the **word of God** originate with you? Or are you the only  people it has reached? **If anybody thinks he is a prophet or**  **spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing**  **to you is the Lord's command.** **If he ignores this, he himself**  **will be ignored.**    Therefore, my brothers, **be eager to prophesy,** and do not forbid  speaking in tongues. But **everything should be done in a fitting**  **and orderly way.**    Now, brothers, I want to remind you of **the gospel** I preached to  you, which you received and **on which you have taken your stand.**  eeff **By this gospel** **you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word** I  preached to you. **Otherwise,** **you have believed in vain.**    For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance:  **that Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures, that  he was buried, that **he was raised on the third day** according to  the Scriptures, and **that he appeared** to Peter, and then to the  Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of  the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living,  though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then  to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as  to one abnormally born.    For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be  called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But  **by the grace of God** **I am what I am,** and his grace to me was not  **ee**ss without effect. No, **I worked harder than all of them--yet not**  **I**, but **the grace of God that was with me**. Whether, then, it was  I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what **you**  **believed.**    But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead,  how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the  dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even  Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our  preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we  are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have  testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he  did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if  the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised  either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is  futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have  fallen asleep in Christ are lost.>**If only for this life**<**we have**  **hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.**    But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits  of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a  man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For  as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But  each in his own turn: **Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he**  **comes, those who belong to him.** **Then the end will come,** **when he**  **hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed**  **all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he**  **has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be**  **destroyed is death.** For he "has put everything under his feet."  Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it  is clear that this does not include God himself, who put  everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son  himself will be made subject to him who put everything under  him, so that God may be all in all.    Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are  baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why  are people baptized for them? And as for us, **why do we endanger**  **ourselves every hour? I die every day--**>>**I mean that,**  **brothers--just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus**  **our Lord.**<<If **I fought wild beasts in Ephesus** for merely human  reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, "Let  us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." Do not be misled: **"Bad**  **ee**hh **company**>**corrupts good character**<**."** >**Come back to your senses**<as  you ought, and>**stop sinning**<; for **there are some who are**  >**ignorant**<**of God--I say this to your shame.**    But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of  body will they come?" How foolish! What you sow does not come  to life unless it dies. **When you sow,** **you do not plant the body**  **that will be, but just a seed,** perhaps of wheat or of something  else. But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each  kind of seed he gives its own body. All flesh is not the same:  Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another  and fish another. There are also **heavenly bodies and there are**  **earthly bodies;** but **the splendor of the heavenly bodies** is one  kind, and **the splendor of the earthly bodies** is another. **The**  **sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars**  **another; and star differs from star in splendor.**    So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. **The body that is**  **sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable;** it is sown in  dishonor, it is **raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is**  **raised in power;** **it is sown a natural body, it is raised a**  **spiritual body.**    If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So **it**  **is written: "The first man Adam became a living being";** **the**  **last Adam,** **a life-giving spirit.** The spiritual did not come  first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. **The first**  **man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven.**  As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and  **as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.**  hh And just as we have borne the>**likeness**<of the earthly man, **so**  **shall we bear the**>**likeness**<**of the man from heaven.**    I declare to you, brothers, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit**  **the kingdom of God,** nor does the perishable inherit the  imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all  sleep, but **we will all be changed**--in a flash, in the twinkling  of an eye, **at the last trumpet.** For the trumpet will sound, **the**  **dead will be raised imperishable,** **and we will be changed. For**  **the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable**, and  **the mortal with immortality.** When the perishable has been  clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality,  then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been  swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory?  Where, O death, is your sting?" **The sting of death is sin,** and  **the power of sin is the law.** But thanks be to **God!** **He gives us**  **the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**    ff Therefore, my dear brothers, **stand firm. Let nothing move you.**  **HSMS** **Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord,** **because**  **you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.**    **ee** Now about **the collection** for God's people: Do what I told the  Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each  one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his  income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will  have to be made. Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of  introduction to the men you approve and send them with your  gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable for me to go also,  they will accompany me.    After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you--for I will be  going through Macedonia. Perhaps I will stay with you awhile,  or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my  journey, wherever I go. I do not want to see you now and make  only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if  the Lord permits. But I will stay on at Ephesus until  Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened  to me, and there are many who oppose me.    If Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he  is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just  as I am. No one, then, should refuse to accept him. **Send him on**  **his way in peace** so that he may return to me. I am expecting  him along with the brothers.    Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you  with the brothers. He was quite unwilling to go now, but he  will go when he has the opportunity.    ff **Be**>**on your guard;**<**stand firm in the faith;**>**be men of courage;**<**be**  **HSMS strong. Do everything in love.**    You know that **the household of Stephanas** were the first converts  ee in Achaia, and **they have devoted themselves to the service of**  **the saints.** I urge you, brothers, to **submit to such as these**  ee **and to** **everyone who joins in the work, and labors at it.** I was  glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because  ee **they have supplied what was lacking** from you. For they  refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve  recognition.    The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila  and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the  church that meets at their house. All the brothers here send  you greetings. Greet one another with **a holy kiss.**    I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand.    **If anyone does not love the Lord--a curse be on him.** Come, O  Lord!    **The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.**    My **love** to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.  **============**  **Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,** and Timothy  our brother,    To the church of God in Corinth, together with all the saints  throughout Achaia:    **Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus**  **Christ.**    Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **the**  ss  **Father of compassion** and **the God of all comfort, who comforts**  **us in all our troubles,** so that we can comfort those in any  trouble with **the comfort we ourselves have received from God.**  For **just as** **the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives,**  **so also** **through Christ our comfort overflows.** If we are  distressed, it is for your comfort and **salvation;** if we are  comforted, it is for your **comfort, which produces in you**  **patient endurance of the same** **sufferings we suffer.** And our  hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in  our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.    We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about **the**  **ee**  **hardships we suffered** in the province of Asia. **We were**>**under**  **great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure**<**, so that we**  **despaired even of life.** Indeed, **in our hearts we felt the**  **sentence of death.** But this happened that we might **not rely on**  **ourselves but on God,** **who raises the dead.** **He has delivered us**  **from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us.** **On him we**  **have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,** as you  help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our  behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the  prayers of many.    Now this is **our boast:** Our conscience testifies that **we have**  **ee conducted ourselves** in the world, and especially in our  hh relations with you, **in the**>>**holiness**<<**and sincerity that are from**  **God**. **We have done so** not according to worldly wisdom but  ss **according to God's grace.** For we do not write you anything you  cannot read or understand. And I hope that, as you have  understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that  you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of  the Lord Jesus.    Because I was confident of this, I planned to visit you first so  that you might benefit twice. I planned to visit you on my way  to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia, and then  to have you send me on my way to Judea. When I planned this,  did I do it lightly? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner  so that in the same breath I say, "Yes, yes" and "No, no"?    But as surely as **God is faithful,** our message to you is not "Yes"  and "No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached  among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No,"  but in him it has always been "Yes." **For no matter how many**  **promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ.** And so through  ss him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. **Now** **it is**  **God who**>>>**makes both us and you stand firm**<<<**in Christ. He anointed**  ss  **us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our**  **hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come**.    I call God as my witness that it was in order to spare you that I  did not return to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith,  ff but we work with you for your joy, because>**it is by faith you**  **stand firm.**<So I made up my mind that I would not make another  painful visit to you. For if I grieve you, who is left to make  me glad but you whom I have grieved? I wrote as I did so that  when I came I should not be distressed by those who ought to  make me rejoice. I had confidence in all of you, that you would  all share my joy. For I wrote you out of great distress and  anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to  **let you know the depth of my love for you.**    If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he  has grieved all of you, to some extent--not to put it too  severely. The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is  sufficient for him. Now instead, you ought to forgive and  comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive  sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to **reaffirm your love for him.**  **ee** The reason I wrote you was **to see if you would stand the test**  **and be obedient** **in everything.** If you forgive anyone, I also  forgive him. And what I have forgiven--if there was anything to  forgive--I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake,  in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware  of his schemes.    Now when **I went** toTroas **to preach the gospel of Christ and found**  **that** **the Lord had opened a door for me,** I still had no peace of  mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. **So I said**  **good-by to them and went on to Macedonia.**    But thanks be to **God, who always leads us in triumphal procession**  **in Christ** **and** **through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of**  **the knowledge of him.** For **we are to God the aroma of Christ**  **among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.** **To**  **the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance**  **of life.** And who is equal to such a task? **Unlike so many, we do**  **not peddle the word of God for profit.** On the contrary, **in**  **Christ we speak before God with sincerity,** **like** **men sent from**  **God.**    Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like  some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? You  yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and  read by everybody. You show that **you are a letter from Christ,**  ss the result of our ministry, **written** not with ink but **with the**  **Spirit of the living God,** not on tablets of stone but **on**  **tablets of human hearts.**    Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not  that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for  ss ourselves, but **our**>**competence**<**comes from God.** **He has made us**  >**competent**<as ministers of **a new covenant**--not of the letter but  ss **of the Spirit;** for the letter kills, but **the Spirit gives life.**    **Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in**  **letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could**  **not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory,**  **fading though it was,** **will not the ministry of the Spirit be**  **even more glorious? If the ministry that condemns men is**  **glorious, how much more glorious is** **the ministry**>**that brings**<  **righteousness! For what was glorious has no glory now in**  **comparison with the surpassing glory. And if what was fading**  **away came with glory,** **how much greater is the glory of that**  **which lasts!**    Therefore, **since we have such a hope,** **we are very bold.** **We are**  **not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the**  **Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading**  **away. But their minds were made dull,** for to this day the same  veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been  removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this  day when Moses is read, **a veil covers their hearts.** But  **whenever anyone** **turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.** Now  ss **the Lord is the Spirit,** and **where the Spirit of the Lord is,**  **there is freedom**. And **we, who with unveiled faces all**>**reflect**<  **the Lord's glory,** **are being transformed into**>**his likeness with**  **ever-increasing glory**<**,** **which comes from the Lord, who is the**  **Spirit.**    Therefore, **since** **through God's mercy** **we have this ministry,** **we do**  hh **not lose heart.** Rather, **we have renounced**>**secret and shameful**<  **ways**; **we do not use deception,**^^^**nor do we distort the** **word of**  **God.** On the contrary, **by setting forth the truth plainly**<<<**we**  **commend ourselves to every man's conscience** **in the sight of**  **God.** And even **if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those**  **who are perishing.** **The god of this age has blinded the minds of**  **unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of**  **the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.** For we do not  preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and **ourselves as**  ss  **your servants for Jesus' sake.** For **God,** who said, "Let light  shine out of darkness," **made his light shine in our hearts** **to**  **give us** **the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the**  **face of Christ.**    But we have this **treasure** in jars of clay to show that **this**  ss  **all-surpassing power is from God and not from us**. **We are hard**  **pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in**  **despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not**  **destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of**  **Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our**  **body.** **For we who are alive are always being given over to death**  **for Jesus' sake,** **so that** **his life may be revealed in our mortal**  **body.** **So then,** **death is at work in us, but life is at work in**  **you.**    ff**ee**  >>>**It is written:** **"I believed; therefore I have spoken.**" **With that**  **same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak,**<<<  **because we know that** **the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the**  **dead will also raise us with Jesus** and present us with you in  his presence. All this is for your benefit, so that **the grace**  **that is reaching more and more people** may cause thanksgiving to  overflow to the glory of God.    Therefore **we do not lose heart.** Though **outwardly we are wasting**  **away,** **yet** **inwardly we are being renewed day by day.** **For our**  **light and momentary**>**troubles are achieving**<**for us an eternal**  **ee glory**>**that far outweighs them all**<**. So we**>**fix our eyes not on**  **what is seen, but on what is unseen.**<**For what is seen is**  >**temporary**<**, but what is unseen is eternal.**    Now **we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we**  **have a building from God, an** **eternal** **house in heaven,** not built  by human hands. **Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with**  **our heavenly dwelling,**>**because when we are clothed**<**, we will not**  **be found naked.** For while we are in this tent, **we groan and are**  **burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed** **but to be**  **clothed with our heavenly dwelling,** **so that what is mortal may**  **be swallowed up by life.** Now it is **God who has made us for this**  ss **very purpose** and **has given us the Spirit as a deposit,**  **guaranteeing what is to come.**    ff **Therefore** **we are always confident** **and know that** **as long as we are**  ff **at home in the body we are away from the Lord.** **We**>**live**<**by**  **faith, not by sight. We are confident,** I say, **and would prefer**  **to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.** **So** **we make**  **ee it our goal to please him,** whether we are at home in the body  or away from it. **For we must all appear before the judgment**  **seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for**  **the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.**    **ee** **Since, then, we know what it is to** **fear the Lord,** **we**>**try to**<  **persuade men.** **What we are is plain to God, and** **I hope it is**  **also plain to your conscience.** We are not trying to commend  ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to  take pride in us, so that you can answer **those who take pride**  **in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. If we are**  >**out of our mind**<**, it is for the sake of God;** if we are in our  ss right mind, it is for you. For **Christ's love**>>>**compels**<<<**us,**  because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore  all died. And he died for all, that **those who live should no**  **longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and**  **HSMS was raised again.**    So from now on^^^**we regard no one from a worldly point of view.**<<<  Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.  ss Therefore, **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the**  **old has gone, the new has come!** **All this is from God, who**  **reconciled us to himself through Christ** and gave us the  ministry of reconciliation: that **God was reconciling the world**  **to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.** **And**  **he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are**  **therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his**  **appeal through us.** **We implore you** on Christ's behalf: **Be**  **reconciled to God. God made him who**>**had**<**no sin to be sin for**  hh  **us, so that in him** **we might become the righteousness of God.**    As God's fellow workers **we urge you not to receive God's grace in**  **vain**. **For he says,** **"In the time of my favor I heard you, and in**  **the day of salvation I helped you."** I tell you, **now is the time**  **of God's favor**, **now is the day of salvation.**    **We put no stumbling block in anyone's path,** so that our ministry  will not be discredited. Rather, as servants of God **we commend**  **ourselves** in every way: in **great endurance;** in>**troubles**<**,**  **hardships and**>**distresses**<**;** in **beatings, imprisonments and riots;**  in>**hard work**<**, sleepless nights and hunger;** in **purity,**  **understanding, patience and kindness;** **in the Holy Spirit** and **in**  **sincere love;** **in** **truthful speech** and **in** **the** **power of God;** **with**  **weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left;**  **through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report;**  **genuine, yet regarded as impostors**; **known, yet regarded as**  **unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed;**  **sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich;**  **having nothing, and yet possessing everything.**    **We have spoken freely to you,** Corinthians, **and opened wide our**  **hearts to you.**^We are not withholding our affection from you,  but you are withholding yours from us.<As a fair exchange--I  speak as to my children--open wide your hearts also.    **Do not be yoked**^**together**<**with unbelievers. For what do**  **righteousness and**^**wickedness**<**have in common? Or what fellowship**  **can light have with darkness?** **What**^**harmony**<**is there** between  Christ and Belial? **What does a believer**^**have in common**<**with an**  **unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God**  **and idols?** **For we are the temple of the living God**. **As God has**  **said:** **"I will live with them and walk among them,** and I will be  their God, and they will be my people." **"Therefore come out**  hh **from them and be separate, says the Lord.** **Touch no unclean**  **thing, and I will**>>>>**receive**<<<<**you."** **"I will be a Father to you, and**  **you will be**>**my**<**sons and daughters,** **says the Lord Almighty."**    **ee**hh **Since we have these** **promises,** dear friends,>>>>**let us purify**  **ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit,**  **HSMS** **perfecting holiness** **out of reverence for God.**<<<<    **Make room for us in your hearts.** We have wronged no one, we have  corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. I do not say this  to condemn you; I have said before that you have such a place  in our hearts that we would live or die with you. I have great  confidence in you; I take great pride in you. I am greatly  encouraged; **in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.**    For when we came into Macedonia,>**this body of ours**<**had no rest,**  **but we were**>**harassed at every turn--conflicts on the outside,**  **fears within.**<But **God,** who comforts the downcast, **comforted us**  **by the coming of Titus,** and not only by his coming but **also by**  **the comfort you had given him.** He told us about your longing  for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that  **my joy was greater than ever.**    Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it.  Though I did regret it--I see that my letter hurt you, but only  for a little while--yet now I am happy, not because you were  made sorry, but because>**your sorrow led you to**<**repentance.** For  >**you became sorrowful as God intended**<and so were not harmed in  rr any way by us. **Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to**  **salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings**  **death.** **See what this godly sorrow has produced in you:** **what**  **earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what**  **indignation, what**>**alarm**<**, what longing, what**>**concern**<**, what**  **HSMS** >**readiness to see justice done.**<**At every point you have proved**  **yourselves to be innocent in this matter.** So even though I  wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the  wrong or of the injured party, but rather that before God you  could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are. **By all this**  **we are encouraged.**    In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially  delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has  been refreshed by all of you. I had boasted to him about you,  and you have not embarrassed me. But just as everything we said  to you was true, so our boasting about you to **Titus** has proved  to be true as well. And his affection for you is all the  greater when he remembers that **you were all obedient, receiving**  **him with fear and trembling.** I am glad **I can have complete**  **confidence in you.**    And now, brothers, we want you to know about **the grace that God**  **has given the Macedonian churches.** **Out of the most severe**  **trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled**  **up in rich generosity.** For I testify that **they gave** as much as  they were able, and even **beyond their ability.** Entirely on  their own, they **urgently pleaded** with us for **the privilege** of  sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as  we expected, but **they gave themselves first to the Lord** and  then to us in keeping with God's will. So we urged Titus, since  he had earlier made a beginning, to **bring also to completion**  **this act of grace on your part.** But **just as** **you excel in**  **everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete**  **HSMS earnestness** **and in your love for us--see that you also excel in**  **this grace of giving.**    I am not commanding you, but>>**I want to test the sincerity of your**  **love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.**<<For you  know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was  rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through  his poverty might become rich.    And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter:  Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have  the desire to do so. **Now finish the work,** **so that** **your eager**  **willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it,**  according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the  gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to  what he does not have.    Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are  hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present  time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn  their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be  equality, as it is written: "He who gathered much did not have  too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little."    I thank God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I  have for you. For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is  coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative.  And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by  all the churches for his service to the gospel. What is more,  he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the  offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord  himself and to show our eagerness to help. We want to avoid any  criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. **For we**  **are taking pains to do what is right,** not only in the eyes of  the Lord but also in the eyes of men.    In addition, we are sending with them **our brother** **who has often**  **proved to us in many ways that he is zealous,** and now even more  so because of his great confidence in you. As for Titus, he is  my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers,  they are representatives of the churches and an honor to  Christ. Therefore **show these men the proof of your love** and the  reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it.    There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the  saints. For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been  boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since  last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm  has stirred most of them to action. But I am sending the  brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter  should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said  you would be. For if any Macedonians come with me and find you  unprepared, we--not to say anything about you--would be ashamed  of having been so confident. So I thought it necessary to urge  the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the  arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it  will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.    Remember this: **Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly,**  **and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.** **Each man**  **should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not**  **reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful**  ss **giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you,** so that  **in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will**  **ee abound in every good work.** **As it is written:** **"He has scattered**  **abroad his gifts to the poor;** **his righteousness endures**  ss **forever."** Now **he who supplies seed to the sower** and **bread for**  **food** **will also supply and increase** **your store of seed** and **will**  ss **enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made**  **ee rich in every way so that you can be generous**>>**on every**  **occasion,**<<and through us your generosity will result in  thanksgiving to God.    This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of  God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of  thanks to God. **Because of** **the service by which you have proved**  **yourselves,** men will praise God for^**the obedience that**  **accompanies**<**your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for**  **your generosity** in sharing with them and with everyone else.  **And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you,**  **because of** **the surpassing grace God has given you**. **Thanks be to**  **God for** **his indescribable gift!**    **By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you**--I,  Paul, who am "timid" when face to face with you, but "bold"  when away! I beg you that when I come I may not have to be **as**  **bold as I expect to be** toward some people who think that we  live by **the standards of this world**. For though we live in the  world, we do not wage war as the world does. **The weapons we**  **fight with** are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary,  ss**ee** they **have divine power to demolish strongholds.** **We demolish**  **arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the**  **knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it**  **obedient to Christ. And** **we will be ready to punish every act of**  **disobedience, once your obedience is complete.**    >**You are looking only on the surface of things.**<If anyone is  confident that he belongs to Christ, he should consider again  that we belong to Christ just as much as he. For even if I  boast somewhat freely about **the authority the Lord gave us** **for**  **building you up** rather than pulling you down, I will not be  ashamed of it. I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten  you with my letters. For some say, "His letters are weighty and  forceful, but **in person he is unimpressive and his speaking**  **amounts to nothing."** Such people should realize that what we  are in our letters when we are absent, we will be in our  actions when we are present.    We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who  commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves  and compare themselves with themselves, they are not **wise.** We,  however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine  our boasting to the field God has assigned to us, a field that  reaches even to you. We are not going too far in our boasting,  as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get  as far as you with the gospel of Christ. Neither do we go  beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. **Our hope**  ff **is that,** **as your faith continues to grow, our area of activity**  **ee** **among you** **will** **greatly expand,** **so that we can preach** **the gospel**  **in the regions beyond you.** For we do not want to boast about  work already done in another man's territory. But, "Let him who  boasts boast in the Lord." **For it is not the one who commends**  **himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.**    I hope you will put up with a little of my foolishness; but you  are already doing that. I am jealous for you with a godly  jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I  might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that  **just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your**>**minds**<  **may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion**  **to Christ.** **For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus**  **other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different**  **spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from**  **the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.** But I  do not think I am in the least inferior to those  **"super-apostles."** **I may not be a trained speaker,** **but** **I do have**  **knowledge.** We have made this **perfectly clear** to you **in every**  **way.**    Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by  preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge? I robbed  other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve  you. And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a  burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia  supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden  to you in any way, and will continue to do so. **As surely as the**  **truth of Christ is in me,** nobody in the regions of Achaia will  stop this boasting of mine. Why? Because I do not **love** you? God  knows I do! And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order  to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to  be considered equal with us in the things they boast about.    **For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading**  **as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself**  **masquerades as an angel of light.** It is not surprising, then,  if **his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness.** **Their**  **end will be what their actions deserve.**    I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then  receive me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little  boasting. In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as  the Lord would, but as a fool. Since many are boasting in the  way the world does, I too will boast. You gladly put up with  fools since **you are so** **wise!** In fact, **you**>**even put up with**<  **anyone who enslaves you or**^^^**exploits**<<<**you or takes advantage of**  **you or**^^^**pushes himself forward**<<<**or slaps you in the face. To my**  **shame I admit that we were too weak for that!**    **What anyone else dares to boast about--I am speaking as a fool--I**  **also dare to boast about.** Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they  Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I.  **Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like**  **this.)** **I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison**  **more frequently,**^^^**been flogged more severely, and been exposed**  **to death again and again.**<<<**Five times I received from the Jews**  **the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods,**  **once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a**  **night and a day in the open sea,**^^^**I have been constantly on the**  **move.**<<<**I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from**  **bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from**  **Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in**  **danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have**  **labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have**  **known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I**  **have been cold and naked.** **Besides everything else, I face daily**  **the pressure of my**^^^**concern**<<<**for all the churches.** **Who is weak,**  **and I do not feel weak?**>>**Who is led into sin, and I do not**  **inwardly burn?**<<    **If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my**  **weakness.** The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be  praised forever, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus the  governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes  guarded in order to arrest me. But I was lowered in a basket  from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.    I must go on **boasting.** Although **there is nothing to be gained,** I  will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. I know a  man in Christ who fourteen years ago was **caught up to the third**  **heaven.** Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not  know--God knows. And I know that this man--whether in the body  or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows--**was caught**  **up to paradise.** He heard **inexpressible things, things that man**  **is not permitted to tell.** I will boast about a man like that,  but **I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses.**  Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool,  because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so **no one**  **will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say.**    **To keep me from becoming conceited** because of these **surpassingly**  **great revelations,** **there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a**  **messenger of Satan, to**>>**torment me**<<**. Three times I pleaded with**  **the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me,** **"My grace**  ss **is sufficient for you, for** **my power is made perfect in**  **weakness."** **Therefore** **I will boast all the more gladly about my**  **weaknesses,** **so that Christ's power may rest on me.** **That is why,**  **for Christ's sake, I**>**delight in**<**weaknesses, in insults, in**  **hardships, in persecutions, in**>**difficulties**<**.** For **when I am**  **weak, then I am strong.**    I have made a fool of myself, but you drove me to it. I ought to  have been commended by you, for **I am not in the least inferior**  **to the "super-apostles," even** **though I am nothing.** **The things**  **that mark an apostle--signs, wonders and miracles**--were done  among you with great perseverance. How were you inferior to the  other churches, except that I was never a burden to you?  Forgive me this wrong!    Now I am ready to visit you for the third time, and I will not be  a burden to you, because what I want is not your possessions  but you. After all, children should not have to save up for  their parents, but parents for their children. So^^^**I will very**  **gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as**  **well. If I love you more, will you love me less?**<<<Be that as it  may, I have not been a burden to you. Yet, crafty fellow that I  am, I caught you by trickery! Did I exploit you through any of  the men I sent you? I urged Titus to go to you and I sent our  brother with him. Titus did not exploit you, did he? Did we not  act in the same spirit and follow the same course?    Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending  ourselves to you? **We have been speaking in the sight of God as**  **those in Christ;** **and** **everything we do, dear friends, is for**  **your strengthening.** For I am afraid that when I come I may not  find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you  want me to be. **I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy,**  **outbursts of anger,**^**factions**<**, slander, gossip, arrogance and**  **disorder.** **I am afraid that when I come again my** **God will humble**  **me** **before you,** **and I will be grieved over many who have sinned**  **earlier** **and** **have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and**  **debauchery in which they have indulged.**    This will be my third visit to you. "Every matter must be  established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." I  already gave you a warning when I was with you the second time.  I now repeat it while absent: On my return I will not spare  those who sinned earlier or any of the others, since you are  demanding proof that **Christ is speaking through me. He is** not  weak in dealing with you, but **is powerful among you.** For to be  sure, **he was crucified in weakness, yet** **he lives by** **God's**  ss**ee** **power.** Likewise, **we are weak in him**, **yet by God's power we will**  **live with him to serve you.**    **Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test**  **yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in**  **you--unless,**>**of course**<**, you fail the test? And I trust that you**  **eehh will discover that we have not failed the test. Now we pray to**  **HSMS God that you will not do**>**anything**<**wrong.** **Not that people will**  **see that we have stood the test but that you will do what is**  **right even though we may seem to have failed. For we cannot do**  **HSMS anything against the truth, but only for the truth.** We are glad  hh whenever we are weak but you are strong; **and our prayer is for**  **HSMS your**>>>**perfection.**<<<This is why I write these things when I am  absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use  of authority--the authority the Lord gave me for building you  up, not for tearing you down.    **HSMS**hh Finally, brothers, good-by.>>**Aim for perfection,**<<listen to my  appeal, **be of one mind, live in peace.** **And the God of love and**  **peace will be with you.**    Greet one another with **a holy kiss.** All the saints send their  greetings.    May **the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,** and **the love of God,** and  **the fellowship of the Holy Spirit** **be with you all.**  **============**  **Paul, an apostle**🡪**sent**<**not from men nor by man, but by Jesus**  **Christ and God the Father,** who raised him from the dead--and  all the brothers with me,    To the churches in Galatia:    **Grace and peace to you from God our Father** and **the Lord Jesus**  ss **Christ,** who **gave** himself for our sins **to rescue us from the**  **present evil age,** **according to the will of our God and Father,**  to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.    **I am astonished** **that** **you are so quickly deserting** **the one who**  **called you** **by the grace of Christ** **and are** **turning to a**  **different gospel--which is really no gospel at all.** **Evidently**  **some** **people are** throwing you into confusion and are **trying to**  **pervert the gospel of Christ.** But **even** **if we or an angel from**  **heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to**  **you,** **let him be eternally condemned!** As we have already said,  so now **I say again:** **If anybody is preaching to you a gospel**  **other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!**    **Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God?** Or am I  trying to please men? **If I were still trying to please men, I**  **would not be a servant of Christ.**    I want you to know, brothers, that **the gospel I preached is not**  **something that man made up.** **I did not receive it from any man,**  **nor was I taught it;** rather, **I received it by revelation from**  **Jesus Christ.**    For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how  intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy  it. **I was advancing in Judaism** **beyond many Jews of my own age**  **and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.** **But**  **when** **God,** **who set me apart from birth and called me by his**  **grace,** **was pleased to reveal his Son in me** **so that I might**  **preach him among the Gentiles,** **I did not consult any man, nor**  **did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles** **before**  **I was, but I went immediately into Arabia** and later returned to  Damascus.    **Then after three years,** **I went up to Jerusalem** to get acquainted  with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. I saw none of the  other apostles--only James, the Lord's brother. I assure you  before God that what I am writing you is no lie. Later I went  to Syria and Cilicia. I was personally unknown to the churches  of Judea that are in Christ. They only heard the report: "The  man who formerly persecuted us is now **preaching the faith he**  **once tried to destroy."** And they praised God because of me.    **Fourteen years later** **I went up again to Jerusalem,** this time with  Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a  revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among  the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to  be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in  vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be  circumcised, even though he was a Greek. This matter arose  because **some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks** to spy on  the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. **We**  **did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the**  **gospel might remain with you.**    As for those who seemed to be important--whatever they were makes  no difference to me; God does not judge by external  appearance--those men added nothing to my message. On the  contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of  preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to  the Jews. For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as  an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an  apostle to the Gentiles. James, Peter and John, those reputed  to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas **the right hand of**  **fellowship** when they recognized the grace given to me. They  agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews.  All they asked was that we should **continue to remember the**  **poor,** the very thing I was eager to do.    When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he  was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James,  he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he  began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles  because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision  group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by  their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.    **When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of**  **the gospel, I said** to Peter **in front of them all,** "You are a  Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it,  then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?    "We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a  ff man is not **justified** by observing the law, but **by faith in**  **Jesus Christ.** So **we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus**  **that we may be justified by faith in Christ** and not by  observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be  justified.    **"If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident**  **that we ourselves are sinners,**>**does that mean that Christ**  **promotes sin?** **Absolutely**<**not!** **If I rebuild what I**>**destroyed**<**, I**  **prove that I am a lawbreaker.** For through the law I died to the  law so that I might **live for God.** **I have been crucified with**  **HSMS**ss **Christ and I no longer live,** but **Christ lives in me.** **The life I**  ff **live in the body,** **I live by faith in the Son of God,** **who loved**  **me and gave himself for me.** I do not>**set aside**<**the grace of**  **God,** for if righteousness could be gained through the law,  Christ died for nothing!"    You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very  eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would  like to learn just one thing from you: Did **you receive the**  ff **Spirit** by observing the law, or **by believing what you heard**?  ss Are you so foolish? After beginning with **the Spirit,** **are you**  **now**>**trying to attain your goal by human effort?**<**Have you**  **suffered so much**>**for nothing--if it really was for nothing?**<  ss Does **God give you his Spirit** and work miracles among you  ff because you observe the law, or **because you believe what you**  **heard**?    ff **Consider** **Abraham: "He believed God,** **and it was**>**credited**<**to him as**  **righteousness."** Understand, then, that **those**>**who believe**<**are**  **children of Abraham.** The Scripture foresaw that **God would**  **justify the Gentiles by faith,** and announced the gospel in  advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you."  So those who>**have**<**faith** are blessed along with **Abraham, the man**  **of faith.**    All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is  written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do  everything written in the Book of the Law." Clearly no one is  ffhh justified before God by the law, because, **"The righteous will**  **live by faith."** The law is not based on **faith;** on the contrary,  "The man who does these things will live by them." **Christ**  **redeemed us from the curse of the law** by becoming a curse for  us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a  tree." **He redeemed us** in order that the blessing given to  Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, **so**  ffss **that** **by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.**    Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no  one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly  established, so it is in this case. The **promises** were spoken to  Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to  seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning  one person, who is Christ. What I mean is this: The law,  introduced 430 years later, does not set aside **the covenant**  **previously established by God** and thus do away with the  **promise.** For if **the inheritance** depends on the law, then it no  longer depends on **a** **promise;** but **God in his grace gave it to**  **Abraham through a** **promise.**    What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of  transgressions until the>**Seed to whom the promise referred had**  **come.**<The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.  A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God  is one.    Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely  not! **For if a law had been given that could**>**impart**<**life, then**  **righteousness would certainly have come by the law.** But the  >**Scripture declares that** **the whole world is a prisoner of sin,**<  ffss **so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus**  **Christ, might be given to those who believe.**    **Before this faith came,** **we were** **held prisoners by the law, locked**  **up** **until faith should be revealed.** So the law was put in charge  ff to lead us to Christ that we might be **justified by faith.** Now  that **faith has come,** we are no longer under the supervision of  the law.    ff **You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,** for all of  ss you who were baptized into Christ **have**>**clothed yourselves with**<  **Christ.** There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male  nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **If you belong**  **to Christ,** **then you are Abraham's seed, and** **heirs according to**  **the promise.**    **What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no**  **different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate**. He  is subject to guardians and trustees **until the time set by his**  **father.** So also, when we were children, **we were**>**in slavery**  **under the basic principles**<**of the world.** **But when the time had**  **fully come,** **God sent his Son,** born of a woman, born under law,  **to redeem** those under law, that we might **receive the full**  ss **rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of**  **his Son into our hearts, the Spirit** who calls out, "Abba,  Father." **So you are no longer a slave, but a son;** and since you  are a son, **God has made you also an** **heir.**    Formerly, **when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who**  **by nature are not gods.** But **now that you know God--or rather**  **are known by God--how is it that you are turning back to those**  **weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by**  **them all over again?** You are observing special days and months  and seasons and years! **I fear for you, that somehow I have**  **wasted my efforts on you.**    I plead with you, brothers, become like me, for I became like  you. You have done me no wrong. As you know, it was because of  an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. Even though  **my illness was a trial to you,** you did not treat me with  contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an  angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. What has  happened to all **your**>**joy**<? I can testify that, **if you could have**  **done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to**  **me.** **Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?**    Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What  they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may be  zealous for them. It is fine to>**be zealous**<**,** provided the  **HSMS** purpose is good, and to>**be so always**<and not just when I am  ss with you. My dear children, for whom I am **again** in the **pains of**  **childbirth** **until Christ is formed in you,** how I wish I could be  with you now and change my tone, because **I am perplexed about**  **you!**    Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of  what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons,  one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son  by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by  the free woman was born as the result of a promise.    These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent  two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears  children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands  for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city  of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But  the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. For  it is written: "Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children;  break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labor pains; because  more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has  a husband."    **Now you,** brothers, **like Isaac,** **are children of** **promise.** **At that**  ss **time** **the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son** **born**  **by the power of the Spirit.** **It is the same now.** But what does  the Scripture say? **"Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for**  **the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with**  **the free woman's son."** Therefore, brothers, we are not children  of the slave woman, but of the free woman.    ss **It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.** **Stand firm,** then,  and **do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of**  **slavery.**    Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be  circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I  declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is  obligated to obey the whole law. **You who are trying to be**  **justified by law** **have been alienated from Christ; you have**  ff **fallen away from grace. But by faith we eagerly await through**  sshh **the Spirit**>**the righteousness for which we hope.**<For in Christ  Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value.  ffhh **The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through**  **love.**    You were running a good race. **Who** **cut in on you and kept you from**  **obeying the truth?** **That kind of persuasion** does not come from  the one who calls you.>>>>**"A little yeast works through the whole**  **batch of dough."**<<<<I am confident in the Lord that you will take  no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion will  pay the penalty, whoever he may be. Brothers, if I am still  preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In  that case **the offense of the cross** has been abolished. As for  those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and  emasculate themselves!    **You,** my brothers, **were called to be free.** **But** **do not use your**  **ee freedom to indulge the**>**sinful nature**<**;** rather, **serve one another**  **in love.** The entire law is summed up in a single command: **"Love**  **your neighbor as yourself."** **If you keep on biting and devouring**  **each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.**    ss**ee**hh So I say, **live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the**  **desires of the**>**sinful nature**<**. For the**>**sinful nature desires**  **what is contrary**<**to the Spirit, and the Spirit**>**what is contrary**  **to the sinful nature**<. **They are in**>**conflict with each other, so**  **that you do not do what you want**<**.** But **if you are** **led by the**  **Spirit,** you are not under law.    **The acts of the**>**sinful nature**<**are obvious: sexual immorality,**  **impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft;**>**hatred**<**,**  **discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions,**  **factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn**  **hh you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not**  **inherit the kingdom of God.**    But **the fruit of the Spirit is love,** **joy, peace, patience,**  **kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.**  **HSMS**hh Against such things there is no law. **Those who belong to Christ**  **Jesus have crucified the**>**sinful nature**<**with its passions and**  **desires.** Since **we live by the Spirit,** let us **keep in step with**  **the Spirit.** Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying  each other.    Brothers, if someone is **caught in a sin,** you who are spiritual  should **restore him gently.** But watch yourself, or you also may  be **tempted.** **Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you**  **will fulfill the law of Christ.** If anyone thinks he is  something when he is nothing, **he deceives himself.** Each one  should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself,  without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should  carry his own load.    Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good  things with his instructor.    **ee**hh **Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he**  **sows.** **The one who sows to please his**>**sinful nature**<**, from that**  >**nature**<**will reap**>destruction<**;** **the one who sows to please the**  **ee Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.** **Let us not**  **become weary in doing good,** for **at the proper time** **we will reap**  **ee** **a harvest** **if we do not give up.** Therefore, **as we have**  **opportunity, let us do good to all people,** **especially to those**  **who belong to the family of believers.**    See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!    Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to  compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is  to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. Not even  those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be  circumcised that they may boast about your flesh. **May I never**  **boast except in** **the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through**  **ee**ss **which** **the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.**  Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; **what**  **ee**hh **counts is a new creation.** **Peace and mercy** **to all who follow**  **this rule,** even to the Israel of God.    Finally, **let no one cause me trouble, for** **I bear on my body the**  **marks of Jesus.**    **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers.**  **Amen.**  **============**  **Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,**    **To the saints in Ephesus,** **the faithful in Christ Jesus:**    **Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus**  **Christ.**    **Praise be to** **the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,** **who has**  ss **blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing**  **in Christ.** For **he chose us in him before the creation of the**  hh  **world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love** **he**  **predestined us** **to be** **adopted as his sons** **through Jesus Christ,**  **in accordance with** **his pleasure and will--to the praise of** **his**  **glorious grace,** which he has **freely given** us in **the One** he  **loves.** In him **we have redemption through his blood, the**  **forgiveness of sins,** **in accordance with** **the riches of God's**  **grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.**  **And** **he made known to us the mystery of his will according to**  **his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,** **to be put into**  **effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to**  **bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one**  **head, even Christ.**    **In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to**  **the plan** **of him who works out everything in conformity with the**  **purpose of his will,** in order that we, who were the first to  hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you  also were included in Christ when you heard **the** **word of truth,**  ff **the gospel of your salvation.** **Having believed, you were marked**  ss **in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,**>**who is a deposit**  **guaranteeing our inheritance** until the **redemption of those who**  **are God's possession**<--to the praise of his glory.    ff For this reason, ever since I heard about **your faith in the Lord**  **Jesus and your love for all the saints,** I have not stopped  giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. **I keep**  **asking that** theGod of our Lord Jesus Christ, **the glorious**  ss **Father,** **may** **give you** **the Spirit of wisdom and revelation**, **so**  **that you may know him better.** I pray **also that** **the eyes of your**  **heart** **may be enlightened** **in order** **that you may** **know the hope to**  **which he has called you,** **the riches of his glorious inheritance**  ss **in the saints,** **and**>**his incomparably great power for**<**us who**  ff **believe.** **That power is like** **the working of his mighty strength,**  **which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead** and  seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above  all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title  that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the  one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and  appointed him to be head over everything for **the church,** which  is **his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every**  **way.**    As for you, **you were dead in your transgressions and sins,** in  which you used to live when **you followed the ways of this world**  and of **the ruler of the kingdom of the air,** **the spirit who is**  **now at work in those who are disobedient.** All of us also lived  among them at one time,>**gratifying the cravings of our sinful**  **nature and following its desires and thoughts**<. Like the rest,  we were by nature objects of wrath. But **because of** **his great**  **love for us, God,** **who is rich in mercy,** **made us alive with**  **Christ** **even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace**  **you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and**  **seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,** **in**  **order that in the coming ages he might show** **the incomparable**  **riches of his grace,** **expressed in his kindness to us in Christ**  **Jesus.** For it is **by grace** you have been **saved, through**  ff **faith**--and **this not from yourselves,** **it is the gift of God**--not  by works, so that no one can boast. For **we are God's**  **ee workmanship,** **created in Christ Jesus**>**to** **do**<**good works, which**  **God prepared in advance for us to do.**    Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth  and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the  circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of  men)--remember that at that time **you were separate from Christ,**  excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the  covenants of the promise, **without hope and without God in the**  **world.** **But** **now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have**  **been brought near through the blood of Christ.**    For **he himself is our peace,** who has made the two one and has  destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by  abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and  regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man  out of the two, thus **making peace,** and in this one body to  reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he  put to death their hostility. **He came and preached peace** to you  who were far away and **peace** to those who were near. For **through**  ss **him** **we** both **have access to the Father by one Spirit.**    Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow  citizens with God's people and members of God's household,  built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with  Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. **In him the whole**  **building is joined together and** **rises to become a holy temple**  **in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to**  ss **become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.**    For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the  sake of you Gentiles--    Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace  that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known  to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In  reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight  into **the mystery of Christ,** which was not made known to men in  other generations as **it has now been revealed by the Spirit** **to**  **God's holy apostles and prophets.** This mystery is that through  the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members  together of one body, and sharers together in **the promise in**  **Christ Jesus.**    **I became a servant of this gospel by** **the gift of God's grace**  ss **given me** through **the working of his power.** Although I am less  than the least of all God's people, **this grace was given me: to**  **preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,** and  to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery,  which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all  things. His intent was that now, through the church, **the**  **manifold wisdom of God should be made known** to the rulers and  authorities in the heavenly realms, according to **his eternal**  **purpose which he accomplished in** **Christ Jesus our Lord.**>>>>**In him**  ff  **and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and**  **confidence.**<<<<I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because  of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.    For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole  family in heaven and on earth derives its name. **I pray that out**  **of his glorious riches** **he may strengthen you with power through**  ss  **his Spirit in your inner being,** **so that Christ may dwell in**  ff  **your hearts through faith.** And I pray that **you, being** **rooted**  **and established in love**, **may have** **power,** together with all the  saints,>**to grasp** **how wide and long and high and deep is the**  **love of Christ**<**,** **and** **to know this** **love** **that surpasses**  **HSMS**ss **knowledge--**that you may be **filled to the measure of all the**  **fullness of God.**    ss **Now to him who is able to do**>>>>**immeasurably more than all we ask or**  **imagine,**<<<<**according to his power that is at work within us,** **to**  **him be glory** in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all  generations, **for ever and ever! Amen.**    As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to **live a life**  **worthy** of **the calling** you have received. **Be completely humble**  **ee** **and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.** **Make**  **every effort** to **keep** **the unity of the Spirit** **through the bond**  **of peace. There is one body and** **one Spirit**--just as you were  called to **one hope** when you were called--**one Lord,** **one faith,**  **one baptism;** **one God and Father of all, who is over all and**  **through all and in all.**    **But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned**  **it.** This is why it says: **"When he ascended on high, he led**  **captives in his train and gave gifts to men."** (What does "he  ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower,  earthly regions? **He who descended is the very one who** **ascended**  **higher than all the heavens,**>**in order to fill the whole**  **universe**<**.**) **It was he who gave some to be apostles,** some to be  **prophets,** some to be **evangelists,** and some to be **pastors** **and**  **teachers,** **to prepare God's people for works of service,** so that  the body of Christ may be built up **until we all reach** **unity in**  ff **the faith** **and in the knowledge of the Son of God** **and become**  **HSMS**hh **mature,**>>>>**attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of**  **Christ.**<<<<    Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the  waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and  by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful  scheming. Instead, **speaking the truth in love**, **we will** **in all**  **things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.** **From**  **him the whole body,** joined and held together by every  supporting ligament, **grows and builds itself up in love,** as  each part does its **work.**    So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must  no longer live as the Gentiles do, in **the futility of their**  **thinking.** They are **darkened in their understanding** and  **separated from the life of God** because of the ignorance that is  in them due to **the hardening of their hearts.** Having lost all  sensitivity, they have **given themselves over to sensuality so**  **as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust**  **for more.**    You, however, did not **come to know Christ** that way. Surely you  heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with **the**  **truth that is in Jesus.** **You were taught,** with regard to your  **HSMS** former way of life, **to put off your old self,** which is being  **corrupted by its deceitful desires;** **to** **be made new in the**  hh  **attitude of your minds;** and **to** **put on the new self,** **created to**  **be like God in true righteousness and holiness.**    Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully  **ee**  to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. **"**>**In your**  **anger do not sin**<**": Do not let the sun go down while you are**  **still angry, and**>**do not give the devil a foothold.**<He who has  been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing  something useful with his own hands, that he may have something  to share with those in need.    **ee** **Do not let any**>**unwholesome**<**talk come out of your mouths,** **but only**  **what is helpful for building others up according to their**  **needs,** that it may benefit those who listen. **And do not grieve**  ss **the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day**  **ee of redemption.** **Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger,**  **brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind**  **and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other,** just as  **in Christ God forgave you.**    **ee** **Be imitators of God,** therefore, as dearly **loved** children **and live**  **a life of love,** just as **Christ loved us and gave himself up for**  **us** as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.    **ee**  But among you>**there must not be even a hint** **of sexual immorality,**  **or of any kind of impurity, or of greed**, **because these are**  **improper for** **God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity**<**,**  foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but  hh rather thanksgiving. **For of this you can be sure: No immoral,**  **impure or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any**  **inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.** Let no one  **deceive** you with empty words, for because of such things **God's**  **wrath comes on those who are** **disobedient.** Therefore do not be  partners with them.    **For you were once darkness,** **but now you are light in the Lord.**  **ee**hh **Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists**  **in all goodness, righteousness and truth)** **and** **find out what**  **pleases the Lord.** Have nothing to do with the **fruitless deeds**  **of darkness,** but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to  mention **what the disobedient do in secret.** **But** **everything**  **exposed by the light becomes visible,** for it is light that  makes everything visible. This is why it is said: **"Wake up, O**  **sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."**    ee ^^**Be very careful,** then, **how you live--not as unwise but as wise,**  **making the most of every opportunity,** because **the days are**  **evil.**<<Therefore do not be foolish, but **understand what the**  **Lord's will is.** **Do not get drunk on wine, which** **leads to**  **ee**ss **debauchery.** **Instead,** **be filled with the Spirit.** Speak to one  another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and **make**  **music in your heart to the Lord,** **always giving thanks** to God  the Father **for everything,** in the name of our Lord Jesus  Christ.    **Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.**    **Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.** For **the husband is**  **the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church,** his  body, of which **he is the Savior.** Now **as the church submits to**  **Christ,** so also **wives should submit to their husbands in**  **everything.**    Husbands, **love** your wives, just as **Christ loved the church and**  ss  **gave himself up for her to make her holy,** cleansing her by the  **washing** with water **through the word,** and **to present her to**  **himself as**>>>>**a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any**  hh **other blemish,** but **holy and blameless.**<<<<In this same way,  husbands ought to **love** their wives as their own bodies. **He who**  **loves his wife loves himself.** After all, **no one ever hated his**  **own body,** but **he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does**  **the church**--for we are members of his body. "For this reason a  man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,  and the two will become one flesh." This is **a profound**  **mystery**--but I am talking about Christ and the church. However,  each one of you also **must love his wife as he loves himself,**  and the wife must respect her husband.    Children, obey your parents in the Lord, **for this is right.**  "Honor your father and mother"--which is the first commandment  with a promise--"that it may go well with you and that you may  enjoy long life on the earth."    Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up  in the training and instruction of the Lord.    **ee** **Slaves,** **obey** your earthly masters **with**>**respect**<**and fear, and with**  **sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ.** Obey them  not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but **like**  >**slaves**<**of Christ,** **doing the will of God from your heart.** **Serve**  HSMS >>>**wholeheartedly**<<<, **as if you were serving the Lord,** not men,  because you know that>>>**the Lord will reward everyone for**  **whatever good he does**<<<**,** whether he is slave or free.    And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten  them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours  is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.    **ee** Finally, **be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.** Put on  the full armor of God so that you can **take your stand against**  **the devil's schemes.** For **our struggle** **is not against flesh and**  **blood, but** **against the** **rulers,** against the **authorities,** against  the **powers of this dark world** and against **the spiritual forces**  **ee** **of evil in the heavenly realms.** Therefore **put on the full armor**  **of God,** **so that when the day of evil comes,**>**you may be able to**  **stand your ground,** and **after you have done everything,** **to**  **stand.** **Stand firm**<then, **with** **the belt of** **truth** buckled around  your waist, with **the breastplate of** **righteousness** in place, and  with your feet fittedwith **the readiness** **that comes from the**  **gospel of peace.** In addition to all this, take up **the shield of**  **faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of**  **the evil one.** Take **the helmet of salvation** and **the sword of the**  **Spirit, which is the word of God.** And **pray in the Spirit on all**  **occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.** With this in  mind, **be alert** and **always keep on praying for all the saints.**    **ee** **Pray** also **for me,** **that whenever I open my mouth, words may be**  **given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of**  **the gospel,** **for which I am** **an ambassador** **in chains.** **Pray that I**  **may** **declare it fearlessly, as I should.**    Tychicus, the dear brother and **faithful servant in the Lord,** will  tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and  what I am doing. I am sending him to you for this very purpose,  that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.    **Peace to the brothers,** **and** **love with faith** **from God the Father**  **ee and the Lord Jesus Christ.** **Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus**  **Christ with**>>>>**an undying love.**<<<<  **============**  Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,    To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the  overseers and deacons:    **Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus**  **Christ.**    I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for  all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership  in the gospel from the first day until now, **being confident of**  ss **this, that** **he who began a good work in you will carry it on to**  **completion** **until the day of Christ Jesus.**    It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I  have you in my heart; **for whether I am in chains or defending**  **and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with**  **me.** **God can testify how I long for all of you with** **the**  **affection of Christ Jesus.**    And **this is my prayer: that** **your** **love may abound more and more in**  **knowledge and**>>>**depth of insight,**<<<**so that you may**>>>>**be able to**  hh **discern what is best**<<<<**and may** **be pure and blameless** **until the**  **day of Christ,** **filled with the fruit of righteousness that**  **comes through Jesus Christ**--to the glory and praise of God.    Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me  has really served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has  become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone  else that **I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most**  **of** **the brothers in the Lord have been** **encouraged to speak the**  **word of God more courageously and fearlessly.**    It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but  others out of goodwill. The latter do so in **love,** knowing that  **I am put here for the defense of the gospel.** The former preach  Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that  they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what  does it matter? The important thing is that in every way,  whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And  because of this I rejoice.    Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your  prayers and **the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ,** what  **ee** has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. **I eagerly**  **expect and hope** that I will in no way be ashamed, but **will have**  **sufficient courage so that** **now as always** **Christ will be exalted**  **in my body,** whether by life or by death. **For to me,** **to live is**  **Christ** and to die is gain. **If** **I am to go on living in the body,**  **this will mean fruitful labor for me.** Yet what shall I choose?  I do not know! I am torn between the two: **I desire to depart**  **and** **be with Christ, which is better by far;** but it is more  necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this,  I know that I will remain, and **I will continue with all of you**  **for your progress and joy in the faith,** so that through my  being with you again **your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on**  **account of me.**    **ee**hh **Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the**  **gospel of Christ.** Then, whether I come and see you or only hear  about you in my absence, I will know that you **stand firm** **in one**  **spirit,** **contending as one man** **for** **the faith of the gospel**  **without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you**.  **This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that**  **you will be saved--and that by God.** For **it has been granted to**  **you on behalf of Christ** not only **to believe on him,** but **also to**  **suffer for him,** since you are going through the same struggle  you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.    If you have any **encouragement from being united with Christ,** if  any **comfort from**>**his**<**love,** if any **fellowship with the Spirit,**  if any **tenderness and compassion,** then make my joy complete by  **being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit**  **ee and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain**  **conceit, but**^^^**in humility consider others better than**  **yourselves.**<<<**Each of you should look not only to your own**  **interests, but also to the interests of others.**    **HSMS** **Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:** **Who,**  **being in very nature God,** **did not consider equality with God**  **something to be grasped,** **but** **made himself nothing, taking the**  **very nature of a servant,** being made in human likeness. And  **ee** being found in appearance as a man, **he humbled himself** **and**  **became obedient** **to death--even death on a cross!** Therefore God  exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is  above every name, that **at the name of Jesus every knee should**  **bow,** in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **and** **every**  **tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,** to the glory of God  the Father.    **ee** Therefore, my dear friends, **as you have always obeyed**--not only  in my presence, but now much more in my absence--**continue to**  **work out your salvation** with **fear and trembling,** for **it is God**  ss **who works in you to will and to**>>>**act according to his good**  **purpose.**<<<    **ee** **Do everything without**^^**complaining or arguing**<<**,** **so that you may**  hh **become blameless and**>**pure**<**, children of God without**>**fault**<in a  **crooked and**>**depraved**<**generation, in which** **you shine**>**like stars**  **in the universe as you hold out**<**the word of life**--in order that  I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor  >**for nothing**<**.** But even if I am being poured out like a drink  offering on the>>>**sacrifice and service coming from your faith,**<<<  I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad  and rejoice with me.    I hope in the Lord Jesus to send **Timothy** to you soon, that I also  may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one  else like him, who **takes** **a genuine interest in your welfare.**  **ee** **For**>**everyone**<**looks out for his own interests, not those of**  **Jesus Christ.** **But** you know that **Timothy has proved himself,**  because as a son with his father he has served with me in the  work of the gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I  see how things go with me. And I am confident in the Lord that  I myself will come soon.    But I think it is necessary to send back to you **Epaphroditus,** my  brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your  messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. For he longs  for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill.  Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him,  and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon  sorrow. Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that  when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less  anxiety. Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men  like him, because **he almost died for the work of Christ,**  **risking his life** to make up for the help you could not give me.    Finally, my brothers, **rejoice in the Lord!** It is no trouble for  me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard  for you.    Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators  of the flesh. For **it is** we who are the circumcision, **we who**  **worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and**  **who put no confidence in the flesh**--though I myself have  reasons for such confidence.    If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the  flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the  people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of  Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal,  persecuting the church; as for legalistic **righteousness,**  faultless.    But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of  **HSMS** Christ. What is more, **I consider everything a loss compared to**  **the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for**  **whose sake I have lost all things.** I consider them rubbish,  **that I may gain Christ and be found in him,** not having **a**  **righteousness** of my own that comes from the law, but that which  ffss is **through faith in Christ**--**the righteousness that comes from**  **God and**>>>**is by**<<<**faith.** **I want to know Christ** and **the power of his**  **ee** **resurrection** and **the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings,**  **becoming like him in his death,** **and so, somehow,** **to attain to**  **the resurrection from the dead.**    **Not that I** have already obtained **all this,** or **have already been**  **ee made perfect,** but>>>**I press on to take hold of that for which**  **Christ Jesus took hold of me.**<<<Brothers, I do not consider  myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do:  **ee** **Forgetting** what is behind and **straining** toward what is ahead, **I**  **press on** **toward the goal**>**to win the prize for which God has**  **called me heavenward**<**in Christ Jesus.**    All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And  if on some point you think differently, that too **God will make**  **clear to you.**>>**Only let us live up to what we have already**  **attained.**<<    Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note  of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. For, as  I have often told you before and now say again even with tears,  **many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.** Their destiny is  **destruction,** their god is their stomach, and **their glory is in**  **their shame.** **Their mind is on earthly things.** But **our**  **citizenship is in heaven.** And **we eagerly await a** **Savior** **from**  **there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables**  **him to bring everything under his control,** will transform our  lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.    Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and  **ee** crown, **that is how you should** **stand firm in the Lord,** dear  friends!    I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each  other in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help  these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the  gospel, along with Clement and the rest of **my fellow workers,**  **whose names are in the** **book of life.**    **ee** **Rejoice in the Lord always.** I will say it again: **Rejoice!**^^**Let**  **your gentleness be evident to all.**<<**The Lord is near. Do not be**  **anxious about anything,** **but in everything, by prayer and**  **petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.** **And**  **the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will**  **guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**    **ee** Finally, brothers, **whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever**  **is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is**  **admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think**  **about such things**. **Whatever** **you have learned or received or**  **heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice.** **And** **the God**  **of peace will be with you.**    I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your  concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no  opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in  **ee** need, for **I have learned to be content whatever the**  **circumstances.** **I know**>>**what it is to be in need, and I know what**  **it is to have plenty.**<<**I have learned the secret** of being  content in **any** and **every** situation, **whether well fed or hungry,**  ss **whether living in plenty or in want.** **I can do everything**  **through him who gives me strength.**    Yet **it was good of you to share in my troubles**. Moreover, as you  Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with  the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church  shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except  you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, **you sent me aid**  ^**again and again**<**when I was in need.** Not that I am looking for a  gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your  account. **I have received full payment and even more; I am amply**  **supplied,** now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts  you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable  sacrifice, pleasing to God. **And my God will meet all your needs**  **according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.**    To our God and Father be glory **for ever and ever.** Amen.    Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with  me send greetings. All the saints send you greetings,  especially those who belong to Caesar's household.    **The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.**  **============**  **Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus** **by the will of God**, and Timothy  our brother,    hh **To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ** at Colosse:    **Grace and peace to you from God our Father.**    We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we  pray for you, because **we have heard of your faith in Christ**  **Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints--the** **faith**  **and love** **that** **spring from the hope that is stored up for you in**  **heaven** and that you have already heard about in **the** **word of**  **truth, the gospel** that has come to you. **All over the world this**  **gospel is bearing fruit and growing,** just as it has been doing  among you since the day **you heard it and** **understood God's grace**  **in all its truth.** You learned it from **Epaphras,** our dear fellow  servant, who is **a** **faithful minister of Christ** on our behalf,  ss and who also **told us of** **your love in the Spirit.**    For this reason, since the day we heard about you, **we have not**  ss **stopped** praying for you and **asking God to fill you with the**  **knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and**  hh **understanding.** And we pray this in order **that you may** **live a**  **ee life worthy of the Lord** and **may please him in every way:**  **bearing fruit in every good work,** **growing in the knowledge of**  **God,** **being strengthened with all power according to his**  **glorious might so that you may have great endurance and**  **patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father,** **who has**  **qualified you** **to share** **in the inheritance of the saints** **in the**  **kingdom of light.** For **he has rescued us from the dominion of**  **darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,**  **in whom we have** **redemption,** **the forgiveness of sins.**    **He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all**  **creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven**  **and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers**  **or rulers or authorities; all things were created**>**by**<**him and**  **for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold**  **together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the**  **beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in**  **everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to**  **have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to**  **reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or**  **things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on**  **the cross.**    **Once** you were **alienated from God and** were **enemies in your minds**  **because of your evil behavior.** **But** **now** **he has reconciled you** **by**  hh **Christ's physical body through death** **to present you holy in his**  ff **sight, without blemish and free from accusation**--**if you**  **continue in your faith**, **established and** **firm, not moved from**  **the hope held out in the gospel.** This is the gospel that you  heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under  heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.    Now **what was suffered for you,** and **I fill up in my flesh what is**  **Still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions,**  **for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become**  **its servant by the commission God gave me** to present to you **the**  **word of God** **in its fullness--the mystery that has been kept**  **hidden for ages and generations,** **but is now disclosed to the**  **saints.** To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles  **the glorious riches of this mystery, which is** **Christ in you,**  **the hope of glory.**    **We proclaim him,**>**admonishing**<and teaching **everyone** **with all**  hh  **wisdom,** so that we may **present everyone**>>**perfect**<<**in Christ.** To  **ee** this end **I labor,** **struggling** with **all his energy, which so**  **powerfully works in me.**    I want you to know **how much I am struggling for you** and for those  at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. My  purpose is **that** **they may** **be** **encouraged in heart and** **united in**  **love,**>**so that they may have the full riches of complete**  **understanding**<**,** in order that they may **know the mystery of God,**  **namely, Christ,** in whom are hidden **all** **the treasures of wisdom**  **and knowledge.** I tell you this so that no one may deceive you  by fine-sounding arguments. For **though I am absent from you in**  **body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see** **how**  ff **orderly you are** **and how firm your faith in Christ is.**    **ee** So then, just **as you received Christ Jesus as Lord,** **continue to**  **live in him,** **rooted and built up in him,**>**strengthened**<**in the**  ff **faith** as you were taught, and **overflowing with thankfulness.**    **See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and**  **deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the**  **basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.**    For **in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives** in bodily form,  **and you have**>>> **been given fullness**<<<**in Christ,** who is the head  over every power and authority. **In him you were also**  hh **circumcised, in**>>>**the putting off of the sinful nature,**<<<not with  a circumcision done by the hands of men but **with the**  ss **circumcision**>>>**done by**<<<**Christ,** having been buried with him in  ff baptism and **raised with him through your faith in the power of**  **God, who raised him from the dead.**    **When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your**  ss>**sinful nature**<**,** **God made you alive with Christ.** **He forgave us**  **all our sins,** having canceled the written code, with its  regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us;  he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed  the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them,  triumphing over them by the cross.    Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink,  or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration  or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to  come; the>>>**reality, however, is found in Christ.**<<<Do not let  **anyone who delights in false humility** and the worship of angels  **disqualify you for the prize.** **Such a person goes into great**  **detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs**  **him up with idle notions.** **He has lost connection with** **the Head,**  **from whom the whole body,** supported and held together by its  ligaments and sinews, **grows as God causes it to grow.**    hh Since **you died with Christ to the**>>**basic principles**<<**of this world,**  why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its  rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These are  all destined to perish with use, because they are based on  human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an  **appearance of wisdom,** with their **self-imposed worship,** their  **false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they**  **lack any value in**>**restraining sensual indulgence**<**.**    **ee**hh Since, then, **you have been raised with Christ,**>>**set your hearts**<<**on**  **things above,** where Christ is seated at **the right hand of God.**  **Set your minds on things above,** **not on**>**earthly things**<**.** **For you**  **died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.** **When**  **Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear**  **with him in glory.**    **ee** **Put to death,** therefore, **whatever**>**belongs to your earthly nature**<**:**  **sexual immorality, impurity,**>>>**lust**<<<, e**vil desires and**>**greed**<**,**  **which is idolatry.** **Because of these, the wrath of God is**  **coming.** **You used to walk in these ways,**>**in the life you once**  **lived**<**. But now** **you must**>**rid yourselves of all such things as**  **these**<**:** **anger,**>**rage**<**, malice, slander, and**>**filthy language**<**from**  **ee your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off**  **your old self with its practices and have put on the new self,**  **which is being renewed** **in knowledge** **in the image of its**  **Creator.** Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or  uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but **Christ**  **is all, and is in all.**    **ee**hh Therefore, as **God's chosen people, holy** and **dearly loved,** **clothe**  **yourselves** with **compassion, kindness, humility,**>**gentleness**<**and**  **patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever**>**grievances**<  **you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave**  **you. And over all these virtues put on love,** **which binds them**  **all together in** **perfect**>**unity**<**.**    **ee** **Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,** since as members of  one body **you were called to peace.** And **be thankful.** **Let the**  **word of Christ dwell in you richly** as you teach and **admonish**  one another with **all wisdom,** and as you sing psalms, hymns and  spiritual songs **with** **gratitude in your hearts to God.** And  **HSMS**hh **whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name**  **of the Lord Jesus,** giving thanks to God the Father through him.    Wives, **submit** to your husbands, **as is fitting in the Lord.**    Husbands, **love** your wives and **do not be harsh with them.**    Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the  Lord.    Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become  discouraged.    Slaves, **obey** your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not  only when their eye is on you and^**to win their favor**<**,** but **with**  **HSMS**hh **sincerity of heart and**>>>**reverence for the Lord.** **Whatever you do,**  **work at it with all your heart,**<<<**as working for the Lord,** not  for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance  from the Lord as a reward. **It is the Lord Christ you are**  **serving.** **Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong,**  **and there is no favoritism.**    Masters, **provide your slaves with what is right and fair,** because  you know that you also have a Master in heaven.    **Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.** And  **pray** for us, too, **that God may open a door for our message, so**  **ee that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ,** **for which I am in**  **chains.** **Pray that I may** **proclaim it clearly,** **as I should.** **Be**  **ee** **wise** in the way you act toward outsiders;^^M**ake the most of**  **every opportunity.**<<Let your conversation be always **full of**  **grace,** seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer  everyone.    Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear  brother, a **faithful minister** and fellow servant in the Lord. I  am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know  about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts.  He is coming with Onesimus, our **faithful** **and dear brother,** who  is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening  here.    My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does  Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions  about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) Jesus, who is  called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews  among my **fellow workers for the kingdom of God,** and they have  proved a comfort to me. Epaphras, who is one of you and a  servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always  wrestling in prayer for you, that you may **stand**>**firm**<**in all the**  **will of God,** **mature and** **fully assured.** I vouch for him that he  is **working hard** for you and for those at Laodicea and  Hierapolis. Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send  greetings. Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and  to Nympha and the church in her house.    After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read  in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the  letter from Laodicea.    **ee** Tell Archippus: **"See to it that you** **complete the work you have**  **received in the Lord."**    I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains.  **Grace be with you.**  **============**  Paul, Silas and Timothy,    To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord  Jesus Christ:    **Grace and peace to you.**    We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our  prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father **your**  ff**ee** **work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love,** and your  >**endurance**<**inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.**    For **we know,** **brothers** **loved by God,** that **he has chosen you,**  ss **because our gospel came to you** not simply with words, but also  **with power, with the Holy Spirit and with**>>>>**deep conviction.**<<<<  You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators  of us and of the Lord;>**in spite of severe suffering**<**, you**  ss **welcomed the message with** **the joy given by the Holy Spirit.** And  so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and  Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you not only in  Macedonia and Achaia--**your faith in God has become known**  **everywhere.** Therefore we do not need to say anything about it,  for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us.  They tell how **you turned to God** **from idols to serve the living**  **and true God,** **and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he**  **raised from the dead--Jesus, who rescues us from the coming**  **wrath.**    You know, brothers, that our visit to you was not a failure. We  had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you  know, but **with the help of our God we dared to tell you his**  **gospel in spite of strong opposition.** For the appeal we make  does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying  to trick you. On the contrary,^^**we speak as** **men approved by God**  **ee to be entrusted with the gospel.**<<**We are** not **trying to please**  men but **God, who tests our hearts.** You know we never used  flattery,^^**nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed**<<--God is  our witness. We were not looking for praise from men, not from  you or anyone else.    As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but **we**  **were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little**  **children.** We **loved** you so much that we were delighted to share  with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well,  because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember,  brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in  order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel  of God to you.    hh You are witnesses, and so is God, of **how holy, righteous and   blameless we were** among you who **believed.** For you know that **we**  **ee dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children,**  **encouraging, comforting** and **urging you to** **live lives worthy of**  **God,** **who calls you into his kingdom and glory.**    And we also thank God continually because, **when** **you received the**  **word of God,** which you heard from us, **you accepted it** not as  ss the word of men, but **as it actually is,** **the word of God, which**  ff  **is at work in you who believe.** For you, brothers, became  imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ  Jesus: You suffered from your own countrymen the same things  those churches suffered from the Jews, who killed the Lord  Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease  God and are hostile to all men in their effort to keep us from  **ee** **speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved.** In this way  they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God  has come upon them at last.    But, brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short time  (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made  every effort to see you. For **we wanted to come to**  **you**--certainly I, Paul, did, again and again--**but Satan stopped**  **us.** For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we  will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is  it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.    So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be  left by ourselves in Athens. **We sent Timothy,** who is our  brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of  ff Christ, **to strengthen and encourage you in your faith,** so that  no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well  that we were destined for them. In fact, when we were with you,  we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned  out that way, as you well know. For this reason, when I could  ff stand it no longer, **I sent to find out about your faith.** **I was**  **afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and**  **our efforts might have been useless.**    But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought **good**  ff  **news about your faith and love.** He has told us that you always  have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just  as we also long to see you. Therefore, brothers, in all our  ff distress and persecution **we were encouraged about you** **because**  **of your faith.** For **now we really live, since** **you are** **standing**  **firm in the Lord.** How can we thank God enough for you in return  for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of  you? Night and day **we pray most earnestly that we may** see you  ff again and **supply what is lacking in your faith.**    Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the  ss way for us to come to you. **May the Lord make your love increase**  **and overflow** **for each other and for everyone else,** just as ours  sshh does for you. **May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be**  **blameless and holy** **in the presence of our God and Father when**  **our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.**    Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to **live in order to**  **please God,** as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge  **ee** you in the Lord Jesus to **do this more and more.** For you know  what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord  Jesus.    hh It is **God's will** that **you should be sanctified: that you should**  **ee avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should**>>>**learn**<<<**to**  **control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not**  **in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God;** and  that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take  advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins,  as we have already told you and warned you. **For God did not**  **hh call us**>>>**to be impure, but to live a holy life.**<<<Therefore, **he**  **who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God,** **who**  ss **gives you his Holy Spirit.**    Now about brotherly **love** we do not need to write to you, for **you**  ss **yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.** And in  fact, **you do love all the brothers** throughout Macedonia. Yet we  urge you, brothers, to **do so more and more.**    Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own  ee business and **to work** with your hands, just as we told you, so  that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders **and so**  **that you will not be dependent on anybody.**    Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall  asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope**. We**  **believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that**  **God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.**  According to **the Lord's own word,** we tell you that **we who are**  **still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord,** will  certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For **the**  **Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command,**  **with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of**  **God,** and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who  are still alive and are left will be caught up together with  them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. **And so we will**  **be with the Lord forever.** Therefore encourage each other with  these words.    Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to   you, for you know very well that **the day of the Lord will come**  **like a thief in the night.** **While people are saying, "Peace and**  **safety," destruction will come on them suddenly,** as labor pains  on a pregnant woman, and **they will not escape.**    **But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should**  **surprise you like a thief.** **You are all sons of the light and**  **sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the**  **darkness.** So then, **let us not be like** **others, who are asleep,**  **ee** but **let us be alert and self-controlled.** For those who sleep,  sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.  But since we belong to the day, **let us be self-controlled,**  **putting on faith** and **love** as a breastplate, **and** **the hope of**  **salvation** as a helmet. For **God did not**>**appoint us**<**to suffer**  **wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.**  **He died for us so that,** whether we are awake or asleep, **we may**  **live together with him.** **Therefore encourage one another and**  **build each other up,** just as in fact you are doing.    Now we ask you, brothers, to **respect** **those who work hard among**  **you,** who are over you in the Lord and **who** **admonish you.** Hold  them in the highest regard in love because of their work. **Live**  **in peace with each other.** And we urge you, brothers, warn those  **ee** who are idle, encourage the timid, **help the weak, be patient**  **with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong,**  **but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.**    **HSMS**  **Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all**  **circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.**    **Do not put out the Spirit's fire;** do not treat prophecies with  **HSMS** contempt. **Test everything.** **Hold on to the good. Avoid every**  **kind of evil.**    ss **May God himself,** **the God of peace,** **sanctify you through and**  **through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless**  ss  **at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you**  **is faithful and** **he will do it.**    Brothers, pray for us. Greet all the brothers with **a holy kiss.** I  charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the  brothers.    **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.**  **============**  Paul, Silas and Timothy,    To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord  Jesus Christ:    **Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus**  **Christ.**    We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so,  ff because **your faith is growing more and more, and the love every**  **one of you has for each other is increasing.** Therefore, among  God's churches we boast about **your perseverance** and **faith** **in**  **all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.**    hh **All this is evidence** **that** **God's judgment is right, and**>>>>**as a**  **result you will be counted worthy**<<<<**of the kingdom of God,** **for**  **which you are suffering.** **God** is just: **He will pay back trouble**  **to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are**  **troubled,** and to us as well. **This will happen** **when the Lord**  **Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire** **with his powerful**  **ee** **angels.** He will punish **those who do not know God** and **do not**  **obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.** They will be punished with  **everlasting destruction** and **shut out from the presence of the**  **Lord** and **from the majesty of his** **power** on the day he comes to  hh be glorified in **his holy people** and to be marveled at among **all**  ff **those who have believed.** **This includes you, because** **you**  **believed our testimony to you.**    hh With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, **that our God may**  >**count**<**you worthy of his calling,** and that **by his power** **he may**  **ee** **fulfill**>>>**every good purpose of yours** and **every act prompted by**  ff **your faith.**<<<We pray this **so that the name of our Lord Jesus may**  **be glorified in you, and you in him,** **according to the grace** **of**  **our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.**    Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being  gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily  unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter  supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord  has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for  that day will not come **until the rebellion occurs** and **the man**  **of lawlessness** is revealed, **the man doomed to destruction.** **He**  **will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is**  **called God or is worshiped,** so that he sets himself up in God's  temple, **proclaiming himself to be God.**    Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you  these things? And now you know what is holding him back, so  that he may be revealed at the proper time. For **the secret**  **power of lawlessness is already at work;** but the one who now  holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of  the way. And then **the lawless one** will be revealed, whom the  Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and  destroy by the splendor of his coming. **The coming of** **the  lawless one** will be in accordance with **the work of Satan**  displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and  wonders, and in>>>**every sort of evil that deceives those who are**  **perishing.**<<<**They perish because they refused to love the truth**  **and so be saved.** **For this reason God sends them a powerful**  **delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will**  **be condemned who have not believed the truth but have**>>>>**delighted**  **in wickedness.**<<<<    But we ought always to thank God for you, **brothers** **loved by the**  **Lord,** because **from the beginning God chose you to be saved**  ss **through the sanctifying**>**work**<**of the Spirit and through belief**  ff **in the truth.** **He called you to this through our gospel, that**  **you might**>**share in**<**the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.** So then,  **ee** brothers, **stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to**  **you,** whether by word of mouth or by letter.    **May our** **Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved**  **us and by his grace** **gave us** **eternal encouragement and good**  ss **hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good**  **deed and word.**    Finally, brothers, **pray for us** **that the message of the Lord may**  >**spread rapidly**<**and be honored,** just as it was with you. And  pray **that we may be delivered from** **wicked and evil men, for** **not**  ff **everyone has faith.** **But** **the Lord is faithful, and he will**  ss **strengthen and protect you from the evil one.** We have  **ee** confidence in the Lord that **you are doing and will continue to**  **do the things we command.** **May** **the Lord direct your hearts into**  **God's love and Christ's**>**perseverance.**<    In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers,  ee to **keep away from every brother who** is idle and **does not live**  **according to the teaching you received** from us. For you  yourselves know how **you ought to follow our example.** We were  not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food  without paying for it. On the contrary, **we worked night and**  **day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to**  **any of you.** We did this, not because we do not have the right  to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to  follow. For even when we were with you, **we gave you this rule:**  **"If a man will not work, he shall not eat."**    ee We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are  busybodies. Such people **we command and urge in the Lord Jesus**  **Christ** to settle down and earn the bread they eat. And as for  **HSMS**hh you, brothers,^^**never tire of doing what is right.**<<    ee **If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take**  **special note of him. Do not associate with him,** **in order that**  **he may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but**  **warn him as a brother.**    Now **may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and**  **in every way.** **The Lord be with all of you.**    I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the  distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write.    **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.**  **============**  **Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior**  **and of Christ Jesus our hope,**    To Timothy my true son in **the faith:**    **Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our**  **Lord.**    As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus  so that you may **command certain men not to teach false**  **doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths** and  endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than  ff**ee**  >>>>**God's work**<<<<**--which is by faith.** The goal of this command is  **love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and** **a**  **sincere faith.** **Some**^^**have** **wandered away from these and** **turned** **to**  **meaningless talk**<<**.** **They want to be teachers** of the law, **but** **they**  ^^**do not know what they are talking about or what they so**  **confidently affirm.**<<    We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also  know that **law is made not for the righteous but for** **lawbreakers**  **and** **rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious;**  for **those who kill their fathers or mothers,** for **murderers,** for  **adulterers and perverts,** for **slave traders** and **liars** and  **perjurers**--and for whatever else is contrary to **the sound**  **doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed**  **God,** which he entrusted to me.    I thank **Christ Jesus** our Lord, **who has given me strength,** that **he**  **ee considered me faithful, appointing me to his service.** Even  though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent  man, **I was shown mercy** because I acted in ignorance and  ss unbelief. **The grace of our Lord was poured out on me**  ff **abundantly,** **along** **with the faith and love that are in Christ**  **Jesus.**    Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance:  **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners**--of whom I am   the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that  in me, the worst of sinners, **Christ Jesus might display his**  ff >**unlimited patience**<as an example **for those who**>**would**<**believe on**  **him and receive eternal life.** **Now to the King eternal,**  **immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever**  **and ever. Amen.**    Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the  prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you  **ee**ff may **fight** **the good fight,** **holding on to faith** and **a good**  hh **conscience.** **Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked**  **their faith.** Among them are Hymenaeus and **Alexander,** **whom I**  **have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.**    **I urge, then, first of all, that**^**requests**<**, prayers, intercession**  **and thanksgiving be made for everyone**--for kings and all those  **ee** in authority, that we may **live peaceful and quiet lives in** **all**  hh **godliness and holiness.** This is good, and pleases **God our**  **Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a**  **knowledge of the truth.** For **there is one God and one mediator**  **between God and men, the man** **Christ Jesus, who gave himself as**  **a ransom for all men**--the testimony given in its proper time.  And for this purpose **I was appointed a herald** and an apostle--I  am telling the truth, I am not lying--and **a teacher of the true**  **faith** to the Gentiles.    I want men everywhere to **lift up holy hands in prayer, without**  **anger or disputing.**    **I also want women to**^**dress modestly, with decency and propriety,**<  **not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes,**  **but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to**  **worship God.**    **A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.** **I do not**  **permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she**  **must be silent.** For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam  was not the one **deceived;** it was the woman who was **deceived** and  became a sinner. But women will be **saved** through  childbearing--if they continue in **faith, love** **and holiness with**  **propriety.**    Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being  **an overseer,** **he desires a noble task.** Now the overseer **must be**  **above reproach,** the husband of but one wife, **temperate,**  **self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not**  **given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome,**  **not a lover of money.** He must manage his own family well and  ^**see that his children obey him with proper respect.**<(If anyone  does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take  care of God's church?) **He must not be a recent convert, or** **he**  **may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the**  **devil.** He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so  that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.    Deacons, likewise, are to **be** **men worthy of respect, sincere,** not  indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. **They**  **must keep hold of the**>>>>**deep truths of the faith**<<<<**with a clear**  **conscience.** **They must first be tested;** and **then if there is**  **nothing against them, let them serve** as deacons.    In the same way, their wives are to be **women worthy of respect,**  not malicious talkers but **temperate and trustworthy in**  **everything.**    A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his  children and his household well. **Those who have served well**  **gain** an excellent standing and>>>>**great assurance in their faith**  **in Christ Jesus.**<<<<    Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these  instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people  ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is **the**  **church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the**  **truth.** Beyond all question, **the mystery of godliness is great:**  **He** appeared in a body, **was vindicated by the Spirit,** was seen  by angels, was preached among the nations, **was believed on in**  **the world,** was taken up in glory.    **The Spirit clearly says** that **in later times some will abandon the**  **faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons**.  **Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose**  **consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.** They forbid  people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods,  which God created to be received with thanksgiving by **those who**  **believe and who know the truth.** For **everything God created is**  **good,** and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with  thanksgiving, because it is **consecrated by the word of God** and  prayer.    If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good  minister of Christ Jesus, **brought up in** **the truths of the faith**  and of the good teaching that you have followed. Have nothing  to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, **train**  **ee yourself**>>>>**to be godly.**<<<<For physical training is of some value,  but **godliness has value for all things, holding promise for**  **both the present life and the life to come.**    This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance (and   **for this we labor and strive**), that **we have put our hope in the**  ff **living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of**  **those who believe.**    Command and teach these things. Don't let anyone look down on you  **ee** because you are young, but **set an example for the believers in**  **speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.** Until I come,  **devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to**  **preaching and to teaching.** Do not neglect your gift, which was  given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders  laid their hands on you.    **HSMS** >>>>**Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them,**<<<<  So that everyone may see your progress. **Watch your life and**  **doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you**  **will save both yourself and your hearers.**    Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but **exhort him** as if he were  **ee** your father. **Treat** younger men as brothers, older women as  mothers, and **younger women as sisters,**>**with absolute purity**<**.**    Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need.  But **if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should**  **ee** **learn first of all to**^**put their religion into practice**<**by**  **caring for their own family** and so repaying their parents and  grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. **The widow** **who is**  **really in need and** **left all alone** **puts her hope in God** **and**  **HSMS** **continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. But**  **the widow who**>>**lives for pleasure**<<**is dead even while she lives.**  Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be  **ee** open to blame. **If anyone does not provide for his relatives,**  ff **and especially for his immediate family,** **he has denied the**  **faith and is worse than an unbeliever.**    **No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over**  **sixty, has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for**  **ee her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing**  **hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in**  **trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.**    **As for younger widows,** do not put them on such a list. For when  Their>**sensual desires overcome** their **dedication**<**to Christ**, they  want to marry. Thus they>>>**bring judgment on themselves**<<<**, because**  **they have broken their first pledge.** Besides, they get into the  habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And  not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and  busybodies, saying things they ought not to. So I counsel  ee younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their  homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. **Some**  **have in fact already**>>>**turned away to follow Satan**.<<<    ee If any woman who is **a believer** has widows in her family, she  should help them and not let the church be burdened with them,  so that the church can help those widows who are really in  need.    The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy  of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and  teaching. For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while  it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his  wages." Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless  it is brought by two or three witnesses. **Those who sin are to**  **be rebuked publicly,** so that the others may take warning.    I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect  angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to  do nothing out of favoritism.    Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and **do not share in**  **ee**hh **the sins of others.** **Keep yourself pure.**    Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your  stomach and your frequent illnesses.    The sins of some men are obvious, reaching the place of judgment  ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. In the  same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not  cannot be hidden.    All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their  masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our  teaching may not be slandered. Those who have **believing** masters  are not to show less respect for them because they are  **ee** brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because  those who benefit from their service are **believers,** and dear to  them. These are the things you are to teach and urge on them.    **If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound**  **instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he**  **is conceited and understands nothing.** He has an unhealthy  interest in **controversies and quarrels about words** that result  in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant  friction between **men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of**  **the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial**  **gain.**    But **godliness with contentment is great gain.** For we brought  nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But  **if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.**   **People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and**  **into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin**  **and destruction.** **For the love of money is a root of all kinds**  **of evil.** **Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the**  **faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.**    **ee** But you, **man of God,** **flee from all this,** and **pursue**  **righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and**  **ee**ff **gentleness.** **Fight the good fight of the faith.** **Take hold of the**  **eternal life** to which **you were called** when you made your good  confession in the presence of many witnesses. **In the sight of**  **God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus,** who  while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good  **HSMS**hh confession, I charge you to>**keep this command without spot or**  **blame**<until **the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,** **which God**  **will bring about in his own time--God, the blessed and only**  **Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is**  **immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has**  **seen or can see. To him be honor and**>**might**<**forever. Amen.**    **Command those who are rich** in this present world not to be  arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so  uncertain, but **to** **put their hope in God,** **who richly provides us**  **ee with everything for our enjoyment.** **Command them to do good, to**  **be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.**  **In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as**>>>**a firm**  **foundation for the coming age**<<<**, so that they may take hold of**  **the life that is truly life.**    Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. **Turn away**  **from** **godless chatter** and>>>**the opposing ideas of what is falsely**  **called knowledge**<<<**, which some have professed and in so doing**  **have**>**wandered**<**from the faith.**    **Grace be with you.**  **============**  **Paul,** **an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God**, according to  **the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,**    To Timothy, my dear son:    **Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our**  **Lord.**    I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear  conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my  prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may  ff be filled with joy. I have been reminded of **your sincere faith,**  **which first lived** **in your grandmother Lois and in your mother**  **Eunice and, I am persuaded,** **now lives in you** also. For this  reason I remind you to **fan into flame the gift of God,** which is  ss in you through the laying on of my hands. For **God did not give**  **us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of**  **self-**>**discipline**<**.**    **ee** So **do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord,** or ashamed of me  his prisoner. But **join with me in** **suffering for the gospel, by**  ss **the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a**>>>**holy**  hh **life**<<<**--not because of**>>**anything we have done**<<**but because of his**  **own purpose and grace.** **This** **grace was given us in Christ Jesus**  **before the beginning of time,** but it has now been revealed  through the appearing of **our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has**  **destroyed death and has** **brought life and immortality to light**  **through the gospel.** And of this gospel I was appointed a herald  and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I  ff am. Yet I am not ashamed, because **I know whom** **I have believed**,  **and am convinced** that he is able to guard what I have entrusted  to him for that day.    What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching,  ff with **faith** **and love in Christ Jesus.** **Guard the good deposit**  ss **that was entrusted to you--guard it with the help of** **the Holy**  **Spirit who lives in us.**    You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me,  including Phygelus and Hermogenes.    May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because  he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. On the  contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he  found me. **May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the**  **Lord on that day!** You know very well in how many ways he helped  me in Ephesus.    You then, my son, **be strong in the grace** **that is in Christ Jesus.**  And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many  witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to  **ee** teach others. **Endure hardship** **with us like a good soldier of**  **ee Christ Jesus.** **No one serving as a soldier gets involved in**  **civilian affairs**--**he wants to please** his commanding officer.  Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, **he does not**  **receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the**  **rules.** The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a  share of the crops. Reflect on what I am saying, for **the Lord**  **will give you insight into all this.**    **Remember** **Jesus Christ, raised from the dead,** descended from  David. **This is** **my gospel, for which I am suffering** **even to the**  **point of being chained like a criminal.** But **God's word** **is not**  **ee chained.** Therefore **I endure everything** for the sake of **the**  **elect, that they too may obtain the salvation** **that is in Christ**  **Jesus, with eternal glory.**    Here is a trustworthy saying: **If we died with him, we will also**  **live with him;** **if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we**  **disown him, he will also disown us**; **if we are faithless, he**  **will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.**    Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against  quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those  **ee** who listen. **Do your best** **to present yourself to God as one**  **approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who**  >**correctly**<**handles the word of truth**. Avoid godless chatter,  because those who indulge in it will become more and more  ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them  are **Hymenaeus and Philetus,** who **have**>**wandered away**<**from the**  **truth.** They say that the resurrection has already taken place,  ff and>>>**they destroy the faith of some.**<<<**Nevertheless,** **God's solid**  **foundation stands firm,** sealed with this inscription: **"The Lord**  **ee**hh **knows those who are his,"** and, **"Everyone who confesses the name**  **of the Lord**>>>**must turn away from wickedness.**<<<**"**    In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver,  but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some  **ee**hh for ignoble. **If a man cleanses himself** from the latter, **he will**  **be an instrument for noble purposes,**>>>**made holy**<<<**, useful to the**  **Master** and prepared to do any good work.    **ee**hh **Flee** **the evil desires of youth,** and **pursue** **righteousness, faith,**  **love and peace,** along with those who **call on the Lord out of a**  **pure heart.**>>**Don't have anything to do with foolish and**>>**stupid**<<  **arguments,** **because you know they produce quarrels.**<<And **the**  **Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to**  **everyone, able to teach,**>**not resentful**<**. Those who oppose him he**  ss **must gently instruct,** **in the hope that God will grant them**  **repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that**  **they will come to their senses and escape from** **the**>**trap**<**of** **the**  **devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.**    **But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days.**  **People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful,**  **proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful,**  **unholy,**>>**without love,** **unforgiving,**<<**slanderous,** **without**  **self-control,** **brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous,**  >>**rash,**<< **conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of**  **God**--**having a form of godliness but denying its** **power.**>>>**Have**  **nothing to do with them.**<<<    They are **the kind who** worm their way into homes and **gain control**  **over weak-willed** **women,** **who** **are** **loaded down with sins** **and are**  >>>**swayed by all kinds of evil desires,**<<<**always learning but** **never**  **able to**>>>**acknowledge**<<<**the truth.** Just as Jannes and Jambres  opposed Moses, so also **these men oppose the truth--men of**  >**depraved**<**minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are**  >**rejected**<.But they will not get very far because, as in the  case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.    **You, however, know all about my teaching,**>**my way of life,** **my**  hh**ee** **purpose,**<**faith**, **patience, love, endurance, persecutions,**  **sufferings--what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch,**  ss **Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured.** **Yet the Lord**  **rescued me from all of them.** In fact, **everyone who wants to**  **live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,** **while**  **evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and**  ee  **being deceived.** But **as for you,** **continue in what you have**  **learned and have become convinced of,** because you know those  from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known  **the holy Scriptures,** which are **able to make you wise for**  ff **salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.** **All Scripture is**  **God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting**  **and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be**  **thoroughly equipped for every good work.**    In the presence of God and of **Christ Jesus,** **who will judge the**  **living and the dead,** and **in view of his appearing and** **his**  **ee** **kingdom,** I give you this charge: **Preach the Word;** **be prepared**  **in season and out of season;**>**correct**<**, rebuke** **and**  >**encourage**<**--with great patience and**>**careful instruction**<**.** For  **the time will come when men will not**>**put up with sound doctrine**<.  **Instead,** **to suit their own**>**desires,**<**they will gather around**  **them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears**  **want to hear.** **They will** **turn their ears away from the truth and**  **ee turn aside to myths.** **But you,**>**keep your head in all situations**<**,**  **endure hardship,** **do the work of an evangelist, discharge all**  **the duties of your ministry.**    For **I am already being poured out like a drink offering,** and **the**  **ee time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I**  ff **have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in**  **store for me the crown of righteousness,** which **the Lord,** **the**  **righteous Judge, will award to me on that day**--and not only to  me, but **also** **to all who have**>>>**longed for**<<<**his appearing.**    Do your best to come to me quickly, for **Demas,** **because he loved**  **this world, has deserted me** and has gone to Thessalonica.  Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke  is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is  helpful to me in my ministry. I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. When   you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and  my scrolls, especially the parchments.    **Alexander** the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord  will repay him for what he has done. You too should be on your  guard against him, because he **strongly opposed our message.**    At my first defense, **no one came to my support,** but **everyone**  **deserted me.** **May it not be held against them.** **But the Lord**  **stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the**  **message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might**  ss **hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. The Lord**  **will rescue me from every evil**>**attack**<**and will bring me safely**  **to his heavenly kingdom.** **To him be glory for ever and ever.**  **Amen.**    Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus.  Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in  Miletus. Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets  you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers.    **The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.**  **============**  **Paul, a servant** of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ **for the**  ff **faith of God's elect** **and**>>**the** **knowledge of the truth that leads**  hh  **to godliness--a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of**  **eternal life,**<<**which God, who does not lie, promised before the**  **beginning of time,** and **at his appointed season** **he** **brought his**  **word to light** through the preaching entrusted to me by the  command of **God our Savior,**    ff To Titus, my true son in **our common** **faith:**    **Grace and** peace **from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.**    The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out  what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I  directed you. **An elder** **must be blameless,** the husband of but  one wife, a man whose children **believe** and are not open to the  charge of being wild and disobedient. **Since an overseer is**  **ee** **entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless**--**not**  **overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not**  **violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.** Rather **he must be**  **hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled,**  **upright, holy and disciplined.** **He must hold firmly** **to the**  **trustworthy message** as it has been taught, so that he can  **encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose**  **it.**    For **there are many rebellious people,** **mere talkers and deceivers,**  especially those of the circumcision group. **They must be**  **silenced,** because **they are ruining whole households by teaching**  **things they ought not to teach**--and that **for the sake of**  **dishonest gain.** Even one of their own **prophets** has said,  **"Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." This**  **testimony is true.** Therefore, **rebuke them sharply,** **so that they**  ff **will be** **sound in the faith** **and will pay no attention to** Jewish  myths or to **the commands of those who reject the truth.** **To the**  **pure, all things are pure,** **but to those who are**>**corrupted**<**and**  ff **do not believe,** **nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and**  **consciences are**>**corrupted**<**. They claim to know God, but by their**  >**actions**<**they deny him.** **They are detestable, disobedient and**  **unfit for**>**doing anything good**<.    **ee** **You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.** Teach the  **ee** older men to **be**>**temperate, worthy of respect,**<**self-controlled,**  ff **and sound in faith, in love and in**>**endurance**<**.**    Likewise, teach the older women to be **reverent in the way they**  **live, not to be slanderers or** **addicted to much wine,** but to  **teach what is good.** Then they can train the younger women **to**  **love** their husbands and children, to **be self-controlled and**  **pure,** to be **busy at home,** to **be kind,** and to be subject to  their husbands, so that no one will malign **the word of God.**    Similarly, encourage the young men to **be self-controlled.** In  ee everything set them an example by **doing what is good. In your**  **teaching show integrity,**>**seriousness**<**and soundness of speech**  **that cannot be condemned,** **so that those who oppose you may be**  **ashamed** because they have nothing bad to say about us.    Teach>**slaves**<to be subject to their masters in everything, to try  to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from  them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, **so that in**  **every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior**  **attractive.**    ss For **the grace of God that brings salvation** has appeared to all  **ee**hh men. **It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly**  **passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives**  in this present age, **while we wait for** **the blessed hope--the**  **glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,**  hh who **gave himself** for us **to redeem us from all**>**wickedness**<and to  ss**ee** **purify for himself a people** that are his very own, **eager to do**  **what is good.**    These, then, are the things you should teach. **Encourage and**  **rebuke with all authority.** **Do not let anyone**>**despise**<**you.**   Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be  ee obedient, to **be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no**  **one, to be peaceable and considerate, and**^^**to show true humility**<<  **toward all men.**    At one time we too were **foolish, disobedient, deceived and**  **enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures.** We lived in  malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. **But when**  **the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us,**  **not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his**  ss **mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal**  >**by**<**the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously** through  **Jesus Christ our Savior,** so that, **having been justified by his**  **grace,** we might become heirs having **the hope of eternal life.**  This is a trustworthy saying. And **I want you to stress these**  ff **things,** **so that** those who have **trusted in God** **may be careful to**  **ee devote themselves to doing what is good.** **These things are**  **excellent and profitable** for everyone.    But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and  quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and  useless. **Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a**  **second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may**  **be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is**  **self-condemned.**    As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to  come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter  there. Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and  Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they  **ee** need. **Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what**  **is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities**  **and not live unproductive lives.**    Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who **love** us in  the **faith.**    **Grace be with you all.**  **============**  Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,    To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker, to Apphia our  sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that  meets in your home:    **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus**  **Christ.**    I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I  ff hear about>>**your faith in the Lord Jesus** and **your** **love** **for all**  **ee the saints.**<<I pray that you may>>>**be active in sharing your**  **faith,** **so that you will have a full understanding of every good**  **thing we have in Christ.**<<< **Your love** has given me great joy and  encouragement, because **you, brother, have refreshed the hearts**  **of the saints.**    Therefore, **although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do**  **what you ought to do,** **yet I appeal to you on the basis of love.**  I then, as Paul--an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ  Jesus--I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son  while I was in chains. Formerly he was useless to you, but now  he has become useful both to you and to me.    I am sending him--who is my very heart--back to you. I would have  liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in  helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. But I did not  want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you  do will be spontaneous and not forced. Perhaps the reason he  was separated from you for a little while was that you might  have him back for good--no longer as a slave, but better than a  slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer  to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.    So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome  me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge  it to me. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay  it back--not to mention that you owe me your very self. I do  wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the  Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience,  I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.    And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope  to be restored to you in answer to your prayers.    Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you  greetings. And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my  fellow workers.    **The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.**  **============**  **In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets** at  many times and in various ways, but **in these last days he has**  **spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things,**  **and through whom he made the**>**universe**<**. The Son is the radiance**  **of God's glory and the exact**>**representation of his being**<**,**  >**sustaining all things by his** **powerful word**<**.** **After he had**  **provided purification for sins,** **he sat down at** **the right hand**  **of the Majesty** **in heaven.** So he became as much superior to the  angels as the name he has inherited is **superior** to theirs.  For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son;  today I have become your Father"? Or again, "I will be his  Father, and he will be my Son"? And again, when God brings his  firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels  worship him." In speaking of the angels he says, **"He makes his**  **angels winds, his**>**servants**<**flames of fire."** But **about the Son**  **he says,** "**Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever,** and  hh **righteousness will be the scepter** **of your kingdom.** **You have**  **loved righteousness and hated wickedness**; **therefore God, your**  **God, has**>**set you above your companions by anointing you with**  **the oil of joy**<**."** **He also says,** **"In the beginning, O Lord, you**  **laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work**  **of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all**  **wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe;**  **like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same,**  **and your years will never end."** To which of the angels did God  ever say, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a  footstool for your feet"? **Are not all angels ministering**  **spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?**    **ee** **We must pay more careful attention,** therefore, to what we have  heard, **so that we do not drift away.** For if the message spoken  by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience  received its just punishment, **how shall we escape if we**>**ignore**<  **such a great salvation?** This **salvation,** which was first  announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard  him. **God** also **testified to it by** signs, wonders and various  miracles, and **gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to**  **his will.**    It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come,  about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone  has testified: "What is man that you are mindful of him, the  son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower  than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put  everything under his feet." In putting everything under him,  God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we  do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who was  made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and  honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he  might taste death for everyone.    **In bringing many sons to glory,** **it was fitting that God,** for whom  and through whom everything exists, **should make** **the author of**  **ee their salvation** **perfect through suffering.** Both>>>**the one who**  sshh **makes men holy** **and** **those who are made holy** **are of the same**  **family.**<<<**So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.** **He says,**  **"I will declare your name** **to my brothers;** in the presence of  ff the congregation I will sing your praises." And again, "I will  put my trust in him." **And** **again** he says, **"Here am I, and the**  **children God has given me."**    Since the children have flesh and blood, **he** too **shared in their**  **humanity** **so that** **by his death** **he might destroy him who holds**  **the power of death--that is, the devil**--**and free those who all**  **their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.** For  surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants.  For this reason **he had to be made like his brothers in every**  **way,** **in order that he might become** **a** **merciful and** **faithful** **high**  **priest** in service to God, **and** **that he might make**>**atonement**<**for**  **the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was**  **tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.**    **ee** Therefore, **holy** brothers, who share in **the heavenly calling,**>[**fix**  **your thoughts on Jesus**]<**,** the apostle and high priest whom we  confess. **He was** **faithful** **to** **the one who appointed him,** **just as**  **Moses was** **faithful** in all God's house. **Jesus has been found**  **worthy of greater honor than Moses,** **just as the builder of a**  **house has greater honor than the house itself.** For every house  is built by someone, but **God is the builder of everything.**  **Moses was faithful** **as a servant** **in all God's house,** testifying  to what would be said in the future. But **Christ is faithful as**  **ee**ff **a son** **over God's house.** And **we are his house,**>**if we hold on to**  **our courage and the hope of which we boast.**<    So, **as the Holy Spirit says:** **"Today,** **if you hear his voice, do**  **not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the**  **time of testing in the desert,** **where** **your fathers tested and**  **tried me and for forty years saw what I did.** That is why I was  hh angry with that generation, and **I said, 'Their hearts are**  **always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I**  **declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall**>**never**<**enter my**  **rest.'"**    **ee**ff **See to it,** brothers, that none of you has a>**sinful**<**, unbelieving**  **heart**>**that turns away**<**from the living God.** But **encourage one**  **another daily,** as long as it is called Today, so that none of  you may be **hardened by sin's deceitfulness.** **We have come to**  ff  **share in Christ if we hold firmly** **till the end** **the confidence**  **we had at first.** As has just been said: **"Today, if you hear his**  **voice, do not harden your hearts** **as you did in the rebellion."**    Who were they who **heard and rebelled**? Were they not **all** those  Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty  years? Was it not with **those who sinned,** whose bodies fell in  the desert? And to whom did **God swear that they would never**  **enter his rest** if not to **those who** **disobeyed**? So we see that  ff **they were not able to enter, because of their** **unbelief.**  Therefore, since **the promise of entering his rest** **still stands,**  **ee** >**let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen**  **short of it.**<For we also have had the gospel preached to us,  just as they did; but **the message they heard was of no value to**  ff  **them,**>>>>[**because those who heard did not** **combine it with faith.**]<<<<  Now **we who have believed enter that rest,** just **as God has said,**  **"So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my**  **rest.'"** And yet his work has been finished since the creation  of the world. For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day  in these words: "And on the seventh day God rested from all his  work." And again in the passage above he says, "They shall  never enter my rest."    It still remains that some will enter that rest, and **those who**  hh  **formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in,** **because**  **of their disobedience.** Therefore God again set a certain day,  calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through  David, as was said before: **"Today,** **if you hear his voice,** **do**  **not harden your hearts."** For if Joshua had given them rest, God  would not have spoken later about another day. There remains,  then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who  enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did  **HSMS** from his. **Let us,** therefore,>**make every effort**<**to enter that**  **rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of**  **disobedience.**    For **the word of God is living and active.** Sharper than any  double-edged sword, **it penetrates even to dividing soul and**  **spirit,** joints and marrow; **it judges the thoughts and attitudes**  **of the heart.** **Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's**  **sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of**  **him to whom we must give account.**    Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through  **ee**ff the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, **let us hold firmly to the**  **faith we profess.** **For we do not have a high priest who is**  **unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who**  **has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without**  **sin.** **Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence,**  **so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our**  **time of need.**    **Every high priest** is selected from among men and is appointed to  represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and  sacrifices for sins. **He is able to deal gently with those who**  **are ignorant and are going astray,** **since he himself is subject**  **to weakness.** This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own  sins, as well as for the sins of the people.    **No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God,**  just as Aaron was. So Christ also did not take upon himself the  glory of becoming a high priest. But **God said to him, "You are**  **my Son; today I have become your Father." And he says in**  **another place, "You are a priest forever, in the order of**  **Melchizedek."**    **During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers**  **and petitions with loud cries and tears** **to** **the one who could**  **save him from death,** and **he was heard because of his**>**reverent**  **ee submission**<**.** Although he was a son, **he learned obedience from**  hh **what he suffered and,**>**once made perfect**<**,** **he became the source**  **ee of eternal salvation** **for all who obey him** and was designated by  God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.    We have much to say about this, but **it is hard to explain because**  **you are slow to learn.** In fact, **though by this time you ought**  **to be teachers,** **you need someone to teach you the elementary**  **truths of God's word all over again.** **You need milk, not solid**  **food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant,** **is**>**not**  **acquainted**<**with the teaching about righteousness.** **But** **solid**  **food is for the mature, who** **by constant use have trained**  **themselves to distinguish good from evil.**    Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and  rr go on to maturity, not laying again **the foundation of**  ff  **repentance from**>**acts that lead to death**<**,** and of **faith in God,**  instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, **the**  **resurrection of the dead,** and **eternal judgment.** And God  permitting, we will do so.    **It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who**  **have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy**  **Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the**  **powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back**  **to repentance,** **because to their loss they are crucifying the**  **Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public**  **disgrace.**    **ee** Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that  produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives  the blessing of God. But land that produces thorns and thistles  is worthless and is>**in danger of**<being cursed. **In the end it**  **will be burned.**    Even though we speak like this, dear friends, **we**>**are confident**<**of**  better things in your case--**things that accompany salvation.**  **ee** God is not unjust; he will not forget **your work** and **the love**  **you have shown him** as **you have helped his people** and continue   to help them. We want each of you to>**show** **this same diligence**  **to the very end,** **in order to make your hope sure.**<**We do not**  **ff want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who** **through** **faith**  **and patience** **inherit what has been promised.**    When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one  greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, "I  will surely bless you and give you many descendants." And so  **after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.**    Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath  confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. Because  God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very  clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with  an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in  ff which it is impossible for God to lie, **we who have fled to take**  **hold of the hope offered to us** **may be greatly encouraged.** **We**  **have this hope as an anchor for the soul,**>**firm and secure**<**.** It  enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who  went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high  priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.    This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High.  He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and  blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. **First,**  **his name means "king of righteousness";** then also, "king of  Salem" means **"king of peace."** Without father or mother, without  genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the  Son of God he remains a priest forever.    Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him  a tenth of the plunder! Now the law requires the descendants of  Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the  people--that is, their brothers--even though their brothers are  descended from Abraham. This man, however, did not trace his  descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and  blessed him who had the promises. And without doubt the lesser  person is blessed by the greater. In the one case, the tenth is  collected by men who die; but in the other case, by **him who is**  **declared to be living.** One might even say that Levi, who  collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, because  when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his  ancestor.    hh **If perfection could have been attained** through the Levitical  priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the  people), why was there still need for another priest to  come--one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of  Aaron? For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must  also be a change of the law. He of whom these things are said  belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has  ever served at the altar. For it is clear that our Lord  descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said  nothing about priests. And what we have said is even more clear  if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become  a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry  but on the basis of **the power of an indestructible life**. For it  is declared: "You are a priest forever, in the order of  Melchizedek."    The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and  hhff useless (for **the law made nothing perfect**), and **a better hope**  **is introduced, by which** **we draw near to God.**    And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any  oath, but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him:  "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a  priest forever.'" Because of this oath, Jesus has become the  guarantee of a better covenant.    Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented  them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives  forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore **he is able to**  **save**>**completely**<**those who come to God through him,** **because** **he**  **always lives to intercede for them.**    **Such a high priest** **meets our need--one who is** **holy,**>**blameless,**  **pure,** **set apart from sinners,**<**exalted above the heavens.** Unlike  the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices  day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of  the people. **He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he**  **offered himself.** For the law appoints as high priests men who  are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed **the**  hh **Son, who has** **been made perfect forever.**    The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high  priest, who sat down at **the right hand** of the throne of the  Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true  tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.    Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and  sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have  something to offer. If he were on earth, he would not be a  priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts  prescribed by the law. They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy  and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned  when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you  make everything according to the pattern shown you on the  mountain." But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior   to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior  to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.    For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no  place would have been sought for another. But God found fault  with>**the people**<and said: "The time is coming, declares the  Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel  and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I  made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to  lead them out of Egypt, because **they did not remain faithful to**  **my covenant, and**>**I turned away from them,**<**declares the Lord.**  **This is the covenant I will make** with the house of Israel **after**  ss **that time,** declares the Lord. **I will put my laws in their minds**  **and write them on their hearts.** I will be their God, and they  will be my people. **No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or**  **a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because** **they will**  **all know me,** **from the least of them to the greatest.** **For** **I will**  >**forgive their wickedness**<**and will remember their sins no more.**"    By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one  obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.    Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an  earthly sanctuary. A tabernacle was set up. In its first room  were the lampstand, the table and the consecrated bread; this  was called **the Holy Place.** Behind the second curtain was a room  called **the**[**Most Holy Place**]**,** which had the golden altar of  incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark  contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded,  and the stone tablets of the covenant. Above the ark were the  cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But  we cannot discuss these things in detail now.    When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered  regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. **But**  **only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once**  **a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself**  **and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.** **The**  **Holy Spirit** **was showing** **by this** **that** **the way into the**[**Most Holy**  **Place**]**had not yet been disclosed** as long as the first  tabernacle was still standing. This is an illustration for the  present time, indicating that **the gifts and sacrifices being**  **offered** **were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.**  They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial  washings--external regulations applying until the time of the  new order.    When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are  already here, he went through the greater and **more perfect**  **tabernacle** that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of  this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats  and calves; but>**he entered the**[**Most Holy Place**]**once for all by**  **his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.**< The blood of  goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those  who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are  outwardly clean. **How much more,** then, **will** **the blood of Christ,**  **who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to**  ss **God,**>**cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death,**<**so**  **that we may serve** **the living God!**    For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that  **those who are called** **may receive the promised eternal**  ss **inheritance--now that** **he has died**>**as a ransom** **to set them free**<  **from the sins committed** under the first covenant.    In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the  one who made it, because a will is in force only when somebody  has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is  living. This is why even the first covenant was not put into  effect without blood. When Moses had proclaimed every  commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of  calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of  hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. He said,  "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you  to keep." In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the  tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact, **the**  **law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and**  **without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.**    It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to  be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things  themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did  not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true  one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's  presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and  again, the way the high priest enters **the**[**Most Holy Place**]every  year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had  to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now  ss **he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages**>[**to do away**  **with sin**]<**by the sacrifice of himself.** **Just as man is destined**  **to die once, and after that to face judgment,** **so Christ was**  **sacrificed once**>**to take away the sins**<**of many people;** and **he**  **will appear a second time,** not to bear sin, but **to bring**  **salvation to those who are waiting for him.**    **The law** is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not  the realities themselves. For this reason it **can never,** by the  hh same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, **make**  **perfect** **those who draw near to worship.** **If it could,** would they  not have stopped being offered? For **the worshipers would have**  **been cleansed**>**once for all, and would no longer have felt**  **guilty for their sins.**<But those sacrifices are an annual  reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of  bulls and goats to take away sins.    **Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said:** "Sacrifice  and offering you did not desire, but **a body you prepared for**  **me;** with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not  pleased. Then I said, **'Here I am--it is written about me in the**  **ee scroll--I have come to do your will,** **O God.'"** First he said,  "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings  you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them" (although  the law required them to be made). Then he said, "Here I am, I  have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to  ss establish the second. And **by that will,** **we have been made holy**  **through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**    Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious  duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which  can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for  all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at **the right hand**  of God. Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his  ss footstool, because>>>>>>>**by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever**  hh **those who are being made holy.**<<<<<<<    **The Holy Spirit** also **testifies** to us about this. First he says:  **"This is the covenant I will make with them after that time,**  ss **says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will**  **write them on their minds."** Then he adds: **"Their sins and**  **lawless acts I will remember no more."** And where these have  been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.    Therefore, brothers, since **we have confidence to enter the**>[**Most**  **Holy Place**]<**by the blood of Jesus,** **by a new and living way**  **opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,** and **since**  **we have a great priest** over the house of God, **let us draw near**  ff **to God with a**>**sincere**<**heart in** **full assurance of faith,** **having**  **our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a**>**guilty**<**conscience** and  **ee**ff having our bodies washed with pure water. **Let us hold**  >**unswervingly to the hope** **we profess**<**,** **for he who promised is**  **ee** **faithful. And** **let us consider how we may spur one another on**  **toward love and good deeds.** **Let us not give up meeting**  **together,** as some are in the habit of doing, but **let us**  **encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day**  **approaching.**    **If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the**  **knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only**  **a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will**  **consume the**>**enemies of God.** **Anyone who rejected**<**the law of**  **Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three**  **witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves**  **to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who**  **has**>**treated as an unholy thing**<**the blood of the covenant that**  **sanctified him,** **and who has**>**insulted**<**the Spirit of grace?** **For**  **we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and**  **again, "The Lord will judge his people."** **It is a dreadful thing**  **to fall into the hands of the living God.**    Remember those earlier days after **you** had **received the light,**  when **you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of**  >**suffering.**<**Sometimes you were publicly exposed to**>**insult and**  **persecution;**<at other times you stood side by side with those  who were so treated. **You** sympathized with those in prison and  **joyfully accepted the**>**confiscation**<**of your property, because**  **you knew that you yourselves had better and**>**lasting**<  **possessions.**    ff So **do not throw away** **your confidence;** **it will be richly rewarded.**  **ee** **You**>**need to persevere**<so that **when** **you have done the will of**  **God,** you will receive what he has **promised.** **For in just a very**  **little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay.**  ff **But my righteous one will live by faith.** And if he shrinks  back, I will not be pleased with him." But we are not of those  ff who shrink back and are **destroyed,** but of **those who believe and**  >[**are saved.**]<    ff Now **faith is being sure of what we hope for** and **certain of what**  **we do not see.** This is what the ancients were commended for.    ff **By faith we understand** that **the universe was formed at God's**  **command,** so that what is seen was not made out of what was  visible.    ff By **faith** **Abel** **offered God a better sacrifice** **than Cain did.** **By**  **faith he was** **commended as a righteous** **man, when** **God spoke well**  **of his offerings.** And **by faith he still speaks, even though he**  **is dead.**    ff By **faith** **Enoch** **was taken from this life, so that he did not**  **experience death; he could not be found, because** **God had taken**  **him away.** For before he was taken, **he was commended as one who**  **pleased God.** And **without faith it is impossible to please God,**  because anyone who comes to him **must believe that he exists and**  **ee that he rewards** those **who earnestly seek him.**    ff By **faith Noah,** when warned about things not yet seen, **in holy**  **fear built an ark to** **save** **his family. By his faith he condemned**  **the world** **and** **became heir of the righteousness that comes by**  **faith.**    ff By **faith** **Abraham**, **when called to go** to a place he would later  **ee** receive as his inheritance, **obeyed and went,** **even though he did**  **not know where he was going.** **By faith** **he made his home in the**  **promised land like a stranger in a foreign country;** **he lived in**  **tents,** as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the  same promise. For **he was looking forward to the city with**  **foundations, whose architect and builder is God.**    ff By **faith Abraham,** **even though he was past age--and Sarah** herself  **was barren--was** **enabled to become a father** **because** **he**  **considered him faithful who had made the promise.** And so from  this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as  numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand  on the seashore.    ff All these people were **still living by faith when they died. They**  **did not receive the things promised;** they only saw them and  **HSMS** welcomed them from a distance. And **they admitted** that **they were**  **aliens and strangers on earth.** People who say such things show  that they are looking for a country of their own. **If they had**  **been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had**  **HSMS** **opportunity to return.** Instead, **they were longing for a better**  **country--a heavenly one.** Therefore **God is not ashamed to be**  **called their God,** for he has prepared a city for them.    ff**ee** By **faith Abraham,** **when God tested him,** **offered Isaac** **as a**  **sacrifice.** He who had received the promises was about to  sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to  him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be  reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and  figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.    ff By **faith** **Isaac** blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.    ff By **faith** **Jacob,** when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons,  and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.    ff By **faith** **Joseph,** when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of  the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his  bones.    ff By **faith Moses' parents hid him for three months** after he was  born, because>**they saw he was no ordinary child**<**,** and **they were**  **not afraid of the king's edict.**    ff **By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the**  **HSMS son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with**  **the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for**  **a short time. He regarded**>**disgrace for the sake of Christ**<**as of**  **greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was**  **looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not**  **fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who**  **is invisible. By faith** he kept the Passover and the sprinkling  of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not  touch the firstborn of Israel.    ff By **faith** **the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land;**  but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.    ff By **faith** **the walls of Jericho fell,** after the people had marched  around them for seven days.    ff By **faith** **the prostitute Rahab,** **because she** **welcomed the spies,**  **was not killed with those who were disobedient.**    ff And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about  **Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the**  **HSMS prophets, who** **through faith conquered kingdoms, administered**  **justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of**  **lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of**  **the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who**  **became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women**  **received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were**  **tortured and refused to be released, so that they might**>**gain a**  **better resurrection.**<**Some faced jeers and flogging, while still**  **others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they**  **were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They**  **went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted**  **and mistreated--the world was not worthy of them. They wandered**  **in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.**    ff **These were all** **commended for their faith,** **yet none of them**  **received what had been promised**. God had planned something  hh better for us so that>>>**only together with us would they** **be made**  **perfect.**<<<    Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of  **HSMS** witnesses, **let us**^^^^**throw off everything that hinders and the sin**  **that so easily entangles,** and **let us run** **with perseverance**<<<<**the**  **race marked out for us.** **Let us fix our eyes** **on Jesus, the**  ssff **author and** **perfecter of our faith,** **who for the joy set before**  **him endured the cross,**>**scorning**<**its shame,** **and sat down at the**  **right hand of the throne of God.** **Consider him who endured such**  **opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and**  **lose heart.**  **In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the**  **point of shedding your blood.** And you have forgotten that word  ss of encouragement that addresses you as sons: **"My son, do not**  **make light of the Lord's discipline, and**>**do not lose heart**<**when**  **he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves,**  **and he**>**punishes**<**everyone he accepts** **as a son."**    >>**Endure hardship as discipline;**<<**God is treating you as sons. For**  **what son is not disciplined by his father?** If you are not  disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are  illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all  had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for  it. **How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits**  **and live!** Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they  sshh thought best; but **God disciplines us** for our good, **that we may**  **share in his holiness.** **No discipline seems pleasant at the**  **time, but painful. Later on,** however, **it produces a harvest of**  **righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.**    **ee** Therefore, **strengthen** your feeble arms and weak knees**. "Make**  **level paths for your feet," so that the lame may not be**  **disabled, but rather healed.**    **ee** **Make every effort** to live in **peace** with all men and **to be holy;**  hh **without holiness no one will see the Lord**. **See to it** **that no**  **one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to**  **cause trouble and defile many.** **See that no one** **is sexually**  **immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold**  **his inheritance rights as the oldest son.** Afterward, as you  know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected.  >**He could bring about no change of mind,**<though he sought the  blessing with tears.    **You have not come to a mountain** that can be touched and **that is**  **burning with fire;** **to darkness, gloom and storm; to a trumpet**  **blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it**  **begged that no further word be spoken to them, because they**  **could not bear what was commanded:** **"If even an animal touches**  **the mountain, it must be stoned." The sight was so terrifying**  **that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."**    **But you have come** **to Mount Zion,** **to the heavenly Jerusalem, the**  **city of the living God.** You have come **to thousands upon**  **thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the**  **firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.** You have come **to**  sshh **God, the judge of all men,** **to** **the spirits of** **righteous men made**  **perfect, to Jesus** the mediator of a new covenant, and to the  sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of  Abel.    **See to it** **that you do not refuse him who speaks.** **If they did not**  **escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much**  **less will we,** **if we turn away** **from him who warns us from**  **heaven**? At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has  promised, **"Once more I will shake not only the earth but also**  **the heavens."** The words "once more" indicate **the removing of**  **what can be shaken**--that is, created things--so **that** **what**  **cannot be shaken may remain.**    Therefore, **since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be**  **ee shaken,** **let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with**  **reverence and awe,** **for our "God is a consuming fire."**    **ee** **Keep on loving** each other as brothers. **Do not forget to entertain**  **strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels**  **without knowing it.** **Remember** **those in prison as if you were**  **their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated**>**as if you**  **yourselves were suffering.**<    Marriage should be honored by all, and>**the marriage bed kept**  **Pure**<**,** for **God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually**  **ee immoral. Keep your lives free from the love of money** and be  ss content with what you have, **because God has said, "Never will I**  **leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with**  ff  **confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What**  **can man do to me?"**    Remember your leaders, who spoke **the word of God** **to you.** Consider  the outcome of their way of life and imitate their **faith.** **Jesus**  **Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.**    **Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings.** **It is**  **good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace,** not by  ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them.  We have an altar from which those who minister at the  tabernacle have no right to eat.    **The** **high priest carries the blood of animals into the**[**Most Holy**  **Place**]**as a sin offering,** **but** **the bodies are burned outside the**  **camp.** **And** **so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate** **to make**  hh **the people holy through his own blood.** **Let us, then, go to him**  **outside the camp, bearing the**>**disgrace he bore**<**. For here we do**  **not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that**  **is to come.**    **ee** **Through Jesus,** therefore, **let us continually offer to God a**  **sacrifice of praise**--the fruit of lips that confess his name.  **ee** And **do not forget to do good and to share with others,** for **with**  **such** **sacrifices** God is pleased.    Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch  over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that  their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no  advantage to you.    hh **Pray** **for us.** **We are sure that** **we have a clear conscience and**  **desire to live honorably in every way.** I particularly urge you  to pray so that I may be restored to you soon.    **May** **the God of peace,** **who through** **the blood of the eternal**  **covenant** **brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,** **that great**  ss **Shepherd of the sheep,** **equip you with everything good for doing**  **his will,** and **may he work in us what is pleasing to him,**  **through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**    Brothers, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for I  have written you only a short letter.    I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If  he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you.    Greet all your leaders and all God's people. Those from Italy  send you their greetings.    **Grace be with you all.**  **============**  James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,    To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations:    Greetings.  Consider it **pure joy,** my brothers, **whenever you**>**face**<**trials of**  ff**ee** **many kinds,** because you know that **the testing of your faith**  **develops**>**perseverance.**<**Perseverance must finish its work so**  **that you may be**>**mature**<**and complete, not lacking anything.**  **If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives**  **generously to all without**>**finding fault,**<**and it will be given**  ff **to him.** **But** **when he asks, he must believe and not doubt,**  because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and  tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive  anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in  all he does.    The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his  high position. But **the one who is rich should take pride in his**  **low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower.** For  the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its  blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, **the**  **rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.**    **ee** **Blessed is** **the man who perseveres under trial,** **because** **when he**  **has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life** **that** **God**  **has** **promised** **to** **those who love him.**    When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For **God**  **cannot be tempted by evil,** **nor does he tempt anyone;** **but each**  **one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away**  **and enticed.** Then, **after desire has conceived,** **it gives birth**  **to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.**    **Don't be deceived,** my dear brothers. **Every good and perfect gift**  **is from above,** coming down from the Father of the heavenly  lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.>**He chose** **to**  ss **give us birth through**<**the word of truth,** that we might be a  kind of firstfruits of all he created.    **ee** My dear brothers, take note of this: **Everyone should be** **quick to**  **listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,** for man's anger  does not bring about **the**>**righteous life that God desires**<**.**  **ee**  Therefore,>**get rid of all** **moral filth and the evil that is so**  ss **prevalent** and **humbly accept**<**the word planted in you, which can**  **save you.**    **ee**  **Do not merely listen to the word, and so** **deceive yourselves.**>**Do**  **what it says.**<Anyone who listens to the word but does not do  what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror  and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately  **ee** forgets what he looks like. But the man who **looks**>**intently**<into  **the perfect law**>**that gives freedom,** and **continues to do this,**<  **ee** **not forgetting** what he has heard, but **doing it**--he will be  blessed in what he does.    **ee**hh **If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a**  **tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion**  **is worthless.** **Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and**  >**faultless**<**is this: to look after orphans and widows in their**  **distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.**    My brothers, as **believers** in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ,  **don't show favoritism.** Suppose a man comes into your meeting  wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby  clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man  wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but  say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by  my feet," have you not discriminated among yourselves and  become judges with evil thoughts?  Listen, my dear brothers: **Has not God chosen those who are poor**  ff **in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the**  **kingdom he promised** **those who love him**? But you have insulted  the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they  not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the  ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you  belong?    **If you really** keep the royal law found in Scripture, **"Love your**  **neighbor as yourself,"** **you are doing right.** But **if you show**  **favoritism, you sin** and are convicted by the law as  lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles  at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who  said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If  you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have  become a lawbreaker.    **Speak and act as those who are going to be**>>**judged** **by** **the law that**  **gives freedom,**<<**because judgment without mercy will be shown to**  **anyone who has not been merciful.** **Mercy triumphs over judgment!**    ff **What good is it,** my brothers, **if a man** **claims to have faith but**  **ee** **has**>**no deeds**<**? Can such faith save him?** Suppose a brother or  sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to  him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does  nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same  ff**ee** way, **faith by itself, if it is not**>**accompanied by action**<**, s**  **dead.**  But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."    ff**ee** **Show me your faith**>**without deeds**<**,** and **I will show you my faith by**  >**what I do.**<You believe that there>**is one God. Good!**<Even the  demons believe that--and shudder.    ff**ee** You foolish man, do you want evidence that **faith without deeds is**  **useless**? **Was not** our ancestor **Abraham**>**considered righteous**<**for**  **what he did** **when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?** You see  ff**ee** that>**his faith and his actions were working together,** and **his**  **faith was made complete by what he did.**<**And the scripture was**  **fulfilled that says,** **"Abraham believed God, and it was**>**credited**<  **to him as righteousness,"** **and** **he was called God's friend.** You  ff**ee** see that **a person is justified by what he does and not by faith**  **alone.**    In the same way, **was not even** **Rahab the prostitute considered**  **righteous** **for** **what she did** **when she gave lodging to the spies**  ff**ee** and sent them off in a different direction?>**As the body without**  **the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.**<    Not many of you should>**presume to be**<teachers, my brothers,  because you know that we who teach will be judgedmore  **ee**hh strictly. **We all stumble in many ways.** **If anyone**>**is never at**  **fault in what he says,**<**he is a perfect man, able to**>**keep his**  **whole body in check.**<    When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us,  we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example.  Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they  are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to  go. Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it  makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire  by a small spark. **The tongue also is a fire, a world of**>**evil**<  **among the parts of the body.**>**It corrupts the whole person,**<**sets**  **the whole course of his life on fire, and**>**is itself**<**set on fire**  **by hell.**    All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea  are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but **no man can tame**  **the tongue.** **It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.**    **With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we**  **curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the**  **same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should**  **not be.** Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same  spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine  bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.    **Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his**  **good life, by deeds done in**>**the humility that comes from**<  **wisdom.** But **if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in**  **your hearts,** **do not** boast about it or^**deny the truth.**<**Such**  **"wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly,**  **unspiritual,**>of the devil<**.** For where you have envy and selfish  ambition, **there you find** **disorder and every evil practice.**    But **the wisdom that comes from heaven** **is first of all pure; then**  **peace-loving,**>**considerate, submissive,**<**full of mercy and good**  **fruit, impartial and sincere.** **Peacemakers who sow in peace**  **raise a harvest of righteousness.**    **What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from**  **your desires that battle within you?** **You want something but**  **don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you**  **want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do**  **not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask**  **with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your**  **pleasures.**  **HSMS**hh **You adulterous people,** don't you know that **friendship with the**  **world is**>**hatred toward**<**God? Anyone who**>**chooses**<**to be a friend**  **of the world becomes an enemy of God.** Or do you think Scripture  says>**without reason**<that **the spirit he caused to live in us**  >**envies intensely**<**? But he gives us more grace.** That is why  Scripture says: **"God opposes the proud but gives** **grace to the**  **humble."**    **ee**  **Submit yourselves,** **then, to God.** **Resist the devil, and he will**  **flee from you.** **Come near to God and he will come near to you.**  **Wash** **your hands, you sinners, and** **purify** **your hearts, you**  **double-minded.**>**Grieve**<**, mourn and**>**wail**<**.** Change your laughter to  mourning and your joy to gloom. **Humble yourselves before the**  **Lord,** **and he will**>**lift you up.**<    Brothers, **do not**>**slander**<**one another.** **Anyone who speaks against**  **his brother or judges him** **speaks against the law and judges it.**  When you judge the law, **you are** not keeping it, but **sitting in**  **judgment** on it. **There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one**  **who is able to save and destroy.** **But you--who are you to judge**  **your neighbor?**    Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or  that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make  money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow.  What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little  while and then vanishes. Instead, **you ought to say, "If it is**  **the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."** As it is,  **ee**hh you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. **Anyone, then,**  **who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.**    Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery  that is coming upon you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have  eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their  corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like  fire. **You have hoarded wealth in the last days.** Look! The wages  you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying  out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the  ears of the Lord Almighty. **You have lived on earth in luxury**  **and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of**  **slaughter.** You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who  were not opposing you.    **Be patient,** then, brothers, **until the Lord's coming.** See how the  farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how  **ee** patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, **be**  **patient and**>>**stand firm,**<<because **the Lord's coming is near.**  **Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be**  **judged.** **The Judge is standing at the door!**    **ee** Brothers, **as** **an example of**^**patience in the face of suffering**<**,**  **take the prophets** **who spoke in the name of the Lord.** As you  **ee** know, we consider blessed **those who**>**have** **persevered.**<**You have**  **heard of Job's perseverance** and have seen>**what the Lord finally**  **brought about.**<**The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.**    Above all, my brothers, do not swear--not by heaven or by earth  or by anything else. **Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no,**  >**or you will be condemned.**<    Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy?  Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should  call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him  ff with oil in the name of the Lord. And **the prayer**>**offered in**  **faith**<**will make the sick person well;** **the Lord will raise him**  **up.** **If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.** **Therefore** **confess**  **your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may**  **be healed. The prayer of a righteous man**>**is powerful and**  **effective**<**.**    **Elijah** **was a man just like us. He** **prayed earnestly** that it would  not rain, **and it did not rain on the land for three and a half**  **years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain,** and the  earth produced its crops.    My brothers, **if one of you should** **wander from the truth** **and**  **someone should bring him back,** remember this: **Whoever turns a**  **sinner from**>**the error of his way**<**will save him from death** **and**  **cover over a multitude of sins.**  **============**  Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,    **To God's elect, strangers in the world,** **scattered** throughout  Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,>**who have been**  **chosen according to the foreknowledge** **of God the Father,**  ss**ee**  >**through the sanctifying work**<**of the Spirit, for obedience to**  **Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood:**    **Grace and peace be yours in abundance.**    Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! **In his**  ff **great mercy** **he has given us new birth** **into a living hope**  **through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and**  **into an inheritance that**>**can never perish, spoil or fade**<**--kept**  ff **in heaven for** **you,** **who** **through faith are shielded by God's**  **power** **until** **the coming of the salvation that is ready to be**  **revealed in the last time.** In this you greatly rejoice, though  now **for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all**  **ee**ff **kinds of trials.** These have come so that **your faith**--of greater  worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by  fire--**may be proved genuine** **and may result in praise, glory and**  **honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.** **Though you have not seen**  **him,** **you love him;** and even though you do not see him now, **you**  ff  **believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and**  ff **glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the**  **salvation of your souls.**    Concerning **this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace**  **that was to come to you,** searched intently and with the  greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to  which the **Spirit of Christ** in them was pointing when he  predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would  follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving  themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now  ss been told you by **those who have** **preached the gospel to you by**  **the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.** Even angels long to look into  these things.    **ee** Therefore, **prepare** your **minds** for **action;**>**be self-controlled;**<**set**  ff  **your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ**  **is revealed.** As obedient children, **do not conform** to the>**evil**  **desires**<you had when you lived in ignorance. But just **as** **he who**  **HSMS**hh **called you** **is holy,** **so** **be holy in all you do;** for it is  written: **"Be holy, because I am holy."**    Since **you call** on **a Father who judges**>**each man's work**<  **ee** **impartially,**>**live your lives as strangers**<**here** **in**>**reverent**<  **fear.** For you know that it was not with perishable things such  as silver or gold that **you were redeemed from**>**the empty way of**  **life**<handed down to you from your forefathers, but **with the**  **precious blood of Christ,** a lamb without blemish or defect. **He**  **was**>**chosen before the creation**<**of the world,** but was revealed  ff in these last times for your sake. **Through him you believe in**  **God,** **who raised him from the dead and glorified him,** and so  ff **your faith and hope are in God.**    **ee** Now that **you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth** so  that you have **sincere** **love** for your brothers, **love one another**  ss >**deeply, from the**<**heart.** For **you have been born again,** not of  perishable seed, but of **imperishable,** **through the living and**  >**enduring**<**word of God.** For, "All men are like grass, and all  their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers  and the flowers fall, but **the word of the Lord stands forever."**  And this is the word that was preached to you.    **ee** Therefore, **rid yourselves** of **all** malice and **all** **deceit,**  hypocrisy, envy, and slander of **every kind.** Like newborn  babies, **crave** pure spiritual milk, so that by it **you may grow**  **up in your salvation,** **now that** **you have tasted that the Lord is**  **good.**    **As you come to him, the living Stone**--rejected by men but **chosen**  ss  **by God and precious to him--you also,** **like living stones,** **are**  hh  **being built into a spiritual house** **to be a holy priesthood,**  **offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus**  **Christ.** For in **Scripture** it **says:** **"See, I lay a stone in Zion,**  ff **a chosen and precious cornerstone, and** **the one who trusts in**  **him will never be put to shame**." **Now to you who believe,** **this**  **stone is precious.** But to **those who do not believe,** "The stone  the builders rejected has become the capstone," and, "A stone  that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall."  They **stumble because** **they disobey the message--which is also**  **what they were destined for.**    hh But **you are a chosen people,** a royal priesthood, **a holy nation,** a  **ee** people belonging to God, that you may **declare the praises of**  **him** **who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.**  Once you were not a people, but **now you are the people of God;**  once you had not received mercy, but **now you have received**  **mercy.**    Dear friends, I urge you, as>**aliens and strangers in the world**<**,**  **ee**hh to **abstain from**>**sinful desires**<**, which war against your soul.**  **Live such good lives among the pagans that,** though they accuse  you of doing wrong, **they may see your good deeds and** **glorify**  **God on the day he visits us.**    **Submit yourselves** **for the Lord's sake** to every authority  instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme  authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those  who do wrong and to commend **those who do right.** For it is God's  will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of  foolish men. Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a  cover-up for evil; **live as servants of God.** **Show proper respect**  **to everyone:** **Love the brotherhood** **of believers,** **fear God,** honor  the king.    Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not  only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those  who are harsh. For **it is commendable if a man bears up under**  **the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God.**  But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing  wrong and endure it? But **if you suffer for doing good and you**  **endure it, this is**>**commendable**<**before God.** **To this you were**  **called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an**  **example,** **that you should follow in his steps.** **"He committed** **no**  **sin,** and **no deceit** was found in his mouth." **When they hurled**  **their**>**insults**<**at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered,**  ff  **he made no threats.** Instead, **he entrusted himself** **to him who**  **judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the**  hh **tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness;**  **by his wounds you have been healed.** For you were like sheep  **going astray,** but now **you have returned** to **the Shepherd and**  **Overseer of your souls.**    Wives, in the same way **be submissive** to your husbands so that, if  any of them do not **believe** the **word,** they may be won over  without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see **the**  **purity and reverence of your lives.** Your beauty should not come  from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of  gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of  **your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet**  **spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.** **For this is the**  **way** **the holy women of the past who put their hope in God** **used**  **to make themselves beautiful.** They were submissive to their own  husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her  master. **You are** **her daughters if you do what is right** and do  not give way to fear.    Husbands, in the same way **be considerate** as you live with your  wives, and **treat them with respect** as the weaker partner and as  **heirs with you of the gracious gift of life,** so that nothing  will hinder your prayers.    **ee** Finally, all of you,>**live in harmony**<with one another; **be**  **sympathetic,** **love** as brothers,>**be compassionate and humble**<**.** **Do**  **not** **repay evil with evil or**>**insult with insult**<**, but with**  **blessing,** because to this you were called so that you may  inherit a blessing. For, "Whoever would love life and see good  days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful  **ee** speech. He **must turn from evil and do good;** he **must seek peace**  hh **and pursue it.** **For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous**  **and his ears are attentive to their prayer,** **but** **the face of the**  **Lord is against those who do evil."**    Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even **if**  **you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed.** **"Do not**  ff **fear what they fear; do not be frightened."** **But in your hearts**  **set apart Christ as Lord.** **Always be prepared** **to**>**give an answer**  **to everyone**<**who asks you to give the reason for** **the hope that**  **you have.** But **do this with gentleness and respect,**>**keeping a**  **clear**<**conscience,** so that those who speak maliciously against  your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.  It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good  ss than for doing evil. For **Christ died for sins once for all, the**  **righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.** **He was** **put**  **to death in the body but** **made alive by the Spirit, through whom**  **also he went and preached to the spirits in prison who**  **disobeyed long ago when** **God waited patiently in the days of**  **Noah while the ark was being built.** **In it only a few people,**  **eight in all, were saved** through water, and this water  symbolizes baptism that now **saves you also**--not the removal of  rr dirt from the body but>**the pledge of a good conscience toward**  **God.** **It** **saves** **you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,**<who has  gone into heaven and is at God's right hand--with angels,  authorities and powers in submission to him.    Therefore, **since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also**  **with the same attitude, because** **he who has suffered in**>**his body**  **is done with sin**<**. As a result, he does not live the rest of his**  **ee earthly life for**>**evil human desires**<**, but rather for the will of**  **God.** **For**>**you have spent enough time**<**in the past doing what**  **pagans choose to do--living in**>**debauchery, lust, drunkenness,**  **orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry**<**.** **They think it**  **strange that you do not plunge with them into the same** **flood of**  >**dissipation,** **and they heap abuse on you**<**. But** **they will have to**  **give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the**  **dead. For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to**  **those who are now dead, so that**>**they might be judged according**  **to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in**  **regard to the spirit.**<    **ee** **The end of all things is near.** **Therefore** **be**>**clear minded**<**and**  **self-controlled** so that you can pray. **Above all,** **love each**  **other**>**deeply**<**, because love covers over a multitude of sins.**  **Offer hospitality** to one another without grumbling. Each one  should use whatever gift he has received to **serve others,**  **faithfully administering God's grace** in its various forms. **If**  **anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words**  **of God.** **If anyone** **serves,** **he should** **do it with** **the strength God**  **provides,** so that in all things God may be praised through  Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and  ever. Amen.    Dear friends, **do not be surprised at the painful trial you are**  **suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.**  But **rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ,**  **so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.** **If you**  **are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed,**  ss  **for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.** If you suffer,  it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of  criminal, or even as a meddler. However, **if you suffer as a**  **Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that**  **name.** **For** **it is time for judgment to begin with the family of**  **God;** **and if it begins with us,** **what will the outcome be for**  **HSMS**  **those who do not obey the gospel of God? And,** **"If**>**it is hard**  **for the righteous to be saved**<**, what will become of the ungodly   and the sinner?"**    **ee** So then, **those who suffer according to God's will** should>**commit**  **themselves**<to their **faithful Creator**>**and** **continue to do good**<**.**    To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of  Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to  be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your  care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because  you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money,  but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you,  but being examples to the flock. And **when the Chief Shepherd**  **appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never**  **fade away.**    Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older.  **All of you,** **clothe yourselves with humility** **toward one another,**  because, **"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."**  **Humble yourselves,** **therefore, under God's mighty hand, that** **he**  **may lift you up in due time.** **Cast all your anxiety on him**  **because he cares for you.**    **Be**>**self-controlled and alert**<**.** **Your enemy the devil prowls around**  **ee like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.** **Resist him,**  ff>**standing**<**firm in the faith,** because you know that **your brothers**  **throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of**  **sufferings.**    **And the God of all grace,** **who called you** **to his eternal glory in**  ss **Christ,** **after you have suffered a little while, will himself**  **restore you and make you strong,**>**firm and steadfast.**<**To him be**  **the power for ever and ever. Amen.**    With the help of Silas, whom I regard as **a faithful brother,** I  have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying  that **this is the true grace of God.** **Stand fast in it.**    She who is in Babylon, **chosen** together with you, sends you her  greetings, and so does my son Mark. Greet one another with a  kiss of **love.**    **Peace to all of you who are in Christ.**  **============**  Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,    **To those who** **through the righteousness of our God and Savior**  ssff  **Jesus Christ** **have**>**received**<**a faith**>**as precious**<**as ours:**    **Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of**  **God and of Jesus our Lord.**    ss **His divine power has given us everything we need for life and**  **godliness** **through our knowledge of him** **who called us** by his own  glory and goodness. Through these **he has given us his very**  **great and precious promises, so that** **through them** **you may**  hh >**participate in**<**the divine nature and escape the corruption in**  **the world caused by**>>>**evil**<<<**desires.**    **ee**  **For this very reason,** **make every effort** **to** **add to your faith**  >**goodness;** and **to goodness**<**, knowledge;** and **to knowledge,**  **self-control;** and **to self-control,**>**perseverance;** and **to**  **perseverance**<**, godliness;** and **to godliness, brotherly**>**kindness**<**;**  and **to brotherly**>**kindness**<**, love.** For **if**>**you possess**<**these**  **qualities in increasing measure,** **they will keep you from being**  **ineffective**>**and unproductive** **in your**<**knowledge of our Lord**  **Jesus Christ.** But **if anyone does not have them, he is**  **nearsighted and blind,** **and** **has forgotten that he has been**  **cleansed from his past sins.**    **ee Therefore,** my brothers, **be all the more**>**eager to make your**  **calling and election sure.**<For **if you**>**do these things**<**, you will**  **never fall,** **and**>**you will receive a rich welcome**<**into the**  **eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**    So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know  them and **are** **firmly established in the truth** you now have. I  think it is **right** to refresh your memory as long as I live in  the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it  aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I  will make every effort to see that after my departure you will  always be able to remember these things.    We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you  about **the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,** but we  were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and  glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from **the**  **Majestic Glory,** saying, **"This is my Son, whom I love; with him**  **I am well pleased."** We ourselves heard this voice that came  from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.    And **we have the** **word** **of the prophets** **made more certain,** and **you**  **will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a**  **dark place,** **until the day dawns and the morning star rises in**  **your hearts.** Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of  Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For  **prophecy** never had its origin in the will of man, but **men spoke**  **from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**    But there were also false prophets among the people, just as  **there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly**  **introduce destructive heresies,** even denying the sovereign Lord  who bought them--**bringing swift destruction on themselves.** **Many**  **will follow** their shameful ways **and** **will bring the way of truth**  **into disrepute.** **In their greed these teachers will exploit you**  **with stories they have made up.** Their **condemnation** has long  been hanging over them, and their **destruction** has not been  sleeping.    For if **God did not spare angels when they sinned,** but sent them  to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be **held for**  **judgment;** if **he did not spare the ancient world when** **he brought**  **the flood on its ungodly people,** but **protected Noah,** **a preacher**  **of righteousness**, and seven others; if **he condemned** the cities  of Sodom and Gomorrah by **burning them to ashes,** and **made them**  **an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;** and if **he**  **rescued Lot,** **a righteous man,** who was distressed by the>**filthy**  **lives of lawless men**<(for **that righteous man,** living among them  day after day,>**was tormented** **in**<**his righteous soul** by the  lawless deeds he saw and heard)--if this is so, then **the Lord**  **knows how to rescue godly men from trials** **and to** **hold the**  **unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their**  **punishment. This** **is** **especially true of those who**>>>**follow the**  **corrupt desire of the sinful nature**<<<**and despise authority.**    **Bold and arrogant,** these men are not afraid to slander celestial  beings; yet even angels, although they are stronger and more  powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such  beings in the presence of the Lord. **But these men blaspheme in**  **matters**>**they do not understand.** They are like brute beasts,  creatures of instinct, **born only to be caught and destroyed**,  and like beasts they too will perish.<    They will be paid back with harm for **the harm they have done.**  >**Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight.**<They  are blots and blemishes, **reveling in their**>**pleasures**<while they  feast with you. **With eyes full of adultery, they never stop**  **sinning;** they seduce the unstable; **they are experts in**  **greed--an accursed brood!** **They have left the straight way and**  **wandered off** to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, **who loved**  **the wages of wickedness.** But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing  by a donkey--a beast without speech--who spoke with a man's  voice and restrained the prophet's madness.    **These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm.**  **Blackest darkness is reserved for them.** For **they mouth**>**empty**<**,**  **boastful words** and, **by**>**appealing to the lustful desires of**  **sinful human nature**<**, they entice people who are just escaping**  **from those who live in error.** **They promise them freedom, while**  **they themselves are slaves of**>**depravity--for** **a man is a slave**  **to whatever has mastered him.**<**If they have escaped the**  **corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus**  **Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are**  **worse off at the end than they were at the beginning.** **It would**  **have been better for them not to have known the way of**  **righteousness,** **than to have known it and then to** **turn their**  **backs** **on the sacred command** **that was passed on to them.** Of them  the proverbs are true: **"A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A**  **sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."**    Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written  both of them as **reminders to stimulate you to wholesome**  **thinking.** I want you to recall the **words** spoken in the past by  the **holy prophets** and the command given by **our Lord and Savior**  through your apostles.    First of all, you must understand that **in the last days** **scoffers**  **will come, scoffing and** **following their own evil desires.** They  will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our  fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning  of creation." But **they deliberately forget** that **long ago by**  **God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed** **out of**  **water and by water.** By these waters also the world of that time  was deluged and destroyed. **By the same word the present heavens**  **and earth are reserved for fire,** being kept **for** **the day of**  **judgment and destruction of ungodly men.**    But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: **With the Lord a**  **day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a**  **day.** **The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise**, as some  understand slowness. **He is patient with you,** **not wanting anyone**  rr **to perish, but everyone to**>**come to**<**repentance.**    But **the day of the Lord will come like a thief.** **The heavens will**  **disappear with a roar;**>**the elements will be destroyed by fire,**  and **the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.**<    **Since everything will be**>**destroyed**<**in this way,** what kind of  **ee**hh people ought you to be?>**You ought to** **live holy and godly lives**<  **as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.**  **That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by**  **fire, and**>**the elements will melt in the heat**<**.** But **in keeping**  **with** **his promise** **we are looking forward** **to a new heaven and a**  hh  **new earth, the home of righteousness.**    **So then,** dear friends, **since you are looking forward to this,**  **HSMS**hh >**make every effort to be found spotless, blameless** and **at peace**  **with him.**<Bear in mind that **our Lord's patience**>**means**<  **salvation,** just as our dear brother **Paul** also **wrote you** **with**   **the wisdom that God gave him.** He writes the same way in all his  letters, speaking in them of these matters. **His letters contain**  **some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and**  **unstable people**>**distort**<**, as they do the other Scriptures, to**  **their own destruction.**    **ee** Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, **be on your**  **guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of**  **lawless men**>>>**and fall from your secure position.**<<<But **grow in the**  **grace** **and knowledge of** **our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** To him  be glory both now and forever! Amen.  **============**  **That which was from the beginning,** which we have heard, which we  have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands  have touched--this we proclaim concerning **the Word of life.** **The**  **life appeared;** we have seen it and testify to it,and **we**  **proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and**  **has appeared to us.** We proclaim to you what we have seen and  heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And **our**  **fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.**  We write this to make our joy complete.    **This is** **the message** **we have heard from him** and declare to you:  **ee**sshh **God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim**  **to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie**  **and do not**>**live by**<**the truth. But if we walk in the light, as**  **he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and**  **the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.**    **If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and** **the truth**  **is not in us.** **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just**  **and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all**  **unrighteousness.** If we claim we have not sinned, we make him  out to be a liar and **his word** has no place in our lives.    My dear children, **I write this to you so that you will not sin.**  **But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father**  **in our defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the**  >**atoning sacrifice**<**for our sins,** and not only for ours but also  for the sins of the whole world.    **ee** **We know that we have come to know him**>**if we obey**<**his commands.**  **The man who says, "I know him," but does not**>**do what he**  **commands**<**is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone**  ss>**obeys**<**his word, God's love is truly**>**made complete**<**in him. This**  **is how we know we are in him:**>>>**Whoever claims to live in him**  >**must**<**walk as Jesus did.**<<<    Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one,  which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the  message you have heard. Yet I am writing you **a new command;** **its**  **truth is seen in him and you,** because the darkness is passing  and **the true light is already shining.**    **ee** **Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is**  **still in the darkness.** **Whoever loves his brother**>**lives**<**in the**  **light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble.** But  **whoever hates his brother is in the darkness** **and walks around**  **in the darkness;** **he does not know where he is going,** because  **the darkness has blinded him.** I write to you, dear children,  because **your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.** I  write to you, fathers, because **you have known him who is from**  **the beginning.** I write to you, young men, because **you have**  **overcome the evil one.** I write to you, dear children, because  **you have known the Father.** I write to you, fathers, because **you**  **have known him who is from the beginning.** **I write to you, young**  ss **men, because you are strong, and the word of God**>**lives**<**in you,**  **ee and you have overcome the evil one.**    **HSMS** **Do not love the world or**>**anything**<**in the world. If anyone loves**  **the world, the love of the Father is not in him.** For everything  in the world-->>>>**the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes**<<<<  **and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the**  **Father but from the world.** The world and its desires pass away,  but **the man who does the will of God**>**lives**<**forever.**    Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that  the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come.  This is how we know it is the last hour. **They went out from us,**  **but they did not really belong to us.** For if they had belonged  to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed  that none of them belonged to us.    ss But **you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you**>**know**  **the truth.**<I do not write to you because you do not know the  truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from  the truth**. Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus**  **is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist**--he denies the  Father and the Son. **No one who denies the Son has the Father;**  **whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.**    **ee** **See that** **what you have heard from the beginning**>**remains**<**in you.**  **If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.**  And **this is** **what he promised us--even eternal life.**    I am writing these things to you about **those who are trying to**  ss **lead you astray.** **As for you,** **the anointing you received from**  **him**>**remains**<**in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you.**  But **as his anointing teaches you about all things** and **as** **that**  **anointing is real, not counterfeit**--just **as it has taught you,**  **ee** >**remain**<**in him.**    **ee** And now, dear children,>**continue**<**in him,** so that when he appears  we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.    **ee**hh **If you know that** **he is righteous,**>**you know**<**that everyone who**>**does**  **what is right**<**has been born of him.**    **How great is the love the Father has**>**lavished on**<**us,** **that we**  **should be called** **children of God!** And **that is what we are!** The  reason **the world does not know us** is that it did not know him.  Dear friends, **now we are children of God, and what we will be**  **has not yet been made known.** **But we know that** **when he appears,**  hh **we shall be like him,** for we shall see him as he is. **Everyone**  **ee who has this hope in him purifies himself,** **just as he is pure.**    **Everyone who**>**sins breaks the law**<**; in fact, sin is lawlessness.**  **But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our**  hh **sins.** **And in him is no sin.** **No one who lives in him keeps on**  **sinning. No one who**>**continues**<**to sin has either seen him or**  **known him.**    **ee**hh Dear children, **do not let anyone lead you astray. He who**>**does**  **what is right**<**is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who**  >**does what is sinful**<**is of the devil,** **because the devil has been**  **sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared**  **was to destroy the devil's work.** **No one who is born of God**>**will**  ss **continue to sin,**<**because God's seed remains in him; he cannot**  >**go**<**on sinning, because he has been born of God.** **This is how we**  **know who the children of God are and who the children of the**  **ee**hh **devil are:** **Anyone who does not**>**do what is right**<**is not a child**  **of God;** nor is anyone who does not **love** his brother.    **This is** **the message you heard from the beginning:** **We should love**  **one another.** Do not be like **Cain, who belonged to the evil one**  **and murdered his brother.** And **why** did he murder him? **Because**  **his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. Do**  **not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.** **We know**  **that we have passed from death to life, because we love our**  **brothers.** **Anyone who does not love**>**remains**<**in death.** **Anyone who**  **hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer**  **has eternal life in him**.  **This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life**  **ee for us.** **And** **we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.** **If**  **anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need**  **but has no pity on him, how can the love of God**>**be**<**in him?** Dear  **ee** children, **let us not love with words or tongue but**>**with actions**<  **and in truth**. **This** **then** **is how we know that we**>**belong to**<**the**  **truth,** **and how we**>**set our hearts at rest**< **in his presence**  **whenever our hearts condemn us.** **For God is greater than our**  **hearts, and he knows everything.**    Dear friends, **if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence**  **ee before God and receive from him anything we ask**, **because we**  >**obey**<**his commands and do what pleases him.** And this is his  ff command: **to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ,** and  **ee**  to **love** one another as he commanded us. Those who>**obey his**  **commands live in him,**<**and he in them. And** **this is how we know**  ss **that he**>**lives**<**in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.**    Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits  to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets  have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the  **Spirit of God:** Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ  has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does  not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is **the spirit of**  **the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is**  **already in the world.**    **You, dear children, are from God** **and have overcome them,** **because**  **the one who is in you is greater** than the one who is in the  world. They are from the world and therefore speak from the  viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. **We are**  **from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is**  **not from God does not listen to us.** This is how we recognize  **the Spirit of truth** and the spirit of falsehood.    Dear friends, let us **love** one another, **for love comes from God.**  **ee** **Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever**  **does not love does not know God, because God is love.** **This is**  **how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son**  **into the world** **that we might live through him.** **This is** **love:**  SS **not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as**  **An**>**atoning sacrifice**<**for our sins.** Dear friends, **since God so**  **loved us, we also ought to love one another.** **No one has ever**  **ee**ss **seen God; but** **if we love one another, God lives in us and his**  **love is**>**made complete**<**in us.**    ss **We know that we**>**live**<**in him and he in us, because he has given us**  **of his Spirit.** And we have seen and testify that **the Father has**  **sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.** **If anyone**  ffss >**acknowledges**<**that Jesus is the Son of God, God**>**lives**<**in him and**  **he in God.** **And so we know and**>**rely on**<**the love God has for us.**    **ee**ss **God is love.** **Whoever**>**lives**<**in love**>**lives**<**in God, and God in him.**  In this way, **love is**>**made complete**<**among us so that we will**  **have confidence on the day of judgment,** **because in this world**  **we are like him.** **There is** **no fear in** **love.** But **perfect** **love**  **drives out fear,** **because fear has to do with punishment.** **The**  **one who fears is not** **made** **perfect** **in** **love.**    **We love because he first loved us.** If anyone says, "I **love** God,"  yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For **anyone who does not**  **love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he**  **ee**  **has not seen.** And **he has given us this command:** **Whoever loves**  **God must also love his brother.**    ff **Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God,**  and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This  is how we know that we **love** the children of God: by **loving God**  **ee** **and**>**carrying out**<**his commands.** **This is love for God: to**>**obey**<  **his commands.** **And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone**  ff  **born of God overcomes the world.** **This is the victory that has**  **overcome the world, even our faith.** **Who is it that overcomes**  **the world?**>**Only**<**he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.**    This is the one who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ. He did  not come by water only, but by water and blood. **And it is the**  **Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.** For  there are three that testify: **the Spirit,** the water and the  blood; and the three are in agreement. We accept man's  testimony, but **God's testimony is greater** because **it is** **the**  **testimony of God, which he has**>**given about**<**his Son.** **Anyone who**  **believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart.**  Anyone who does not **believe God** has made him out to be a liar,  because he has not **believed the testimony God has given about**  **his Son.** **And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal**  **life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life;**  **he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.**    ff I write these things to **you who believe** **in the name of the Son of**  **God** so that **you** may **know that you have eternal life.** **This is**  **the confidence we have**>**in approaching God**<**:** that **if we ask**  **anything according to his will,** he hears us. And if we know  that he hears us--**whatever we ask--we know that we have what we**  **asked of him.**    **If anyone sees his brother commit a sin** that does not lead to  death, **he should**>**pray**<**and** **God will give him life.** I refer to  those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that  leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that.  All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to  death.    ss **We know that anyone born of God does not**>**continue**<**to sin; the one**  **who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one**>**cannot**  **harm him.**<**We know that we are children of God,** and that **the**  **whole world is**>**under the control of**<**the evil one.** We know also  that **the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so**  **that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is**  **true--**>**even**<**in his Son Jesus Christ.** **He is the true God and**  **eternal life.**    Dear children, **keep yourselves from idols.**  **============**  The elder,    **To** **the chosen lady** **and her children,** **whom I love in the**  **truth**--and not I only, but also all who know the truth--because  of **the truth, which**>**lives**<**in us and will be with us forever:**    **Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ,**  **the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love.**    It has given me great joy to find **some** **of your children walking**  **in the truth,** **just as the Father commanded us.** And now, dear  lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had  **ee** from the beginning. I ask that we **love one another.** **And this is**  **love: that we walk**>**in obedience to**<**his commands.** As you have  heard from the beginning,>**his command is that you walk in love.**<    Many **deceivers,** who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in  the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the  **deceiver** and the antichrist. **Watch out that you do not lose**  **what**>**you**<**have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully.**  Anyone who>**runs**<**ahead** and does not>continue<in the teaching of  Christ **does not have God**; **whoever**>**continues**<**in the teaching has**  **both the Father and the Son.** **If anyone comes to you and does**  **not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or**  **welcome him.** **Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.**    I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and  ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to  face, so that our joy may be complete.    The children of your **chosen sister** send their greetings.  **============**  The elder,    To my dear friend Gaius, **whom I love in the truth.**    Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all  may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.  It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about  >**your faithfulness to the truth** and how **you continue to walk in**  **ee the truth.**<I have no greater joy than to hear that **my children**  **are walking in the truth.**    Dear friend, **you are faithful in what you are doing for the**  **brothers,** even though they are strangers to you. They have told  the church about your **love.** You will do well to **send them on**  **their way in a manner worthy of God.** **It was for the sake of the**  **Name that they went out,** receiving no help from the pagans. We  ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may  **work together for the truth.**    I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first,  will have nothing to do with us. So if I come, **I will call**  **attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us.**  Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He  also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the  church.    **ee** Dear friend, **do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone**  **who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil**  **has not seen God.** **Demetrius is** **well spoken** **of** by everyone--and  even **by the truth itself.** We also speak well of him, and you  know that our testimony is true.    I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and  ink. I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.    **Peace to you.** The friends here send their greetings. Greet the  friends there by name.  **============**  Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James,    ss **To those who have been called,** **who are**>>>**loved by**<<<**God the Father**  **and** **kept**>>>**by**<<<**Jesus Christ:**    **Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.**    Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the  salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to  **ee** **contend for the faith that was** **once for all**>**entrusted**<**to the**  **saints.** For certain **men whose condemnation was written about**  **long ago** have **secretly slipped in** among you. They are godless  men, **who change the grace of our God into**>**a license for**  **immorality**<and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.    Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that>**the**  **Lord**<**delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed**  ff **those who did not believe.** And **the angels who** **did not keep**  **their positions of authority but abandoned their own**  **home--these** **he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting**  **chains for** **judgment on the great Day.** In a similar way, **Sodom**  **and Gomorrah** and the surrounding towns>**gave themselves up** **to**<  **sexual immorality and**>>**perversion**<<. **They serve as an example of**  **those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.**    In the very same way, **these dreamers**>>**pollute their own bodies,**<<  reject authority and slander celestial beings. **But even the**  **archangel Michael,** when he was disputing with the devil about  the body of Moses, **did not dare to bring a slanderous**  **accusation against him,** but said, **"The Lord rebuke you!"** Yet  **these men speak abusively against whatever they do not**  **understand; and** **what things they do understand by instinct,**  **like unreasoning animals--these are the very things that**  **destroy them.**    Woe to them! They have **taken the way of Cain;** they have **rushed**  **for profit into Balaam's error;** they have>**been destroyed**<**in**  **Korah's rebellion.**    These men are blemishes at **your love feasts,** **eating with you**  **Without**>**the slightest qualm**<**--shepherds who feed only**  **themselves.** They are clouds without rain, blown along by the  wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted--twice dead.  They are **wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame;**  **wandering stars,** **for whom**>**blackest darkness has been reserved**  **forever.**    **Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men:** **"See,**  **the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy**  **ones to judge everyone, and** **to convict all the ungodly of all**  **the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way,** **and of all**  **the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."** **These**  **men are grumblers and**>**faultfinders**<**; they follow their own**>**evil**<  **desires;** **they boast about themselves** **and**>**flatter others**<**for**  **their own advantage.**    But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus  Christ foretold. They said to you, **"In the last times there**  **will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly**>**desires**<**."**  **These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural**  **instincts and do not have the Spirit.**    **ee** But you, dear friends, **build yourselves up in your most holy**  ff**ee faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.** **Keep yourselves in God's**  **love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ**>**to**  **bring you**<t**o eternal life.**    **ee** **Be merciful** to those who doubt; **snatch others from the fire** **and**  **save them;** to others **show mercy,** mixed with **fear**--**hating** **even**  **the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.**    ss **To him who is able to keep you from**>**falling**<**and to present you**  **before his glorious presence**>**without fault**<**and with great**  **joy**--to the only **God our Savior** **be glory, majesty,**>**power**<**and**  **authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all**>**ages**<**, now**  **and forevermore! Amen.**  **============**  **The revelation of Jesus Christ,** which God gave him to show his  servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending  his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he  saw--that is, **the** **word of God** **and the testimony of Jesus**  **Christ.** **Blessed is the one who reads the** **words of this**  ff **prophecy,** and **blessed are those who hear it and take to heart**  **what is written** in it, because **the time is near.**    John,    To the seven churches in the province of Asia:    **Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is**  **to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from**  **Jesus Christ,** who is **the faithful witness,** the firstborn from  the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.    SS **To him who loves us and has** **freed us from our sins by his blood,**  **and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God**  **and Father--to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.**  **Look, he is coming with the clouds,** and every eye will see him,  even those who pierced him; **and** **all the peoples of the earth**  **will**>**mourn because**<**of him.** **So shall it be! Amen.**    **"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and**  **who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."**    **I, John,** your brother and companion **in the suffering and kingdom**  **and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island**  **of Patmos because of the** **word of God** **and the testimony of**  **Jesus.** On the Lord's Day **I was in the Spirit,** and I heard  behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: "Write on a  scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to  Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and  Laodicea."    I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And  when I turned **I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the**  **lampstands was someone "like a son of man,"** dressed in a robe  reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his  chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as  snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like  bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound  of rushing waters. **In his right hand** he held seven stars, and  out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was  like the sun shining in all its brilliance.    When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed  his **right hand** on me and said: "Do not be afraid. **I am the**  **First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold**  **I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and**  **Hades.**    "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will  take place later. The mystery of the seven stars that you saw  in my **right hand** and of the seven golden lampstands is this:  The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the  seven lampstands are the seven churches.    "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:    These are **the words** of him who holds the seven stars in his **right**  **ee hand** and walks among the seven golden lampstands: **I know your**  **deeds,**>**your hard work and your perseverance**<**.** **I know that you**  **cannot tolerate wicked men,** that you have tested those who  claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.  **You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and**  **have not grown weary.**    **ee** **Yet I hold this against you:** **You have forsaken your first love.**  rr **Remember the height from which you have fallen!** **Repent and do**  **the things you did at first.** **If you do not repent, I will come**  **to you and remove your lampstand from its place.** **But you have**  **this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans,**  **which I also hate.**    **He who has an ear, let him hear** **what the Spirit says** to the  **ee** churches. **To him who**>**overcomes**<**, I will give the right to eat**  **from the tree of life,** **which is in the paradise of God.**  "To the angel of the church in Smyrna write:    These are **the** **words** **of him who is the First and the Last, who**  **died and came to life again. I know your afflictions and your**  **poverty--yet you are rich!** **I know the slander of those who** say  they are Jews and are not, but **are a synagogue of Satan.** **Do not**  **be afraid of what you are about to suffer.** I tell you, **the**  **devil will put some of you in prison to test you,** and **you will**  **ee suffer persecution for ten days.** **Be faithful, even to the point**  **of death, and I will give you the crown of life.**    **He who has an ear, let him hear** **what the Spirit says** to the  churches. **He who overcomes** **will not be hurt at all by the**  **second death.**  "To the angel of the church in Pergamum write:    These are **the words** **of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword.**  **ee** **I know where you live--where Satan has his throne. Yet you**  **remain true to my name.** **You did not renounce your faith in me,**  **even in the days of Antipas,** **my faithful witness,** **who was put**  **to death in your city--where Satan lives.**    **ee** **Nevertheless, I have a few things against you:** **You have people**  **there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to**  >**entice the Israelites to sin**<by eating food sacrificed to idols  and **by committing sexual immorality.** Likewise **you also have**  rr  **those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.** **Repent**  **therefore!** Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight  against them with the sword of my mouth.    **He who has an ear, let him hear** **what the Spirit says** to the  **ee** churches. **To him who overcomes,** **I will give some of the hidden**  **manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name**  **written on it, known only to him who receives it.**  "To the angel of the church in Thyatira write:    These are **the** **words** **of the Son of God, whose eyes are like**  **blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.** **I know**  **ee your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance,**  and that **you are now doing more** **than you did at first.**    **ee**  **Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman**  **Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess.** By her teaching **she**  >**misleads**<**my servants into** **sexual immorality** and the eating of  rr food sacrificed to idols. **I have given her time to repent of**  **her immorality, but she is unwilling.** **So I will cast her on a**  **bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery**  **with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways.** **I**  **will strike her children dead.** Then all the churches will know  that **I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay**  **each of you according to your**>**deeds**<**. Now** **I say to the rest of**  **you** in Thyatira, to you **who do not hold to her teaching and**  **have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets** **(I will not**  **impose any other burden on you): Only hold on to what you have**  **until I come.**    **ee** **To him who overcomes** and>**does my will**<**to the end,** **I will give**  **authority over the nations--'He will rule them with an iron**  **scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery'--just as I**  **have received authority from my Father.**  **I will also give him**  **the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear** **what the**  **Spirit says** to the churches.    "To the angel of the church in Sardis write:    These are **the words** of him who holds the seven spirits of God and  the seven stars. **I know your**>**deeds**<**; you have a reputation of**  **being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains**  **ee**  **and is about to die, for** **I have not found your deeds complete**  **in the sight of my God.** **Remember,** therefore, **what you have**  **ee**rr **received and heard;**>**obey it**<**, and repent.** But **if you do not wake**  **up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what**  **time I will come to you.**    **ee**hh **Yet** you have **a few people** in Sardis **who have not soiled their**  **clothes.** **They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are**  hh**ee worthy.** He who **overcomes** **will,** like them, **be dressed in white.**  **I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will**  **acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.** **He who**  **has an ear, let him hear** **what the Spirit says** to the churches.  "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:    These are **the** **words of him who is holy and true,** who holds the  key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts  **ee** no one can open. **I know your deeds.** See, **I have placed before**  **you an open door that no one can shut. I know that** **you have**  **ee little**>**strength**<**, yet** **you have kept my word and have not denied**  **my name.** I will make **those who are of the synagogue of Satan,**  **who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars--I will**  **make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that**  **ee** **I have loved you.** Since **you have kept my command to endure**  **patiently,** **I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is**  **going to come upon the whole world to**>**test**<**those who live on**  **the earth.**    **ee** **I am coming soon.**>**Hold on to**<**what you have,** **so that no one will**  **take your crown.** **Him who overcomes** **I will make a pillar in the**  **temple of my God.** **Never again will he leave it. I will write on**  **him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the**  **new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God;**  **and I will also write on him my new name. He who has an ear,**  **let him hear what the Spirit says** to the churches.    "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:    These are **the** **words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness,**  ee  **the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are**  **neither cold nor hot. I wish** **you were either one or the other!**  So, **because you are lukewarm--neither hot nor cold--I am about**  **to spit you out of my mouth.** **You say, 'I am rich; I have**  **acquired wealth and do not need a thing.'** **But you do not**  **realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.**  **ee** I counsel you to **buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you**  **can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover**  **your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you**  **can see.**    ssrr **Those whom I love I**>**rebuke**<**and discipline.** **So be earnest, and**  **repent.** **Here I am!** **I stand at the door and knock. If anyone**  **hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with**  **him, and he with me.**    **ee** **To him who overcomes,** **I will give the right to sit with me on my**  **throne,** **just as I overcame** **and sat down with my Father on his**  **throne.** **He who has an ear, let him hear** **what the Spirit says** to  the churches."    After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open  in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like  a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must  take place after this." **At once I was in the Spirit,** and there  before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.  And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and  carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the  throne. Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones,  and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed  in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne  came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder.  Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are **the**  **seven spirits of God.** Also **before the throne there was what**  **looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.**    In the center, around the throne, were **four living creatures,** and  they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first  living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the  third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying  eagle. Each of the **four living creatures** had six wings and was  covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and  night they never stop saying: **"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God**  **Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."** Whenever **the living**  **creatures** give glory, honor and thanks to **him who sits on the**  **throne and who lives for ever and ever,** **the twenty-four elders**  fall down before him who sits on the throne, and **worship him**  **who lives for ever and ever.** They lay **their crowns** before the  throne and say: **"You are worthy,** **our Lord and God, to receive**  **glory and honor and power,** **for you created all things, and by**  **your will they were created and**>**have their being**<**."**    Then I saw in **the right hand** of him who sat on the throne a  scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals.  And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is  worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" But no one in  heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or  even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found  who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of  the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, **the Lion of the tribe**  **of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed.** He is able to open  the scroll and its seven seals."    **Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain,** standing in  the center of the throne, encircled by the four living  creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes,  which are **the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.**  He came and took the scroll from **the right hand** of him who sat  on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living  creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb.  Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of  incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a  new song: **"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its**  **seals,** **because you were slain, and with your blood you**  >**purchased**<**men for God** from every tribe and language and people  and nation. **You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to**  **serve our God,** and they will reign on the earth."    Then I looked and heard the voice of **many angels,** numbering  thousands upon thousands, and>>>**ten thousand times ten thousand**<<<**.**  **They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the**  **elders. In a loud voice they sang:** **"Worthy is the Lamb, who was**  **slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and**  **honor and glory and praise!"**    Then I heard **every creature in heaven and on earth and under the**  **earth and on the sea,** **and all that is in them, singing:** **"To him**  **who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and**  **glory and power, for ever and ever!"** **The four living creatures**  **said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.**    I watched as the Lamb opened the **first of the seven seals.** Then I  heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like  thunder, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a **white**  **horse!** Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and **he**  **rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.**    When the Lamb opened the **second seal,** I heard the second living  creature say, "Come!" Then another **horse** came out, a **fiery red**  one. Its rider was **given power to take peace from the earth and**  **to make men slay each other.** To him was given a large sword.    When the Lamb opened the **third seal,** I heard the third living  creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a **black**  **horse!** Its rider was **holding a pair of scales** in his hand. Then  I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living  creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and  three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the  oil and the wine!"    When the Lamb opened the **fourth seal,** I heard the voice of the  fourth living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before  me was a **pale horse!** Its rider was named Death, and Hades was  following close behind him. They were **given power over a fourth**  **of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague,** and by the  wild beasts of the earth.    When he opened **the** **fifth seal,** I saw **under the altar** **the souls of**  **ee** **those who had been slain because of the word of God and the**  **testimony they had maintained.** **They called out in a loud voice,**  **"How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the**  **inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?"** Then **each of**  **them was given** **a white robe,** and they were told to wait a  little longer, **until the number of** **their fellow servants and**  **ee brothers who were to be killed** as they had been was completed.    I watched as he opened the **sixth seal.** There was a great  earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat  hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky  fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by  a strong wind. The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and  every mountain and island was removed from its place.    Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich,  the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and  among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains  and the rocks, **"Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who**  **sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the**  **great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"**    After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the  earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any  wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree.  Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the  seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the  four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the  sea: "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees **until we put**  **a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God."** Then I  heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the  tribes of Israel. From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed,  from the tribe of Reuben 12,000, from the tribe of Gad 12,000,  from the tribe of Asher 12,000, from the tribe of Naphtali  12,000, from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000, from the tribe of  Simeon 12,000, from the tribe of Levi 12,000, from the tribe of  Issachar 12,000, from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000, from the  tribe of Joseph 12,000, from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000.    After this I looked and there before me was **a great multitude**  **that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and**  **language,** standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb.  **They were wearing white robes** and were holding palm branches in  their hands. **And they cried out in a loud voice:** **"Salvation**  **belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."**  **All the angels were standing around the throne and around the**  **elders and the four living creatures.** **They fell down on their**  **faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying:** **"Amen!**  **Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and**  **strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"**    Then one of the elders asked me, **"These in white robes--who are**  **they, and where did they come from?"**    I answered, "Sir, you know."    And he said, **"These are they who have come out of the great**  **ee**hh **tribulation;** **they have washed their robes and made them white**  **in the blood of the Lamb.** **Therefore,** **"they are before the**  **throne of God** **and serve him** **day and night in his temple; and he**  **who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.** **Never**  **again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun**  **will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat.** **For the Lamb**  **at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will**  ss **lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away**  **every tear from their eyes."**    When he opened the **seventh seal,** there was silence in heaven for  about half an hour.    And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were  given **seven trumpets.**    Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the  altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of  all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The  smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints,  went up before God from the angel's hand. Then the angel took  the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it  on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings,  flashes of lightning and an earthquake.    Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to  sound them.    The **first** angel sounded his **trumpet,** and there came hail and fire  mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. **A**  **third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were**  **burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.**    The **second** angel sounded his **trumpet,** and something like a huge  mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. **A third of the**  **sea turned into blood, a third of the living creatures in the**  **sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.**    The **third** angel sounded his **trumpet,** and a **great star, blazing**  **like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of** **the rivers and on**  **the springs of water**--the name of the star is Wormwood. **A third**  **of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the**  **waters that had become bitter.**    The **fourth** angel sounded his **trumpet,** and **a third of the sun was**  **struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that**  **a third of them turned dark.** A third of the day was without  light, and also a third of the night.    As I watched, I heard an **eagle that was flying in midair** call out  in a loud voice: "**Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the**  **earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the**  **other three angels!"**    The **fifth** angel sounded his **trumpet,** and I saw a star that had  fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to  the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose  from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky  were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. And out of the smoke  **locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that**  **of scorpions of the earth.** They were told not to harm the grass  of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who  did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. **They were not**  **given power to kill them, but only to torture them for five**  **months.** And **the agony they suffered was like that of the sting**  **of a scorpion** when it strikes a man. **During those days men will**  **seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but**  **death will elude them.**    The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their  heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces  resembled human faces. Their hair was like women's hair, and  their teeth were like lions' teeth. They had breastplates like  breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the  thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle.  They had tails and stings like scorpions, and in their tails  they had power to torment people for five months. They had as  king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is  Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon.    The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.    The **sixth** angel sounded his **trumpet,** and I heard a voice coming  from the horns of the golden altar that is before God. It said  to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four  angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." And the  **four angels** who had been kept ready for this very hour and day  and month and year **were released** **to kill a third of mankind.**  **The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million.** I  heard their number.    The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their  breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur.  The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out  of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. **A third of mankind**  **was killed** **by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur** that  came out of their mouths. The power of the horses was in their  mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes,  having heads with which they inflict injury.    rr **The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still**  **did not repent of the work of their hands;** they **did not stop**  **worshiping demons,** **and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and**  **wood--idols that cannot see or hear or walk. Nor did they**  **repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual**  **immorality or their thefts.**    **Then** I saw another **mighty angel coming down from heaven.** He was  robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was  like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. **He was**  **holding a little scroll,** which lay open in his hand. He planted  his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, and he  gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the  voices of the seven thunders spoke. And when the seven thunders  spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven  say, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not  write it down."    **Then** the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land  raised **his right hand** to heaven. And **he swore by** **him who lives**  **for ever and ever**, **who created the heavens and all that is in**  **them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that**  **is in it,** and said, **"There will be no more delay!** But in the  days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, **the**  **mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to**  **his servants the prophets."**    **Then** the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once  more: "Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the  angel who is standing on the sea and on the land."    So **I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little**  **scroll.** He said to me, "Take it and eat it. It will turn your  stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey."  I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It  tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it,  my stomach turned sour. Then I was told, **"You must prophesy**  **again** **about many peoples, nations, languages and kings."**    I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and  measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the  worshipers there. But exclude the outer court; do not measure  it, because it has been **given to the Gentiles.** **They will**  **trample on the holy city for 42 months.** And **I will give power**  **to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days,**  **clothed in sackcloth."** These are the two olive trees and the  two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. **If**  **anyone tries to harm them,** **fire comes from their mouths and**  **devours their enemies.** This is how anyone who wants to harm  them **must die.** **These men have power to shut up the sky so that**  **it will not rain** during **the time they are prophesying;** and they  **have power to turn the waters into blood** **and to strike the**  **earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.**    Now when they have **finished their testimony,** the beast that comes  up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill  them. Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city,  which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their  Lord was crucified. For three and a half days men from every  people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies  and refuse them burial. The inhabitants of the earth will gloat  over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts,  because **these two prophets** **had tormented those who live on the**  **earth.**    But after the three and a half days **a breath of life from God**  **entered them,** **and they stood on their feet,** and terror struck  those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven  saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up to heaven in a  cloud, while their enemies looked on.    At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of  the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the  earthquake, and **the survivors were terrified and gave glory to**  **the God of heaven.**    **The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.**    The **seventh** angel sounded his **trumpet,** and there were loud voices  in heaven, which said: **"The kingdom of the world has become the**  **kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ,** **and** **he will reign for**  **ever and ever."** And **the twenty-four elders,** **who were seated on**  **their thrones before God,** **fell on their faces and worshiped**  **God,** **saying:** **"We give thanks to you,** **Lord God Almighty, the One**  **who is and who was,** **because you have taken your great power and**  **have begun to reign.** **The nations were angry; and your wrath has**  **come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding**  **your servants** **the prophets and your saints and those who**  **reverence your name, both small and great--and for destroying**  **those who destroy the earth."**    **Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was**  **seen the ark of his covenant.** And there came **flashes of**  **lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a**  **great hailstorm.**    A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: **a woman clothed**  **with the sun,** with the moon under her feet and a crown of  twelve stars on her head. **She was pregnant and cried out in**  **pain as she was about to give birth.** Then another sign appeared  in heaven: **an enormous red dragon** with seven heads and ten  horns and seven crowns on his heads. His tail swept a third of  the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. **The**  **dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth,**  **so that he might devour her child the moment it was born.** **She**  **gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the**  **nations with an iron scepter.** And her child was snatched up to  God and to his throne. The woman fled into the desert to a  place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of  for 1,260 days.    **And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought**  **against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.**  **But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in**  **heaven.** **The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent**  **called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.**  **He was hurled to the earth, and** **his angels with him.**    Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: **"Now have come the**  **salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the**  **authority of his Christ.** **For the accuser of our brothers, who**  **accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled**  **eess down.** **They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and** **by the**  **word of their testimony;** **they**>**did not love their lives so much**  **as to shrink from death.**<Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you  who dwell in them! But **woe to the earth and the sea, because**  **the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because**  **he knows that his time is short."**  **When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he**  **pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.** The  woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she  might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where  she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time,  out of the serpent's reach. Then from his mouth the serpent  spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her  away with the torrent. But the earth helped the woman by  opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had  spewed out of his mouth. Then **the dragon was enraged** at the  woman **and went off to make war against the rest of her**  **ee offspring--those who**>**obey**<**God's commandments and hold to the**  **testimony of Jesus.** **And the dragon stood on the shore of the**  **sea.**    And **I saw** **a beast** coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and  seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a  blasphemous name. The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had  feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. **The**  **dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great**  **authority. One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a**  **fatal wound, but** **the fatal wound had been healed.** The whole  world was astonished and followed the beast. **Men worshiped the**  **dragon** **because he had given authority to the beast, and they**  **also worshiped the beast** **and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who**  **can make war against him?"**    **The beast** **was given** **a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies**  **and to exercise his authority for forty-two months.** He opened  his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his  dwelling place and those who live in heaven. **He was given power**  **to make war against the saints and to conquer them.** And **he was**  **given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.**  **All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast--all whose**  **names have not been written in the book of life belonging to**  **the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.**    **He who has an ear, let him hear.** **If anyone is to go into**  **captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed**  **ee with the sword, with the sword he will be killed.** **This calls**  **for**>**patient endurance and faithfulness**<**on the part of the**  **saints.**    Then **I saw** **another beast,** coming out of the earth. He had two  horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. **He** exercised all  the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and **made the**  **earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast,** **whose fatal**  **wound had been healed.** And he performed great and miraculous  signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in  full view of men. Because of the signs he was given power to do  on behalf of the first beast, **he deceived the inhabitants of**  **the earth.** **He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the**  **beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. He was given**  **power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that**  **it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image**  **to be killed. He also**>**forced everyone**<**, small and great, rich**  **and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand**  **or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he**  **had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of**  **his name.**    This calls for **wisdom.** **If anyone has insight, let him calculate**  **the number of the beast,** **for** **it is man's number.** **His number is**  **666.**    Then I looked, and there before me was **the Lamb, standing on**  **Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his**  **Father's name written on their foreheads.** And I heard a sound  from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud  peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists  playing their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne  and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one  could learn the song except **the 144,000** who had been **redeemed**  **ee**  from the earth. **These are those who did not defile themselves**  **with women, for** **they**>**kept themselves pure**<**. They follow the Lamb**  ss **wherever he goes.** **They were purchased from among men and**  **offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in**  hh **their mouths; they are blameless.**    Then I saw **another angel** **flying in midair, and** **he had**>**the**<**eternal**  **gospel to proclaim** **to those who live on the earth--to every**  **nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice,**  **"Fear God** **and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment**  **has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea**  **and the springs of water."**    **A second angel** followed and **said,** **"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the**  **Great, which made all the nations drink** **the** **maddening wine of**  **her adulteries."**    A **third angel** followed them and said in a loud voice: "**If anyone**  **worships the beast and his image** **and** **receives his mark on the**  **forehead or on the hand,** **he, too, will drink of the wine of**  **God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of**  **his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the**  **presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And** **the smoke of**  **their torment rises for ever and ever.** **There is no rest day or**  **night** **for** **those who worship the beast and his image,** **or** for  **anyone who receives the mark of his name."** **This calls for**  **ee**  **patient endurance on the part of the saints who**>**obey**<**God's**  **commandments and**>**remain faithful**<**to Jesus.**    **Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write:** **Blessed are the**  **dead who die in the Lord from now on."**    **ee** **"Yes," says the Spirit,** **"they will rest from their labor, for**  **their deeds will follow them."**    I looked, and **there before me was a white cloud, and seated on**  **the cloud was one "like a son of man"** **with a crown of gold on**  **his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. Then another angel**  **came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who**  **was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because**  **the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is**  **ripe." So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over**  **the earth, and the earth was harvested.**    **Another angel came out** **of the temple in heaven, and he too** **had a**  **sharp sickle. Still another angel, who had charge of the fire,**  **came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had**  **the sharp sickle,** "Take your sharp sickle and gather the  clusters of grapes from **the earth's vine,** because **its grapes**  **are ripe." The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered**  **its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's**  **wrath. They were trampled in the winepress outside the city,**  **and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the**  **horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.**    I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: **seven angels**  **with the seven last plagues--last, because with them God's**  **wrath is completed.** **And I saw what looked like a sea of glass**  **mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had**  >**been victorious over**<**the beast and his image and over the**  **number of his name.** **They held harps given them by God and sang**  **the song of Moses the servant of God and** **the song of the Lamb:**  **EE** **"Great and**>**marvelous**<**are your deeds, Lord God Almighty.** **Just**  **and true are your ways,**>**King of the ages**<**.** **Who will not fear**  >**you**<**, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are**  **EE holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for** **your**  **righteous acts have been revealed."**    After this I looked and **in heaven the temple, that is, the**  **tabernacle of the Testimony, was opened.** **Out of the temple came**  **the seven angels with the seven plagues.** They were dressed in  clean, shining linen and wore golden sashes around their  chests. Then **one of the four living creatures gave to the seven**  **angels seven golden bowls** **filled with the wrath of** **God, who**  **lives for ever and ever.** **And the temple was filled with smoke**  **from the glory of God and from his power,** and no one could  enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels  were completed.    Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven  angels, **"Go,** **pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the**  **earth."**    The **first angel** went and poured out his bowl on the land, and  **ugly and painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark**  **of the beast and worshiped his image.**    The **second** **angel** poured out his bowl on the sea, and it turned  into blood like that of a dead man, and **every living thing in**  **the sea died.**    **The third angel poured out his bowl on** **the rivers and springs of**  **water, and they became blood. Then I heard the angel in charge**  **of the waters say:** **"You are just in these** **judgments,** **you who**  **are and who were, the Holy One,** **because** **you have so** **judged;** **for**  **they have shed the blood of your saints and prophets,** **and you**  **have given them blood to drink as they deserve." And I heard**  **the altar respond: "Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are**  **your judgments."**    The **fourth** **angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was**  **given power to scorch people with fire. They were seared by the**  **intense heat and** **they cursed the name of God,** **who had control**  rr **over these plagues,** **but they refused to repent** **and glorify him.**    The **fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of** **the beast,**  **and his kingdom was plunged into darkness.** **Men gnawed their**  **tongues in agony and cursed the God of heaven because of their**  rr **pains and their sores, but** **they refused to repent of what they**  **had done.**    The **sixth** **angel** poured out his bowl on the **great river Euphrates,**  **and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings**  from the East. Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like  frogs; they came out of the mouth of the **dragon,** out of the  mouth of the **beast** and out of the mouth of the **false prophet.**  **They are** **spirits of demons** performing miraculous signs, and  **they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for**  **the battle** on the great day of God Almighty.    **ee**  **"Behold, I come like a thief!** **Blessed is he who stays awake and**  **keeps his clothes with him,** **so that he may not go naked and be**  **shamefully exposed."**    Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew  is called **Armageddon.**    The **seventh** **angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of**  **the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, "It is**  **done!" Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals**  **of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has**  **ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was**  **the quake. The great city split into three parts, and the**  **cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the**  **Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of**  **his wrath. Every island fled away and the mountains could not**  **be found. From the sky huge hailstones of about a hundred**  **pounds each fell upon men. And they cursed God on account of**  **the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.**    One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to  me, "Come, I will show you **the punishment of the great**  **prostitute, who sits on many waters.** **With her the kings of the**  **earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were**  **intoxicated with the** **wine of her adulteries."**    Then **the angel** **carried me away in the Spirit** **into a desert. There**  **I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet** **beast** **that was covered with**  **blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. The woman**  **was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with**  **gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her**  **hand, filled with abominable things and** **the filth of her**  **adulteries.** **This title was written on her forehead:** **MYSTERY**  **BABYLON THE GREAT** THE **MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE**  **ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.** I saw that **the woman was drunk with**  **the blood of the saints,** **the blood of**>**those who bore testimony**<  **to Jesus.**    When I saw her, I was greatly astonished. Then **the angel said** to  me: **"Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery**  **of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven**  **heads and ten horns.** **The beast,** which you saw, **once was, now is**  **not, and will come up out of the Abyss and** **go to his**  **destruction.** **The inhabitants of the earth** **whose names have not**  **been written in the book of life from the creation of the world**  **will be astonished when they see the beast, because** **he once**  **was, now is not, and yet will come.**    "This calls for a **mind with** **wisdom.** The seven heads are seven  hills on which the woman sits. They are also seven kings. Five  have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he  does come, he must remain for a little while. **The beast who**  **once was, and now is not,** is an eighth king. **He** belongs to the  seven and **is going to his destruction.**    **"The ten horns you saw are** **ten kings** who have not yet received a  kingdom, but **who for one hour will receive authority as kings**  **along with** **the beast.** **They have one purpose and will give their**  **power and authority to the beast.** **They will make war against**  **the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them** **because he is Lord of**  **lords and King of kings--and with him will be his called,**  **ee**  **chosen and faithful followers."**    Then the angel said to me, **"The waters you saw, where the**  **prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and**  **languages.** **The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the**  **prostitute.** **They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked;**  **they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put**  **it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to**  **give the beast their power to rule,** **until God's words are**  **fulfilled.** The woman you saw is the great city that rules over  the kings of the earth."    After this I saw **another angel coming down from heaven.** **He had**  **great authority,** **and the earth was illuminated by his splendor.**  **With a mighty voice he shouted:** **"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the**  **Great!** **She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every**  **evil spirit,** **a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. For**  **all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her**  **adulteries.** **The kings of the earth committed adultery with her,**  **and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive**  **luxuries."**    **ee** **Then I heard another voice from heaven say:** "**Come out of her, my**  **people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you**  **will not receive any of her plagues;** **for her sins are piled up**  **to heaven,** **and God has remembered her crimes. Give back to her**  >**as she has given**<**; pay her back double for what she has done.**  **Mix her a double portion from her own cup.** **Give her as much**  **torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself.** **In**  **her heart she boasts, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I**  **will never mourn.' Therefore** **in one day her plagues will**  **overtake her: death, mourning and famine.** **She will be consumed**  **by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.**    "When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and  shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep  and mourn over her. **Terrified at her torment,** they will stand  far off and cry: "'Woe! Woe, O great city, O Babylon, city of  power! **In one hour your doom has come!'**    "The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because  **no one buys their cargoes any more**--cargoes of gold, silver,  precious stones and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk and  scarlet cloth; every sort of citron wood, and articles of every  kind made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron and marble;  cargoes of cinnamon and spice, of incense, myrrh and  frankincense, of wine and olive oil, of fine flour and wheat;  cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and bodies and souls of  men.    "They will say, **'The fruit you longed for is gone from you. All**  **your riches and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered.'**  The merchants who sold these things and gained their wealth  from her will stand far off, **terrified at her torment.** They  will weep and mourn and cry out: "'Woe! Woe, O great city,  dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet, and glittering with  gold, precious stones and pearls! **In one hour such great wealth**  **has been brought to ruin!'** "Every sea captain, and all who  travel by ship, the sailors, and all who earn their living from  the sea, will stand far off. When they see the smoke of her  burning, they will exclaim, 'Was there ever a city like this  great city?' **They will throw dust on their heads, and with**  **weeping and mourning cry out:** "'Woe! Woe, O great city, where  all who had ships on the sea became rich through her wealth! **In**  **one hour she has been brought to ruin!** Rejoice over her, O  heaven! **Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets!** **God has**  **judged her for the way she treated you.'"**    Then **a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large**  **millstone and threw it into the sea,** **and said:** **"With such**  **violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never**  **to be found again.** **The music of harpists and musicians, flute**  **players and trumpeters, will never be heard in you again. No**  **workman of any trade will ever be found in you again. The sound**  **of a millstone will never be heard in you again. The light of a**  **lamp will never shine in you again. The voice of bridegroom and**  **bride will never be heard in you again. Your merchants were the**  **world's great men.** **By your**>**magic spell**<**all the nations were**>**led**  **astray**<**.** **In her was found the blood of prophets and of the**  **saints,** **and of all who have been killed on the earth."**    **After this I heard what sounded like the roar of** **a great**  **multitude in heaven shouting:** **"Hallelujah!** **Salvation** **and glory**  **and power** **belong to our God,** **for true and just are his**  **judgments.** **He has condemned** **the great prostitute who corrupted**  **the earth by her adulteries.** **He has avenged on her** **the blood of**  **his servants."**    And **again they shouted: "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up**  **for ever and ever."**    **The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down**  **and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they**  **cried: "Amen, Hallelujah!"**    **Then a voice came from the throne, saying:** **"Praise our God, all**  **ee** **you** **his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!"**    **Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar**  **of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:**  **"Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice**  **and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has**  **ee come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright**  ss **and clean,**>**was given her**<**to wear." (Fine linen stands for the**  hh **righteous acts of the saints.)**    Then **the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are**  **invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'**" **And he added,**  **"These are the true words of God."**    **At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do**  **not do it!** **I am a fellow servant with you and with** **your**  **brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus.** **Worship God! For**  **ee** **the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."**    **I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse,**  **whose rider is called Faithful and True.**>**With justice**<**he judges**  **and makes war.** **His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head**  **are many crowns.** **He has a name written**>**on him**<**that no one knows**  **but he himself.** **He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and**  **his name is the Word of God.** **The armies of heaven** **were**  **following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine**  **linen, white and clean.** **Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword**  **with which to strike down the nations.** **"He will rule them with**  **an iron scepter."** **He treads the winepress of the fury of the**  **wrath of God Almighty.** **On his robe and on his thigh he has this**  **name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**    **And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice**  **to all the birds flying in midair, "Come**, **gather together for**  **the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of**  **kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders,**  **and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great."**    **Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies**  **gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse**  **and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the**  **false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs** **on his**  **behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received**  **the mark of the beast and worshiped his image.** **The two of them**  **were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.** **The**  **rest of them were killed with the sword** **that came out of the**  **mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged**  **themselves on their flesh.**    **And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to**  **the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the**  **dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and**  **bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss,**  **and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving**  **the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After**  **that, he must be set free for a short time.**    **I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given**  **authority to judge. And I saw** **the souls of** **those who had been**  **ee beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of**  **the word of God.** **They had not worshiped the beast or his image**  **and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their**  **hands.** **They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand**  **years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the**  **thousand years were ended.)** **This is the first resurrection.**  hh **Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first**  **resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but** **they**  **will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him**  **for a thousand years.**    **When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his**  **prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four**  **corners of the earth--Gog and Magog--to gather them for battle.**  **In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched**  **across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of**  **God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven**  **and devoured them.** **And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown**  **into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false**  **prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night**  **for ever and ever.**    **Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it.**  **Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place**  **for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before**  **the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened,**  **ee which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to**  **what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up**  **the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead**  **ee that were in them, and each person was judged according to what**  **he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of**  **fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name**  **was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into**  **the lake of fire.**    **Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth,** **for** **the first heaven and**  **the first earth had passed away,** and there was no longer any  sea. **I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of**  **heaven from God,** prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for  her husband. And I heard **a loud voice from the throne** saying,  **"Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with**  **them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with**  **them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes.**  **There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for**  **The**>**old order**<**of things has passed away."**    **He who was seated on the throne said,** **"I am making everything**  **new!"** Then he said, "Write this down, for these **words** are  trustworthy and true."    He said to me: **"It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the**  ss **Beginning and the End.** **To him who is thirsty I will give to**  **drink**>**without cost**<**from the spring of the water of life. He who**  **ee** >**overcomes will inherit all this**<**, and I will be his God and he**  ff **will be my son.** **But the cowardly,**>**the unbelieving,** **the vile,**<  **the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic**  **arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the**  **fiery lake of burning sulfur.** **This is the second death."**    **One of the seven angels** who had the seven bowls full of the seven  last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the  bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he **carried me away in the**  **Spirit** **to a mountain great and high, and** **showed me** **the Holy**  **City, Jerusalem,** **coming down out of heaven from God.** **It shone**  **with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a**  **very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.** It had a  great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at  the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve  tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on  the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall  of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names  of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.    The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to  measure the city, its gates and its walls. **The city was laid**  **out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city**  **with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as**  **wide and high as it is long.** He measured its wall and it was  144 cubits thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was  using. **The wall was made of jasper, and** **the city of pure gold,**  **as pure as glass.** **The foundations of the city walls were**  **decorated with every kind of precious stone.** The first  foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third  chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth  carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth  topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the  twelfth amethyst. **The twelve gates were twelve pearls,** **each**  **gate made of a single pearl.** **The great street of the city was**  **of pure gold, like transparent glass.**    I did not see a temple **in the city,** because **the Lord God Almighty**  **and the Lamb are its temple.** **The city does not need the sun or**  **the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light,**  **and the Lamb is its lamp.** **The nations will walk by its light,**  **and the kings of the earth will bring their**>**splendor**<**into it.**  **On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no**  **night there.** **The glory and honor of the nations will be brought**  hh **into it.** **Nothing**>**impure**<**will ever enter it, nor will anyone who**  **does what is**>**shameful or deceitful**<**, but only those whose names**  **are written in the Lamb's book of life.**    **Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as**>**clear**<  **as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down**  **the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the**  **river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit,**  **yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are**  **for the healing of the nations.** **No longer will there be any**  **curse.** **The throne of God and of the Lamb will be**>**in the city**<**,**  **and his servants will serve him.** **They will see his face, and**  **his name will be on their foreheads.** **There will be no more**  **night.** They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of  the sun, for **the Lord God will give them** **light.** And **they will**  **reign for ever and ever.**    The angel said to me, **"These words are trustworthy and true.** **The**  **Lord,** **the God of the spirits of the prophets,** **sent his angel to**  **show his servants the things that must soon take place."**    **ee** **"Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of**  **the prophecy in this book."**    I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I  had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of  **the angel** who had been showing them to me. But he **said to me,**  "Do not do it! **I am a fellow servant with you and with your**  **ee brothers the prophets and of** **all who keep the words of this**  **book.** **Worship God!"**    Then he told me, **"Do not seal up** **the words of the prophecy** of  this book, **because** **the time is near.**>**Let him who does wrong**  **continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile;**<  **ee let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is**  **holy continue to be holy."**    **ee** **"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give**  **to everyone**>**according to**<**what he has done.** **I am the Alpha and**  **the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.**    **ee**hh "**Blessed are those who wash their robes**, **that they may have the**  **right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the**  **city.** **Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the**  **sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who**  **loves and practices falsehood.**    **"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the**  **churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the**  **bright Morning Star."**    **The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"** And **let him who hears say,**  **ee** **"Come!"** **Whoever is thirsty, let him come;** **and whoever wishes,**  ss **let him take the**>**free gift**<**of the water of life.**    **I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book:**  **If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the**  **plagues described in this book.** **And if anyone takes words away**  **from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his**  **share in the tree of life and in the holy city,** **which are**  **described in this book.**    He who testifies to these things says, **"Yes, I am coming soon."**    **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**    **The grace of the Lord Jesus be with**>**God's people.**<**Amen.**  **NOTES:**  rr = repent  ff = believe in Jesus Christ  ss = Holy Spirit, God living in Us, God doing His work in and through us  ee = our effort to obey God: obedience, works, deeds, behavior, thoughts  **ee** = takes our effort with all our **HSMS,** and the **Holy Spirit** to get it done, to obey God: obedience, works, deeds, behavior, thoughts  hh = we actually become holy, righteous, obedient, ready to be judged as good fish  **HSMS** = pursue, seek, go after, look to, call on, turn to, love, obey, serve, trust, believe in, worship, praise the Lord with **all** your heart, **all** your soul, **all** your mind, and **all** your strength (might)  Green highlighting is for Repent, Faith, Holy Spirit, God doing things through and to us, eternal life. Also for lack or repenting, lack of faith. Also anything that it takes to repent and believe, to get saved. Also anything it takes to not repent and believe. Also what God does for us.  What it takes to repent and believe, and repenting and believing themselves, are things that people keep on doing once they have initially repented and believed. These are put in green because they are necessary in order to repent and believe, which is necessary to get started with the Lord.  Yellow mostly the difference between those that repent and believe in Jesus and those that don’t, how they act and what will happen to them. All the good things believers do are because God is in them enabling and helping them.  Jesus’ love for the Father is His driving force.  ee comes out of faith and love  example: she brought an  alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his  feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then  she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on  them.  Jesus said she both loved and had faith  faith, love, and obedience are inseparable  Perfect example that faith and obedience are inseparable is persecution: clearly takes effort to let yourself be exposed to it and to endure it, clearly takes faith to do the same.  Every time you sin, you are doing the opposite of repenting and believing, so the Holy Spirit backs off.  So when you are tempted, turn to God and believe in Him, in Christ. I have been crucified with Christ, this is painful, resisting temptation. He who has suffdered in his body is done with sin. And I no longer live, but Christ lives in me; when suffering keep repeating this.  YHVH, God’s name in Hebrew | ESV Bible, 2016 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ**,** the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus **was born, who is called** Christ**.**  So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.  Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the **Holy Spirit**. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.  But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for>{**that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.** She will bear a son, and **you shall call his name** Jesus**,**>>>**for** he **will save** his **people from their** sins<<<.”}<  All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:>{**“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means,**>>>**God with us**<<<**).**}<  When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.  Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”  When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: “‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’”  Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.”  After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was.{**When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him.** **Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.**}And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.  Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.”  And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”  Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”  But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead.”  And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.  In those days>{**John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”** For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, **“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:**>>**‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’”**<<}<  {**Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.** **Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and** **they were baptized by him in the river Jordan,**>**confessing their** sins**.**  **But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them,**>>**“You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the** wrath **to come? Bearfruit in keeping with repentance.**}<<  And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, **God** is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.>>>{**Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the** fire.}<<<  **“I baptize you with water for repentance, but** he **who is coming after me is mightier than I,** whose **sandals I am not worthy to carry.**>>>{**He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and** fire. **His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn,** but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”}<<<  Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”  But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented.  >{**And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”**<  >>**Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the** devil**. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”**  **But he answered, “It is written,“‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”**<<}  Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, “‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and “‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’”  Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”  Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, **“All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”**  **Then Jesus said to him,**>>>{**“Be gone,** Satan! **For it is written, “‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’”**}<<<  **Then the** devil **left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.**  Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— **the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light,** and for those **dwelling** in the region and shadow of death, on them **a light has dawned**.”  From that time{**Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”**}  **While walking by the Sea of Galilee,**>**he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.** And he said to them, **“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him.**  And going on from there **he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.**<  And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, and paralytics, and he healed them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.  Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:>{**“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for**>>>**theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**<<<**“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.** >>>**“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.**<<<**“Blessed are the merciful, for**>>>**they shall receive mercy.**<<<**“Blessed are the pure in heart, for**>>>**they shall see God.**<<<**“Blessed are the peacemakers, for**>>>**they shall be called sons of God.**<<<**“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for**>>>**theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**<<<}<  ^**“Blessed are you when others revile you and** persecute **you and utter all kinds of** evil **against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they** persecuted **the prophets who were before you.**<  >>>{**“**You are the salt of the earth**, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything** except to be thrown out **and trampled under people's feet.**}<<<  >{**“**You are the l**igh**t of the world**. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.**>>**Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.**<<**In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.**}<    {>**“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.**<**For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.**}**Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.** >>**For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees,** you will never enter **the kingdom of heaven.**<<  “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be **liabl**e to judgment.’>>>{But **I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liabl**e to judgment**;** whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; **and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the** hell **of fire.**}<<<  ^{**So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.**}<  >{**Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in** prison**. Truly, I say to you,** you will never get out until you have paid the last penny**.**}<  “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’But>>>{**I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to** sin**, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than** that your whole body be thrown into hell**.**}**And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than** that your whole body go into hell**.**<<<  “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.    “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by **heaven**, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.^**Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from** evil**.**<  “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’^{But **I say to you, Do not resist the one who is** evil**. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.**}<  “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ButI say to you,{>>**Love your enemies and pray for those who** persecute **you,**>>>**so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.**<<<**For he makes his sun rise on the** evil **and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?**<>>>**You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**<<<}    “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.  “Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.  “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.  **Pray then like this:**{**“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread,**>>**and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into** temptation**, but deliver us from** evil.<< >>>**For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses,** neither **will your Father forgive your trespasses.**<<<}  “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.    ^^{**“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**}<<  ^{**“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be** full of darkness**. If then the light in you is** darkness**,** how great is the darkness!}<  >>{**“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.**}<<  “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?  And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.{>>>**But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness**<<<, **and all these things will be added to you.**^**“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.**<}  >>>{**“Judge not, that you be not** judged**. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be** judged**, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.**}<<<  Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite,^**first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.**  {**“Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.**}<  >>>{**“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.**}<<<  **Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent?**{>>**If you then, who are** evil**, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!**<<^**“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.**<}  >>>{**“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to** destruction**, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and**>>>>**the way is hard**<<<<**that leads to life, and those who find it are few.**}<<<    “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.{>>**You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears** bad **fruit.**<<>>>**A healthy tree cannot bear** bad **fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.** Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.<<<**Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.**}  >>>{**“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘**I never knew you; depart from me**, you workers of lawlessness.’**}<<<  >>>{**“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And** the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, **but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And** the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, **and** it fell, and great was the fall of it**.”**}<<<  **And when Jesus finished these sayings,**>>**the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority**<<**, and not as their scribes.**  When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. And behold,>**a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, if you will,**{**you can make me clean**}**.”**  **And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I will; be clean.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.**<And Jesus said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them.”  When he had entered Capernaum, **a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home,** suffering terribly**.”**  And he said to him, **“I will come and heal him.”**  But the centurion replied, **“Lord,**>**I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed.** For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”  When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, **“Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found**{**such faith**}**.** I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”  And to the centurion Jesus said, **“Go;**{**let it be done for you as you have believed**}**.” And the servant was healed at that very moment.**<  And when Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve him.   That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word nd healed all who were sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: “He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.”  Now when Jesus saw a crowd around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. **And a scribe came up and said to him,** **“Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.”**  And Jesus said to him, **“Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but**{**the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head**}**.”**  >{Another **of the disciples** said to him, **“Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”**  And Jesus said to him, **“Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.”**}<  And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. And behold,>**there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him, saying,**{**“Save us, Lord; we are** perishing**.”**  And he said to them,>>**“Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?”**<<  **Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.**}<  **And the men marveled, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?”**  And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. And behold, they cried out, “What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?”  Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them. And the demons begged him, saying, “If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of pigs.”  And he said to them, “Go.” So they came out and went into the pigs, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the waters. The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, especially what had happened to the demon-possessed men. And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their region.  And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city. **And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed.**>>{**And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, my son; your** sins **are forgiven.”**}<<  And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.”  But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said,>>>{**“Why do you think** evil **in your hearts?**}<<<For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Rise, pick up your bed and go home.” And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.  As Jesus passed on from there,>**he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him,**{**“Follow me.”**}**And he rose and followed him.**<  And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”  But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’>**For I came not to call the righteous, but** sinners**.”**<  Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?”   And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.  No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made. Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.”  While he was saying these things to them, behold, a ruler came in and knelt before him, saying, “My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.” And Jesus rose and followed him, with his disciples.  **And behold, a woman who had** suffered **from a discharge of blood for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, for she said to herself,**>{**“If I only touch his garment, I will be made well.”**  **Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, “Take heart, daughter;**>>**your faith has made you well**<<**.” And instantly the woman was made well.**}<  And when Jesus came to the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, “Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. And the report of this went through all that district.   And as Jesus passed on from there,>**two blind men followed him, crying aloud, “Have mercy on us, Son of David.”**  **When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?”**  They said to him, **“Yes, Lord.”**  **Then he touched their eyes, saying,**{>>**“According to your faith be it done to you**<<**.” And their eyes were opened.**<}**And Jesus sternly warned them, “See that no one knows about it.” But they went away and spread his fame through all that district.**  As they were going away, behold, a demon-oppressed man who was mute was brought to him. And when the demon had been cast out, the mute man spoke. And the crowds marveled, saying, “Never was anything like this seen in Israel.”  But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the prince of demons.”  And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”  And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction.  The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.  **These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them,** “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.>**And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, raise the** dead**, cleanse lepers, cast out** demons**. You received without paying; give without pay. Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food.**<    ^{**And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. As you enter the house, greet it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.**}<**And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on** the day of judgment **for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.**>{**“Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.**}<  >**Beware of men, for** they will deliver you over to courts and flog you **in their synagogues, and** you will be dragged **before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles.** When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for>>**what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.**<<<  >{Brother will deliver brother over to death**, and** the father his child**, and** children will rise against parents and have them put to death**, and** you will be hated by all **for my name's sake. But**>>>**the one who endures to the end will be saved.**<<<**When they** persecute **you in one town, flee to the next,**}<for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.  **“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.**>>>{**It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master**}<<<. **If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.**  >**“So**{**have no fear of them**}**, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.** **What I tell you in the dark,** **say in the light,** and **what you hear whispered,** **proclaim on the housetops. And**>>{**do not fear** those who kill the body **but cannot** kill the soul**.**<<**Rather**>>>**fear him who can** destroy both soul and body in hell.<<<**Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But**>>>**even the hairs of your head are all numbered**<<<**. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.**}<  {>>>**So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men,** I also will **deny** before my Father who is in heaven.<<<  **“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace,** but a sword**. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And**>a person's enemies will be those of his own household**.**<}  >>>**Whoever loves father or mother more than me** is not worthy of me**, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me** is not worthy of me**. And**{**whoever does not take his cross and follow me** is not worthy of me**.** Whoever finds his life will lose it**, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.**}<<<  **“Whoever receives you receives** me**, and whoever receives** me **receives him who sent** me**. The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”**  When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities.  Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?”  And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”  As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, “‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’ >>>{**Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence,**>>>>**and the violent take it by force.**<<<<}<<<For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.  **“But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates, “‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a** demon**.’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and** sinners**!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”**  **Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did** not **repent. “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable on** the day of judgment **for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be** brought down to Hades**. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on** the day of judgment **for the land of Sodom than for you.”**  **At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.**  **All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and**>>>{**no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.**}<<<  >>>{**Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”**}<<<  At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, “Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.”  He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. And if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.”  He went on from there and entered their synagogue. And a man was there with a withered hand. And they asked him, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”—so that they might accuse him.  He said to them, “Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”  Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other. But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.  Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. **And many followed him, and he healed them all and ordered them not to make him known.** **This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:**{>>>**“Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him,**<<<**and**>**he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.**>>**He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench,**<<**until he brings justice to victory; and in his name the Gentiles will hope.”**<}  **Then a** demon**-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, “Can this be the Son of David?” But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.”**    Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, **“Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. And if** Satan **casts out** Satan**, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?** And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. **But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.**    Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.  {**Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters**}**.**>**Therefore I tell you, every** sin **and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but** the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven**. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but** whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come**.**<  >>>{**“Either** make the tree good and its fruit good**, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are** evil**? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the** evil **person out of his** evil **treasure brings forth** evil**. I tell you,** on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak**, for by your words you will be justified, and** by your words you will be condemned**.”**}<<<  Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.”  But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.  “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation.”  While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him.  But he replied to the man who told him,>{**“Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For**>>>**whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”**<<<}<  That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear.”    Then the disciples came and said to him, **“Why do you speak to them in parables?”**  And he answered them,>**“To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but** to them it has not been given**. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has** will be taken away**. This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing** they do not see**, and hearing** they do not hear**,** nor do they understand**. Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: “‘“You will indeed hear but** never understand**, and you will indeed see but** never perceive**.” For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should** see with their eyes **and** hear with their ears **and** understand with their heart **and turn, and I would heal them.’ But blessed are** your eyes**, for** they see**, and** your ears**, for** they hear**.**<For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.  “Hear then the parable of the sower:>**When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and** does not understand it**, the** evil one comes and snatches away **what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path**<**.**>>>{**As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when** tribulation **or** persecution **arises on account of the word, immediately he** falls away**. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and** it proves unfruitful**. As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”**}<<<  He put another parable before them, saying,>“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’  **But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers,**>>**“**Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned**, but gather the wheat into my barn.”’”**<<<  >>{**He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”**}<<  >>>{**He told them another parable. “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.”**}<<<  All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet: “I will open my mouth in parables; **I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world.**”  Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying,>**“Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.”**  He answered,{**“The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the** sons **of the kingdom.** The weeds are the sons of the evil one**, and the enemy who sowed them is** the devil**.**<**The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels.**}  >>{**Just** as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire**, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will**>>>**gather out of his kingdom all causes of** sin **and all law-breakers, and throw them into** the fiery furnace**.**<<<In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father**}**.** He who has ears, let him hear.<<  >>>>{**“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.**}<<<<  >>>>{**“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.**}<<<<  >>{**“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but** threw away the bad**. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and**>>>**separate the** evil **from the righteous and** throw them into the fiery furnace**.** In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth**.**<<<}<<  “Have you understood all these things?”  They said to him, “Yes.”  And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”  And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there, and coming to his hometown he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” And they took offense at him. But  Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household.”  **And**>>>{**he did not do many mighty works there, because of their** unbelief**.**}<<<  At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the fame of Jesus, and he said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead; that is why these miraculous powers are at work in him.”  For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because John had been saying to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.” And though he wanted to put him to death, he feared the people, because they held him to be a prophet.  But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company and pleased Herod, so that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. Prompted by her mother, she said, “Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter.” And the king was sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he commanded it to be given. He sent and had John beheaded in the prison, and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus.  Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.  Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.”  But Jesus said, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.”  They said to him, “We have only five loaves here and two fish.”  And he said, “Bring them here to me.” Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.  Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them.  **And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them**, walking on the sea. **But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” and they cried out in fear.**  **But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”**  And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.”  He said, “Come.”  **So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus.**>{**But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.”**  **Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him,**>>**“O you of little faith, why did you doubt?**<<**”**  **And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”**}<  **And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized him, they sent around to all that region and brought to him all who were sick and implored him that they might only touch the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.**  Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.”  He answered them, “And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? For God commanded, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ But you say, ‘If anyone tells his father or his mother, “What you would have gained from me is given to God,” he need not honor his father.’>**So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God.** **You hypocrites!**<**Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said:**>**“‘This people honors me with their lips, but**>>**their heart is far from me;**<<in vain do they worship me**, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’”**<  And he called the people to him and said to them, “Hear and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.” Then the disciples came and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?”  He answered,>{**“Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted** will be rooted up**. Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both** will fall into a pit**.”**}<  But Peter said to him, “Explain the parable to us.”  And he said,>{**“Are you also still without understanding?**}<Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled?>>{**But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come** evil **thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person.**}<<But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”  And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.”  But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, “Send her away, for she is crying out after us.”  He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”  But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.”  And he answered, “It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.”  She said,>{**“Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.”**  Then Jesus answered her, **“O woman,**>>>**great is your faith!**<<<**Be it done for you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed instantly.**}<  Jesus went on from there and walked beside the Sea of Galilee. And he went up on the mountain and sat down there. And great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them, so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.  Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.”  And the disciples said to him, “Where are we to get enough bread in such a desolate place to feed so great a crowd?”  And Jesus said to them, “How many loaves do you have?”  They said, “Seven, and a few small fish.”  And directing the crowd to sit down on the ground, he took the seven loaves and the fish, and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces left over. Those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. And after sending away the crowds, he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan.  And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven.  He answered them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ **You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but**>**you cannot interpret the signs of the times.**< >**An** evil **and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it**<**except the sign of Jonah.” So he left them and departed.**  When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. Jesus said to them, “Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”  And they began discussing it among themselves, saying, “We brought no bread.”  But Jesus, aware of this, said,>>>{**“O you of little faith,** why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? **Do you not yet perceive?** Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? **How is it that you fail to understand**}**that I did not speak about bread?**<<<**Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”** Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.  Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”  **He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”**  Simon Peter replied,{**“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”**  And Jesus answered him,>>>**“Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.**<<<}**And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and** the gates of hell **shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.**  From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.”  >>{**But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me,** Satan**! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but**>>>**on the things of man.**<<<**”**}<<  Then Jesus told his disciples,>{>>>**“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his** cross **and follow me. For** whoever would save his life will lose it**, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.**<<<**For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and** forfeits his soul**? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?**>>>**For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then** he will repay each person according to what he has done**.**<<<}<**Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”**  And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and{**led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.** **And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.**}  And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.”  He was still speaking when, **behold,**>**a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “**{**This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased;**}**listen to him.”**<  When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.  And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.”  And the disciples asked him, “Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?”  He answered, “Elijah does come, and he will restore all things. But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.  And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and, kneeling before him, said, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he has seizures and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him.”  And Jesus answered,{>**“O**>>>**faithless and twisted generation**<<<**, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?**<Bring him here to me.” And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly.  Then **the disciples** came to Jesus privately and **said,**>>**“Why could we not cast it out?”**  He said to them, **“Because of**>>>**your little faith**<<<**. For truly, I say to you,**>>>**if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move**<<<**, and** >>>>>>>**nothing will be impossible for you**<<<<<<<**.”**<<}  As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day.” And they were greatly distressed.  When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax went up to Peter and said, “Does your teacher not pay the tax?”  He said, “Yes.”  And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?”  And when he said, “From others,”  Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free. However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for me and for yourself.”  **At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”**  And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said,{>>**“Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children,** you will never enter **the kingdom of heaven.**<<^**Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.**<}  “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.  >>**“Woe to the world for** temptations to sin! **For it is necessary that** temptations **come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes!**<<  >>>{**And if your hand or your foot causes you to** sin, **cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be** thrown into the eternal fire**. And if your eye causes you to** sin, **tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be** thrown into the hell of fire**.**}<<<  “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.  What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So **it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish**.  “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.  **Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**    Again I say to you,>>>{**if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”**}<<<  Then^^**Peter came up** and said to him, **“Lord, how often will my brother** sin **against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?”**  Jesus said to him, **“I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.**<<  **“Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle,** **one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.** **And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made.**  **So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.**’ **And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.**  **But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’**  **So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’**  **He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.** **When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.**    **Then his master summoned him and said to him,**>>>{**‘You** wicked **servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his master** delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt**.**  **So also my heavenly Father** will do to every one of you, **if you** do not **forgive your brother from your heart.”**}<<<  Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.  And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?”  He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”  They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?”  He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”  The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”  But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.”  Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray.  The disciples rebuked the people, but Jesus said,>>{**“Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.”**}<<**And he laid his hands on them and went away.**  >And behold, a man came up to him, saying, **“Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?”**  And he said to him,{**“Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good.**}**If you would enter life, keep the commandments.”**  He said to him, **“Which ones?”**  And Jesus said, **“You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”**  The young man said to him, **“All these I have kept. What do I still lack?”**  Jesus said to him, **“If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”**  When the young man heard this **he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.**  And Jesus said to his disciples, **“Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, 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.”**  When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, {**“Who then can be saved?”**  But Jesus looked at them and said,>>>**“With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”**<<<  **Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed you.**}**What then will we have?”**  Jesus said to them, **“Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.**<But many who are first will be last, and the last first.  “For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard.  And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went.  Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’  They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’  He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’  And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.’  And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’  But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’  So the last will be first, and the first last.”  And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.”  Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something.  And he said to her, “What do you want?”  She said to him, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.”  Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?”  They said to him, “We are able.”  He said to them, “You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.”  And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you.^{**But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to** give his life **as a ransom for many.”**}<  >{**And as they went out of Jericho, a great crowd followed him. And behold, there were two blind men sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!”**  **The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent, but**>>**they cried out all the more,**<<**“Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!”**  **And stopping, Jesus called them and said, “What do you want me to do for you?”**  **They said to him, “Lord, let our eyes be opened.”**  **And Jesus in pity touched their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight and followed him.**}<  Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them at once.”  This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’”  The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”  And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?”  And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”  {**And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.”**  **And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant,**  and they said to him, **“Do you hear what these are saying?”**  **And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read,** **“‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise’?”**  **And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.**}  >>{**In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he became hungry.** And **seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it and found nothing on it but only leaves. And he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you again!” And** the fig tree withered at once**.**}<<  When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, **“How did the fig tree wither at once?”**  And Jesus answered them,>>>{**“Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ it will happen. And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.”**}<<<  And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?”  Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?”  And they discussed it among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From man,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet.”  So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.”  And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.  “What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’  And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he changed his mind and went.  And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go.  Which of the two did the will of his father?”  They said, “The first.”  Jesus said to them,>{**“Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and** you did not believe him**, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it,** you did not afterward change your minds and believe him**.**}<  “Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit.  And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’  But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.  When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”  They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”  Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?  Therefore>>>{**I tell you, the kingdom of God** will be taken away from you **and given to a people producing its fruits.**}<<<And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”  When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.  And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying,>**“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come.**  **Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.”’**  **But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and** he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers **and** burned **their city.**<  Then he said to his servants,>>{**‘The wedding feast is ready,** but those invited were not worthy**. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’ And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.**    >>>**“But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had** no wedding garment**. And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless.**    **Then the king said to the attendants, ‘**Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**’**<<<  **For many are called, but few are chosen.”**}<<  Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words. And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”  But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. And Jesus said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?”  They said, “Caesar's.”  Then he said to them, “Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.”  When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.  The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question, saying, “Teacher, Moses said, ‘If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.’ Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother. So too the second and third, down to the seventh. After them all, the woman died. In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her.”  But Jesus answered them, “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.”  And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.  But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him.{**“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?”**  And he said to him,>>>**“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”**<<<}  Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?”  They said to him, “The son of David.”  He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, “‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet”’? If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?” And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.  Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.  They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others.  But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ.^**The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.**<  >**“**But woe to you, **scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you** shut **the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For** you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in**.**  Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.  **“**Woe to you, **blind guides,** who say,‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ **You blind fools!** For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ **You blind men!** For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.  **“**Woe to you, **scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** **For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected** **the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness.** These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. **You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!**  **“**Woe to you, **scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** **For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.**  **“**Woe to you, **scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and** **lawlessness.**  **“**Woe to you, **scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers.    >>{**You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape** being sentenced to hell?}<<**Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.**<    “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”  Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”  **As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately,** saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”  And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.  >>{**“Then they will deliver you up to** tribulation **and** put you to death, **and** you will be hated **by all nations for my name's sake. And**>>>**then many will** fall away<<<**and betray one another and hate one another.**<<**And many false prophets will arise and lead many** astray**.**>>>**And because lawlessness will be increased,**>>>>**the love of many will grow cold.**<<<<**But the one who endures to the end will be saved.**<<<}And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.  “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.>>{**For then there will be** great **tribulation,** such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be**. And if those days had not been cut short,**>>>**no human being would be saved.**<<<**But for the sake of** the elect **those days will be cut short.**}<<Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it.>>{**For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders,**>>>**so as to lead astray**<<<**, if possible, even** the elect**.**}<<See, I have told you beforehand.  So, if they say to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.  “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.  Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.  “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.>{**Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.**}<    >{**“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until** the flood came and swept them all away**, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and** one left**. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and** one left**.**}<    {>>**Therefore, stay awake,**<<**for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that**>**if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore**  >>>**you also must be ready,**<<<**for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.**<  >**“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.**<**Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.** >>>**But if that** wicked **servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know and** will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth**.**<<<}  >>>{**“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were** foolish**, and five were wise. For when the** foolish **took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the** wise **took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept.**  **But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’**  **Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the** foolish **said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’**  **But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’**  **And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and**>>>>**those who were ready**<<<<**went in with him to the marriage feast, and** the door was shut**.**  **Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’**  **But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you,** I do not know you.**’**  **Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.**}<<<  >>{**“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. So also he who had the two talents made two talents more.** **But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.**  **Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.** And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, **‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’**  His master said to him,>>>**‘Well done, good and faithful servant.**<<<**You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much.**>>>**Enter into the joy of your master**<<<**.’**  And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’  **He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master,**>>>>**I knew**<<<<**you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’**    **But his master answered him,‘You** wicked **and slothful servant!** >>>>**You knew**<<<<**that**>>>>>**I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed?**<<<<<**Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.**  **So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And** cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**’**}<<  >>>{**“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.**  **Then the King will say to those on his right,**>>>>**‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’**<<<<  **Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’**  **And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’**  **“Then he will say to those on his left,**>>>>**‘**Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels**. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’**<<<<    **Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’**  **Then he will answer them, saying,‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’**  **And these will go away into** eternal punishment**, but the righteous into eternal life.”**<<<}      When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”  Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”  Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table.  And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.”  But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.”  Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?” And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.  Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?”  He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’” And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover.  When it was evening, he reclined at table with the twelve. And as they were eating, he said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.”  And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, “Is it I, Lord?”  He answered, “He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.”  Judas, who would betray him, answered, “Is it I, Rabbi?”  He said to him, “You have said so.”  Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, **“Take, eat; this is my body.”**  And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying,{>>>**“Drink of it, all of you, for this is** my blood **of the covenant,** which is poured out **for many for the forgiveness of** sins<<<.  **I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.”**  **And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them,**>**“You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.”**  **Peter answered him, “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.”**  **Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.”**  **Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” And all the disciples said the same.**<}  Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.” And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee,{**he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to** death**; remain here, and watch with me.”**  **And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”**}  And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour? **Watch and**>>{**pray that you may not enter into** temptation**. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”**}<<  Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.”  And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again.  Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”  While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” **And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed him.**  **Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.”**  **Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him.** And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.  Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?”  At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left him and fled.  Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end.  Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward.  At last two came forward and said, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’”  And the high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” But Jesus remained silent.  **And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.”**  **Jesus said to him, “You have said so.** **But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”**  Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your judgment?”  They answered, “He deserves death.”  Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, saying, “Prophesy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?”  Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.”  But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you mean.”  And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.”  And again he denied it with an oath: “I do not know the man.”  After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you.”  Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know the man.”  And immediately the rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.  When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor.  Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.”  They said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.”  And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself.  But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is blood money.” So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me.”  Now Jesus stood before the governor, and **the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”**  **Jesus said, “You have said so.”**  But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?” But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.  Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up.  Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.”  Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.  The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?”  And they said, “Barabbas.”  Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?”  **They all said, “Let him be** crucified!**”**  **And he said, “Why? What evil has he done?”**  **But they shouted all the more, “Let him be** crucified!**”**  So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.”  And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!”  Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.  Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.  As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.” Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”  So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.  >>{**Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”**  And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, “This man is calling Elijah.”  And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.”    **And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.**  **And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.**}  {**When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”**}<<  There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.  When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.  The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, “Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise.’ Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last fraud will be worse than the first.”  Pilate said to them, “You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.” So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.  Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.  >>{**And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.**  **But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was** crucified**. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from** the dead**, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.”**}<<  {**So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.** **And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!”** **And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.**}Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”  While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers and said, “Tell people, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.  Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. **And when they saw him they worshiped him,** but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them,>{**“**>>>**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me**<<<**.**>>**Go therefore and make disciples**<<**of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the** Son **and of the Holy Spirit,**>>**teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you**<<**. And behold,**>>>**I am with you always**<<<**,**  **to the end of the age.”**}<  **============**  {**The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.**  **As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness:**>>**‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’” John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of** sins**.**<<**And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan,**>>**confessing their** sins**.**<< **Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but**>>>**he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”**<<<}  >>{**In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”**  >>>**The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days,** being tempted by Satan**.**<<<**And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.**}<<  **Now after John was arrested,**{**Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and**>**the kingdom of God is at hand;**>>**repent and believe**<<**in the gospel.”**<}  **Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee,**>**he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “**{>>**Follow me,**<<**and**>>>**I will make you become**<<< **fishers of men.” And immediately they left their nets and followed him.**}  **And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.**<  And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. **And**>**they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority,**<**and not as the scribes.** And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”  But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him.  And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.  And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.  That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.  And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, and they found him and said to him, “Everyone is looking for you.”  **And he said to them,**>**“Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.”** And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.  **And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, “If you will,**{**you can make me clean**}**.”**  **Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, “I will; be clean.” And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.**<  And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, and said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them.” But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.  And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them.>**And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. And**>>{**when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your** sins **are forgiven.”**}<< <  Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their  hearts, “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”  And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”  He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. And as he passed by**,**>**he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.**<  And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?”    And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, **“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.**>**I came not to call the righteous, but** sinners<**.”**  Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. And people came and said to him, “Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?”  And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.  No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins—and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins.”  One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. And the Pharisees were saying to him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?”  And he said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?”  And he said to them, **“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.** So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”  **Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come here.”**  And he said to them, **“Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to** kill**?” But they were silent.**    **And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.** **The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.**    Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea and from beyond the Jordan and from around Tyre and Sidon. When the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him. And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they crush him, for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him. **And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.” And he strictly ordered them not to make him known.**    **And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out** demons**.** **He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder**); Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.  **Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind.”**  And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.”  And he called them to him and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.>**“Truly, I say to you, all** sins **will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit** never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin**”**    **— for they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.”**<  And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you.”  And he answered them,>**“Who are my mother and my brothers?”**  **And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For**>>>{**whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.”**}<<<<  Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: “Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”    And he said,“He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”  And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them,>**“To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but** for those outside **everything is in parables, so that “‘they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand,** lest they should turn and be forgiven.**’”**  And he said to them, **“Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?**< >**The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear,** Satan immediately comes **and** takes away **the word that is sown in them**<**.**>>>{**And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when** tribulation **or** persecution **arises on account of the word,**  >>>>**immediately they** fall **away.**<<<<**And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and** choke t**he word, and**>>>>it proves unfruitful**.**<<<<**But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and**  >>>>**accept it** and **bear fruit,**<<<<thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold**.”**}<<<  And he said to them,>**“Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light.** If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”<    And he said to them,>>**“Pay attention to what you hear:**{**with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. For to the one who has, more will be given,**}**and from the one who has not,** even what he has will be taken away**.”**<<  And he said,>**“The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But**>>{when the grain is ripe, **at once he puts in the sickle, because** the harvest has come**.”**}<< <    And he said,>>{**“With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”**}<<  With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. **He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.**  On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was.>**And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are** perishing**?”**  {**And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.**  He said to them,>>**“Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”**<<  **And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”**}<  They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.  And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. And crying out with a loud voice, he said, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.” For he was saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”  And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”  He replied, “My name is Legion, for we are many.” And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country.  Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him, saying, “Send us to the pigs; let us enter them.” So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.  The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region.  As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. And he did not permit him but said to him, “Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.  And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet and implored him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live.” And he went with him.  And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. **And there was a woman** who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. **She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said,**>**“If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.” And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.**<  **And Jesus,**>**perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him,**< **immediately turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my garments?”**  **And his disciples said to him,**>{**“You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, ‘Who touched me?’”**}<  **And he looked around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. And he said to her,** >**“Daughter,**{>>**your faith has made you well;**<<**go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”**}<  **While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said,**>**“Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?”**  But overhearing what they said, **Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue,**>>>{**“Do not fear, only believe.”**}<<<<  And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. And when he had entered, he said to them, “Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him.  But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. Taking her by the hand he said to her, “Talitha cumi,” which means, “Little girl, I say to you, arise.” And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.  He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying,  **“Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands?** **Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.**  **And Jesus said to them,**>**“A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.” And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them.**<**And**>>**he marveled because of their unbelief.**<<  **And he went about among the villages teaching. And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.**  **He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts— but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. And he said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.”**  **So**>**they went out and proclaimed that**>>{**people should repent**}<<**.**<**And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.**  King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, “John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him.”  But others said, “He is Elijah.”  And others said, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.”  But when Herod heard of it, he said, “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.”  **For it was Herod who had sent and seized John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her. For John had been saying to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.” And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death. But she could not, for**>>{**Herod** feared **John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly.**}<<  But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. For when Herodias's daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests.  And the king said to the girl, “Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you.” And he vowed to her, “Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom.”  And she went out and said to her mother, “For what should I ask?”  And she said, “The head of John the Baptist.”  And she came in immediately with haste to the king and asked, saying, “I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.”  And the king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. And immediately the king sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.  The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.  And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.  And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.”  But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.”  And they said to him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?”  And he said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.”  And when they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.”  Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.  Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray.  And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them.>**And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, for they all saw him and were terrified.**  **But immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.” And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for**{**they did not understand about the loaves, but**>>**their hearts were hardened**<<}**.**<  **When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.**    Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.)  And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?”  And he said to them, **“Well did Isaiah prophesy of**>**you hypocrites, as it is written, “‘This people honors me with their lips, but** their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me**,**>>**teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’**<<**You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”**<  And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, “Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban”’ (that is, given to God)— then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”  And he called the people to him again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand: There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.”  And when he had entered the house and left the people,>**his disciples asked him about the parable. And he said to them, “Then are you also without understanding**?<Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.)  And he said,^^{**“What comes out of a person is what** defiles **him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come** evil **thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these** evil **things come from within, and** they defile **a person.”**}<<  And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. **And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden.** **But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet.** Now the woman was **a Gentile**, a Syrophoenician by birth. **And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter.**  And he said to her, **“Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.”**  But she answered him,>{**“Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.”**  And he said to her, **“**>>>**For this statement**<<<**you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter.”**}<  And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.  Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him.  And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly.  And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, “He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.”  In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them, “I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away.”  And his disciples answered him, “How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?”  And he asked them, “How many loaves do you have?”  They said, “Seven.”  And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd. And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away. And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.  The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, “Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.” And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.  Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. And he cautioned them, saying,>>**“Watch out; beware of** the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod**.”**<<  And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread.  And Jesus, aware of this, said to them,>{**“Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread?**>>**Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts** hardened**? Having eyes do you** not see**, and having ears do you** not hear**?**<<**And do you not remember?** When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?”  They said to him, “Twelve.”  “And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?”  And they said to him, “Seven.”  And he said to them,>>**“Do you not yet understand?”**<<}<  And they came to Bethsaida. And **some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him,** **“Do you see anything?”**  And he looked up and said, **“I see people, but they look like trees, walking.”**  Then **Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again;** **and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.** **And he sent him to his home, saying, “Do not even enter the village.”**  And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?”  And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.”  And he asked them, **“But who do you say that I am?”**  **Peter answered him, “**You are the Christ**.”**  **And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.**  **And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.**  But turning and seeing his disciples,he rebuked Peter and said,>{**“Get behind me,** Satan! **For** you are n**ot setting your mind on the things of God, but**>>**on the things of man.**<<**”**}<  **And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them,**  >>>{**“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his** cross **and follow me. For whoever would save his life will** lose it**, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.**} **For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and** forfeit his soul**? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and** sinful **generation, of him will the Son of Man also be** ashamed **when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”**<<<  **And he said to them, “Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.”**  **And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.**  **And Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified.**  **And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud,** >**“This is my beloved Son; listen to him.”**<  **And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.**  **And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the** dead**. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean.**  **And they asked him, “Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?”**  **And he said to them, “Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should** suffer many things **and be treated with contempt? But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him.”**  **And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him.**  **And he asked them, “**What are you arguing about with them?**”**  And someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.”  And he answered them,>>{**“O** faithless **generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?**}**Bring him to me.”**<<    And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth.  And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?”  **And he said, “From childhood. And**{>>it has often cast him into fire and into water**, to** destroy **him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”**  **And Jesus said to him, “‘If you can’!**>>>**All things are possible for one who believes**<<<**.”**  **Immediately the father of the child cried out and said,**>>>**“**I **believe; help my unbelief!”**<<< And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, **“You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and**>>>**never enter him again**<<<**.”**<<}  And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.  And when he had entered the house, **his disciples asked him privately, “**Why could we not cast it out?**”**  And he said to them, **“**This kind **cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”**  They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know, for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.” But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.  And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, **“What were you discussing on the way?” But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.**  And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them,{**“If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.”**}  And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.” **John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” But Jesus said, “Do not stop him, for** no one who does a **mighty work** in **my name will be able soon afterward to speak** evil **of me. For the one who is not against us is for us. For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.**    >>**“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to** sin**, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.**<<{>>>**And if your hand causes you to** sin**, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to** go to hell**, to** the unquenchable fire**. And if your foot causes you to** sin**, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be** thrown into hell**. And if your eye causes you to** sin, **tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be** thrown into hell**, ‘**where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched**.’**<<<**For**  >>>>**everyone will be salted with** fire**.**<<<<}    >>{**Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”**}<<  And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them.  And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”  He answered them, “What did Moses command you?”  They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.”  And Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”  And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. And he said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”  And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.>{**Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child** shall not enter it**.”**}< **And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.**  And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him,>**“Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”**  And Jesus said to him, **“Why do you call me good?**>>>{**No one is good except God alone.**}<<<**You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’”**  And he said to him, **“Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.”**    **And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”**  **Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.**  And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, **“How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!”**  **And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! 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.”**  **And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?”**  Jesus looked at them and said, **“With man it is impossible, but not with God. For**>>>{**all things are possible with God**}<<<**.”**  **Peter began to say to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you.”**  Jesus said, **“Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands,**>>**with** persecutions**,**<<**and in the age to come eternal life.**<But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”  >>**And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will** condemn him to death **and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will** mock him **and** spit on him**, and** flog him **and** kill him**. And after three days he will rise.”**<<  And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.”  And he said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?”  And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”  Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?”  And they said to him, “We are able.”  And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”  And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you.^{**But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to** give his life **as a ransom for many.”**}<    >{**And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”**  **And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”**  **And Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”**  **And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.” And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.**  And Jesus said to him, **“What do you want me to do for you?”**  And **the blind man said to him, “Rabbi, let me recover my sight.”**  And Jesus said to him, **“Go your way;**>>**your faith has made you well.”**<< **And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.**}<  Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’”  And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. And some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”  And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.  >>**On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. And he said to it, “**May no one ever eat fruit from you again.**”**<<**And his disciples heard it.**  **And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. And he was teaching them and saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.”**  And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching. And when evening came they went out of the city.  >**As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree** withered away to its roots**. And Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.”**  And Jesus answered them,{>>>**“Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer,**>>>>**believe that you have received it,**<<<<**and it will be yours.**<<<**And whenever you stand praying,**>>>**forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your** trespasses**.”**<<<}<  And they came again to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him, and they said to him, “By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?”  Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? Answer me.”  And they discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But shall we say, ‘From man’?”—they were afraid of the people, for they all held that John really was a prophet.  So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.”  And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”  And he began to speak to them in parables. “A man planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower, and leased it to tenants and went into another country. When the season came, he sent a servant to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent to them another servant, and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully. And he sent another, and him they killed. And so with many others: some they beat, and some they killed.  He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’  But those tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard.  What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. Have you not read this Scripture: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”  And they were seeking to arrest him but feared the people, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them. So they left him and went away.  And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to trap him in his talk. And they came and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?”  But, knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, “Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.” And they brought one. And he said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?”  They said to him, “Caesar's.”  Jesus said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.”  And they marveled at him.  And Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection. And they asked him a question, saying, “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife, but leaves no child, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. There were seven brothers; the first took a wife, and when he died left no offspring. And the second took her, and died, leaving no offspring. And the third likewise. And the seven left no offspring. Last of all the woman also died. In the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be? For the seven had her as wife.”  Jesus said to them, “Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living. You are quite wrong.”  And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him,>>**“Which commandment is the most important of all?”**  **Jesus answered,**>>>>{**“The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’**}<<<<>>>**The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’**<<<**There is no other commandment greater than these.”**  **And the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”**  **And**>>>{**when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.**}<<<**” And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.**  And as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, “How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? David himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared, “‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.”’ David himself calls him Lord. So how is he his son?”  **And the great throng heard him gladly.**<<  And in his teaching he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”  And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny.  And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”  And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!”  And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”  And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?”  And Jesus began to say to them,>“**See that no one leads you astray.**< Many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.  >>**“But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and** you will be beaten **in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them.** And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. **And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.**<<  **And**>>{**brother will deliver brother over to** death**, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them** put to death**. And** you will be hated by all **for my name's sake. But**>>>**the one who endures to the end will be saved.**<<<}<<  “But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let the one who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything out, and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that it may not happen in winter.>>{**For in those days there will be such** tribulation **as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be. And if the Lord had not cut short the days,**>>>**no human being would be saved.**<<<**But for the sake of** the elect, **whom he chose, he shortened the days.**<And then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. For **false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders,**>>>**to lead astray,**<<<**if possible,** the elect**. But** **be on guard;**}<<**I have told you all things beforehand.**    **“But in those days, after that** tribulation**, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.**  **And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then he will send out the angels and gather his** elect **from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.**  **“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates.** Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. **Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.**  >>{**“But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.**>>>**Be on guard, keep awake.**<<<**For you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge,**>>>**each with his work,**<<<**and commands the doorkeeper to**>>>**stay awake.**<<<  **Therefore**>>>**stay awake**<<<**—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—** lest he come suddenly and find you asleep**. And what I say to you I say to all:**>>>**Stay awake.**<<<**”**}<<  It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him, for they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people.”  And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head.  There were some who said to themselves indignantly, “Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they scolded her.    But Jesus said,>**“Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has  done a beautiful thing to me.** For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do **good** for them. But **you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial.**<And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.”  Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. And when they heard it, they were glad and promised to give him money. And he sought an opportunity to betray him.  And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, “Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?”  And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us.”  And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.  And when it was evening, he came with the twelve. And as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.”  They began to be sorrowful and to say to him one after another, “Is it I?”  He said to them, “It is one of the welve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me. For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.”  And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said,>>**“Take; this is my** body**.”**<<    And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it.  And he said to them,>>**“This is my** blood **of the covenant, which is** poured out **for many.**<<**Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”**  **And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.**  **And Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away, for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.”**  **Peter said to him, “Even though they all fall away, I will not.”**  **And Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.”**  >>**But he said emphatically, “If I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And they all said the same.**<<  **And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” And** he **took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to** death**. Remain here and watch.”**  **And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”**  **And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour?**>>{**Watch and pray that you may not enter into** temptation**. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”**}<<  And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him.  And he came the third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”  And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the  chief priests and the scribes and the elders.  Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard.” And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, “Rabbi!” And he kissed him. And they laid hands on him and seized him. But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.  And Jesus said to them, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? **Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me.**>>**But let the Scriptures be fulfilled.”** **And they all left him and fled.**  **And a young man followed him, with nothing but a linen cloth about his body. And they seized him, but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.**<<  And they led Jesus to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire.  Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree.  And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’”  Yet even about this their testimony did not agree. And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” But he remained silent and made no answer.  **Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?”**  **And Jesus said, “I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”**  **And the high priest tore his garments and said, “What further witnesses do we need? You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?”**  **And they all condemned him as deserving** death**. And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, “Prophesy!” And the guards received him with blows.**  And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came, and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him  and said, “You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus.”  But he denied it, saying, “I neither know nor understand what you mean.”  And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed. And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, “This man is one of them.” But again he denied it.  And after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, “Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.”  But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know this man of whom you speak.”  And immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.” And he broke down and wept.  And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. And they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate.  And Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”  And he answered him, “You have said so.”  And the chief priests accused him of many things. And Pilate again asked him, “Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you.”  But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.  Now at the feast he used to release for them one prisoner for whom they asked. And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas. And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them.  And he answered them, saying, “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” For he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead.  **And Pilate again said to them, “Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?”**  **And they cried out again, “**Crucify **him.”**  **And Pilate said to them, “Why? What** evil **has he done?”**  **But they shouted all the more, “**Crucify **him.”**  So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and **having** scourged Jesus**, he delivered him to be** crucified**.**  **And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion. And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. And they began to salute him, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him.**  **And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take.**  **And it was the third hour when they crucified him. And the inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.” And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, “Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!”**  **So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.**  >>{**And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means,“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”**  **And some of the bystanders hearing it said, “Behold, he is calling Elijah.”**  **And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.”**  **And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.**  **And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”**}<<  There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.  And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph. And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was laid.  When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?”  {**And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed.**  **And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here.**}See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.”  And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.  Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.  After these things he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.  **Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and**>**he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen.**<  **And he said to them,**>>{**“Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.**>>>**Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe** will be condemned<<<**.**}<<And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”  **So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.**>{**And they went out and preached everywhere,**>>>**while the Lord worked with them**<<<}**and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.**<  **============** **Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us,** just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, **it seemed good to me also,** having followed all things closely for some time past, **to write an orderly account for you,** most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.  In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.  Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense.  And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And >>{**you will have joy and gladness,** **and many will rejoice at his birth,** **for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and**>>>**he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb**<<<. **And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah**>>>, **to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,**<<<**to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”**}<<  **And Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this?** **For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.”**  **And the angel answered him,**>{**“I am Gabriel.**>>>**I stand in the presence of God**<<<}, **and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.** **And behold,** **you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words,** **which will be fulfilled in their time.”**<  And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute.  And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home. After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, “Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.”  **In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!”**  **But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name** >**Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.**< **And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”**  **And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”**  And the angel answered her,>{**“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born**>>**will be called holy**<<**—the Son of God.**}<**And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.**>>>{**For nothing will be impossible with God.”**}<<<  And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.  In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For **behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.**  >{**And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”**}<  And Mary said,>{**“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.**}For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for>>>**he who is mighty has done great things for me**<<<, **and holy is his name.**<  >>>{**And his mercy is for those who fear him**}<<<from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”  And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.  Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.  And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, but his mother answered, “No; he shall be called John.”  And they said to her, “None of your relatives is called by this name.”  And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, “His name is John.” And they all wondered. And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea, and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, “What then will this child be?” For the hand of the Lord was with him.  And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us;>>>{**to show the mercy**}<<< **promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,**{>>>**might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.**<<<**And you, child, will be called**>**the prophet of the Most High;**<**for**>>you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways**, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their** sins, **because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in** darkness **and in the shadow of** death**, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”**<<}  >>**And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.**<<  In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town.  And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.  And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, **I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.** For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”  **And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and**>>**on earth** {**peace among those**>>>**with whom he is pleased!”**<<<}<<  When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.”  And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.  And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.  And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.”  Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in **peace**, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”  And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”  And there was^{**a prophetess**}**, Anna,** the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, **having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four.**^^^{**She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day**}<<<**.**<And coming  up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.  And when they had performed everything according to **the Law of the Lord,** they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.>>**And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.**<<  Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.>>**And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem.** His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. **After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.**<<And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you **in great distress.”**  **And he said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that**>>**I must be in my Father's house**<<**?” And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them.**  **And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive** **to them.** And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.  In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas,>**the word of God came to John** the son of Zechariah **in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of**>>**repentance**<<**for the forgiveness of** sins**. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness:**>>{**‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.**}<<**Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”**<  >>**He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from** the wrath **to come?** {>>>**Bear fruits in keeping with repentance.**<<<And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, **God** is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.>**Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees.**>>>**Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is** cut down and thrown into the fire**.”**<<<}  >>>{**And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?”**  And he answered them, **“Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.”**  **Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him,** **“Teacher, what shall we do?”**  And he said to them**, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.”**  **Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?”**  **And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”**}<<<<  As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, John answered them all, saying, **“I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.** {>>>**He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit**>>>>**and** fire<<<<. **His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will** burn with unquenchable fire**.”**<<<}**So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people.**  But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.  >>>{**Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”**  **Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph,** the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Sala, the son of Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Arni, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.    **And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days,** being tempted by the devil. **And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry.**  The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.”  And Jesus answered him**, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’”**<<<  And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. **If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.”**  And Jesus answered him**, “It is written, “‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.’”**}  And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, “‘He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’ and “‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’”  And Jesus answered him, **“It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”**  >{**And when the** devil **had ended every** temptation**,**>>**he departed from him until an opportune time**<<**.**}<  **And**>>>{**Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit**}<<<**to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.**  **And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,**>>>{**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”**}<<<  **And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them,** **“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”**  And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph's son?”  And he said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘“Physician, heal yourself.” What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.’”  And he said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”  When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And>**they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff.** But passing through their midst, he went away.<  And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority.  And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, “Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”  But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm.  And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!” And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.  And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them.  Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.  And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them, but he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.” And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.  On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat.  And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”  And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.”  And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.  But>**when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a** sinful **man, O Lord.” For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken,** and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.  **And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.”**<And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.  While he was in one of the cities,>**there came a man full of leprosy.** **And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, “Lord, if you will,**{**you can make me clean**}**.”**  **And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I will; be clean.” And immediately the leprosy left him.**<  And he charged him to tell no one, but “go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to them.”  But now even more the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.  On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem.>{**And the power of the Lord was with him to heal.**}<**And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed,** and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd,>**they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus.**    **And**>>{**when he saw their faith, he said, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.**}<<**”**<  And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but **God** alone?”  When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, “Why do you question in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the man who was paralyzed—“I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.” And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen extraordinary things today.”  After this **he** went out and>**saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him,**{**“Follow me.” And leaving everything, he rose and followed him.**}<  And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”    And Jesus answered them, **“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.**>**I have not come to call the righteous but** sinners **to repentance.”**<  And they said to him, “The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink.”  And Jesus said to them, “Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.”  He also told them a parable: “No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, ‘The old is good.’”  On a Sabbath, while he was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. But some of the Pharisees said, “Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?”  And Jesus answered them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him?” And he said to them, “The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.”  On another Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered. And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find a reason to accuse him. But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come and stand here.” And he rose and stood there.  And Jesus said to them, “I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?”  And after looking around at them all he said to him, “Stretch out your hand.” And he did so, and his hand was restored. But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.  In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.  **And he came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured.**>{**And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all.**}<    **And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:**>>>{**“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.**}<<<>**“Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. “Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. “Blessed are you when people** hate **you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as** evil**, on account of the Son of Man!**  **Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.** “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. “Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep**. “**{Woe to you, **when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.**}<  “But I say to you who hear,^^{**Love your enemies, do good to those who** hate **you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.**}<<  >>{**“If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even** sinners **love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even** sinners **do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even** sinners **lend to** sinners**, to get back the same amount. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and**>>>**you will be sons of the Most High**<<<, **for he is kind to the ungrateful and the** evil**.**>>>**Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful**<<<**.**}<<  >>>{**“Judge not, and you will not be** judged**; condemn not, and you will not be** condemned**; forgive, and you will be forgiven;**}<<< >>{**give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”**}<<  He also told them a parable:>**“Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?**<A disciple is not above his teacher, but>>>{**everyone** when he is fully trained will be like **his teacher.**}<<<  Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? **You hypocrite,**^**first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.**<  >>>{**“For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the** evil **person out of his** evil **treasure produces** evil**, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.**}<<<  >>>{**“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’** and not do what I tell you**? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house** and could not shake it, because it had been well built**. But the one who hears and does** not **do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it,** immediately it fell**, and the ruin of that house was great.”**}<<<  After he had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. **Now a centurion had a servant who was** sick **and at the point of** death**, who was highly valued by him**. When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying,{>>>**“He is worthy to have you do this for him, for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue.” And Jesus went with them.**<<<  When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him,>>**“Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed.**}**For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”**  When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, **“I tell you, not even in Israel have I found**>>>{**such faith**}<<<**.”**<<And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.  Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.”  Then **he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said,**>>**“Young man, I say to you, arise.” And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.**  **Fear seized them all,** **and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has arisen among us!” and “God has visited his people!”**<<And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.  The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?”  And when the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?’”  In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”  When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings' courts. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, “‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’>>>{**I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John.**>>>>**Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God** is greater than he.**”**<<<<  **(When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just, having been baptized with the baptism of John, but the Pharisees and the lawyers** rejected the purpose of God for themselves, **not having been baptized by him.)**}<<<    ^**“To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, “‘We played the flute for you, and** you did not dance**; we sang a dirge,** and you did not weep**.’ For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by** all her children**.”**<  One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment.  **Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.”**  And Jesus answering said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.”  And he answered, “Say it, Teacher.”  “A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?”  Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt.”  And he said to him, “You have judged rightly.”  Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman?>>{**I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.**>>>**Therefore I tell you, her** sins, **which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much.**<<<**But he who is forgiven little, loves little.”**  **And he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”**  Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, “Who is this, who even forgives sins?”  And he said to the woman,>>>**“Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”**<<<}<<  Soon afterward **he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him,**^^{**and also some women who had been healed of** evil **spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven** demons **had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means.**}<<    And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable, “A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold.”  As he said these things, he called out,>“He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”  And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, he said, **“To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’**<    Now the parable is this:{>**The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the** devil **comes and takes away the word from their hearts,** so that they may not **believe and be saved.**<>>>**And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root;**>>>>**they believe for a while, and in time of testing** fall away**.**<<<<**And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way** they are choked **by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and** >>>>**their fruit does not mature.**<<<<**As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word,**>>>>**hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience**<<<<**.**<<<}    {>**“No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light.** For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. **Take care then how you hear,**<**for**>>**to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who** has not, **even what he thinks that he has will be** taken away.”<<}  Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. And he was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.”  But he answered them,>>>{**“My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”**}<<<  One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side of the lake.” So they set out, and as they sailed he fell asleep.>{**And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger.**  And they went and woke him, saying, **“Master, Master, we are perishing!”**  **And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. He said to them, “Where is your faith?”**}<  **And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, “Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?”**  Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me.” For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.)  Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?”  And he said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him. And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss.  Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.  When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned.  The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, “Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.” **And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.**  **Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.**  **As Jesus went, the people pressed around him. And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone. She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased.**  >{**And Jesus said, “Who was it that touched me?”**  **When all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!”**  **But Jesus said,**>>**“Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me.”**<<  **And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him,** **and how she had been immediately healed.** And he said to her, **“Daughter,**>>**your faith has made you well**<<**; go in peace.”**}<  **While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said,**>**“Your daughter is** dead**; do not trouble the Teacher any more.”**    But Jesus on hearing this answered him,>>{**“Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well.”**}<<<  And when he came to the house, he allowed no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. And all were weeping and mourning for her, but he said, “Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping.”  And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But taking her by the hand he called, saying, “Child, arise.” And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat. And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.  >**And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all** demons **and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. And he said to them, “Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics. And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them.” And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.**<  Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead, by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen. Herod said, “John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?” And he sought to see him.  On their return the apostles told him all that they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida. When the crowds learned it, they followed him, and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing.  Now the day began to wear away, and the twelve came and said to him, “Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions, for we are here in a desolate place.”  But he said to them, “You give them something to eat.”  They said, “We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.” For there were about five thousand men.  And he said to his disciples, “Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.” And they did so, and had them all sit down. And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.  Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, “Who do the crowds say that I am?”  And they answered, “John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.”  Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”  And Peter answered, “The Christ of God.”  And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, **“The Son of Man must** suffer **many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be** killed**, and on the third day be raised.”**  And he said to all,{>>>**“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his** cross **daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life** will lose it**, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.**<<<>>>**For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and** loses or forfeits himself**? For** whoever is ashamed of me and of my words**, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.**<<<}But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see **the kingdom of God.”**  Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and>{**went up on the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of** his departure**, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.**}<Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said.  As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. **And a voice came out of the cloud, saying,**>**“This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!”**<And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.  On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him. And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.”  >>**Jesus answered, “**{**O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you?**}<<**Bring your son here.”**  While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. And all were astonished at the majesty of God.  But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, “Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.” But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.  An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side and said to them, “Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For^{**he who is least among you all is the one who is great.”**}<  John answered, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us.”  But Jesus said to him, “Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is for you.”  {**When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.**}And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. But the people did not receive him, because **his face was set toward Jerusalem**. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” But he turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village.  **As they were going along the road, someone said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.”**  And Jesus said to him, **“Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”**  To another he said, **“Follow me.”**  But he said,>>{**“Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”**  And Jesus said to him, **“Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”**}<<  >>>Yet another said,{**“I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.”**  Jesus said to him, **“No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”**}<<<  **After this the Lord appointed** seventy-two others **and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.**  **Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house.**  **Whenever you enter a town and they receive you,** **eat what is set before you.**>**Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’**<**But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you.**{**Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.**}**’ I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.**  **“**Woe to you**, Chorazin**!Woe to you**, Bethsaida**! **For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable in the** judgment **for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to** Hades**.**  **“The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you** rejects me**, and the one who** rejects merejects him who sent me**.”**  The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!”  And he said to them,>**“I saw** Satan **fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all** the power of the enemy**, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but**>>>{**rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”**}<<<<  >**In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.**<    **All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and**>>>{**no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father**>>>>**is**<<<<  **except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.**}<<<**”**  Then turning to the disciples he said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”  >{**And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”**  He said to him, **“What is written in the Law?**>>>**How do you read it?”**<<<  And he answered,>>**“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”**  And he said to him, **“You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”**<<  But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”  Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’    **Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?”**  He said, **“The one who showed him mercy.”**  And Jesus said to him,>>>**“You go, and do likewise.**<<<**”**}<  Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called >>**Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching.** But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.”  But the Lord answered her, **“Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”**<<  Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”  And he said to them, **“When you pray, say:**{**“Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread, and**  >>>**forgive us our** sins**, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into** temptation**.”**<<<}  And he said to them, **“Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’;**  **And**>>**he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’? I tell you,**{**though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet**>>>**because of his impudence**<<<**he will rise and give him whatever he needs**}**.**  **And I tell you,**>>>{**ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.**}<<<  What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?{**If you then, who are** evil**, know how to give good gifts to your children,**>>>**how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”**<<<}<<  Now he was casting out a demon that was mute. When the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke, and the people marveled. But some of them said, “He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons,” while others, to test him, kept seeking from him a sign from heaven.  But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls. And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.  When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe; but when one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil.  ^{Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters**.**}<  “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house swept and put in order. Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that person is worse than the first.”    As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!”  But he said,>>>{**“Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”**}<<<  When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, “This generation is an evil generation. It seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.  >>{**“No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light.**}<<>{**Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad,** your body is full of darkness**. Therefore** be careful lest the light in you be darkness**. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part** dark**, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.”**}<    While Jesus was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to dine with him, so he went in and reclined at table. The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash before dinner.    And the Lord said to him,>**“Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but** inside you are full of greed and wickedness**.** **You fools!** Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? **But give as alms those things that are within, and behold, everything is clean for you.**  **“But** woe to you Pharisees! **For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God.** These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.  Woe to you Pharisees! **For you love the best seat in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces.**  Woe to you! **For you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without knowing it.”**  One of the lawyers answered him, “Teacher, in saying these things you insult us also.”  And he said, “Woe to you lawyers also! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers.    Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed. So you are witnesses and you consent to the deeds of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their tombs. Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,’ so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation.    Woe to you lawyers! **For you have taken away the key of knowledge.** You did not enter **yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering.”**<    As he went away from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard and to provoke him to speak about many things, lying in wait for him, to catch him in something he might say.  In the meantime, when so many thousands of the people had gathered together that they were trampling one another, he began to say to his disciples first, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.  >>{**“I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who** kill **the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do.**>>>>**But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has** killed**, has authority** to cast into hell**. Yes, I tell you, fear him!**<<<<**Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why,** >>>**even the hairs of your head are all numbered.**<<<**Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.**}<<  >>>{**“And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God, but** the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God**.**}<<<>>**And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit** will not be forgiven**.**<<  >**And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”**<  Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”  But he said to him, **“Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?”** **And he said to them,**^**“Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”**<  And he told them a parable, saying, **“The land of a rich man produced plentifully,** and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’  And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.>>**And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”’**  **But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul** is required of you**, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’**  **So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and** is not rich toward God**.”**<<  And he said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?  Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, >**O you of little faith!** And **do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead,**>>>{**seek his kingdom**}<<<, **and these things will be added to you.**<  ^^^{**“Fear not, little flock, for**>>>**it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give to the needy.**<<< **Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**}<<<  >>>{**“Stay dressed for action and keep your** lamps burning**, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”**    Peter said, “Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?”  **And the Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom**  **his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. But if that servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed in coming,’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and** put him with the unfaithful**.**}<<<  ^{**And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.**}<  **“**{**I came to cast** fire **on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!**}**Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”**  He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, ‘A shower is coming.’ And so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat,’ and it happens. You hypocrites! **You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?**  >>{**“And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison. I tell you,** you will never get out until you have paid the very last penny**.”**}<<  There were some present at that very time who told him about **the Galileans whose** blood **Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.** And he answered them, **“Do you think that these Galileans were worse** sinners **than all the other Galileans, because they** suffered **in this way? No, I tell you; but**>>{**unless you repent, you will all likewise** perish**.**}<<**Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and** killed **them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but**>>{**unless you repent, you will all likewise** perish**.”**}<<  **And he told this parable:**>>>{**“A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?’**  **And he answered him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not,** you can cut it down**.’”**}<<<  Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, “Woman, you are freed from your disability.” And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she **glorified God.**  But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, “There are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.”  Then the Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?”  As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame, and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.  **He said therefore,**>>{**“What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.”**}<<  **And again he said,**>>{**“To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened.”**}<<  He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem.>>>{**And someone said to him, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?”**  **And he said to them,**>>>>**“Strive to** enter **through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to** enter **and** will not be able**.**<<<<**When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us,’**  **then he will answer you, ‘**I do not know where you come from.**’**  **Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.’**  **But he will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from.** Depart from me, all you workers of evil!**’**  In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth**, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but** you yourselves cast out**. And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.**}<<<**And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”**  **At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to** kill **you.”**  **And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should** perish **away from Jerusalem.’**  O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’”  One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully. And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?” But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away.  And he said to them, “Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?” And they could not reply to these things.  Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, “When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you.  ^^{**For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”**}<<  He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But^{**when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”**}<  **When one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, “Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!”**  But he said to him,>{**“A man once gave a great banquet and invited many.** And at the time for the banquet **he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’**    >>**But** they all alike began to make excuses**.** The first said to him, **‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it.** Please have me excused.**’**  And another said, **‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them.** Please have me excused.**’**  And another said, **‘I have married a wife, and** therefore I cannot come.**’**<<  So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then **the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’**  And the servant said, ‘Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’  And the master said to the servant, **‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you,**>>none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet**.’**<<**”**}<    >>{**Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life,** he cannot be my disciple**.**>>>**Whoever does not bear his own** cross **and come after me** cannot be my disciple**.**<<<}<<  For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’  >>{**Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.**>>>>**So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has** cannot be my disciple**.**<<<<}<<  >>>{**“Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?** It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away.}<<<  >{He who has ears to hear, let him hear**.”**  **Now the tax collectors and** sinners **were all drawing near to hear him.**}<And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”  So he told them this parable: “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.  “Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”  And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them.  Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.  “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’ And he arose and came to his father.  But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.  And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’  But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate.  For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate. “Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’  But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’  And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”  He also said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions. And he called him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.’  And the manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.’  So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’  He said, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’  He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’  Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’  He said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’  He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’  **The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.**>>>{**And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.**}<<<  >>{**“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.**>>>**If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?**<<<**And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?**}<<  >>>{**No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.**}**You cannot serve God and money.”**<<<  ^**The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. And he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For**^^{**what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.**}<<<  >{**“The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and**>>>**everyone forces his way into it.**<<<**But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void.**}<  “Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.    >**“There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.**  **The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in** torment**, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this** flame**.’**  **But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’**  And he said, **‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house— for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’**  But Abraham said, **‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’**  And he said, **‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’**  He said to him,{**‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the** dead**.’**}**”**<  And he said to his disciples,>>**“Temptations to** sin **are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come**! **It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to** sin**. Pay attention to yourselves!**<<  >>{**If your brother** sins**, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he** sins **against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’**>>>**you must forgive him**<<<**.”**}<<  >>>**The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”**  And the Lord said,{**“If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.**}<<<  ^^^**“Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and recline at table’? Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink’? Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”**<<<  **On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.”**  When he saw them he said to them, **“Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed.**  **Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan.**  Then Jesus answered,>{**“Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?”** And he said to him, **“Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well**}<**.”**  **Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them,**>>>{**“The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.”**}<<<  And he said to the disciples, “The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. **And they will say to you, ‘Look, there!’ or ‘Look, here!’** **Do not go out or follow them. For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. But first he must** suffer many things **and be rejected by this generation.**  >{**Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and** destroyed **them all.**  **Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and** destroyed **them all—**}<  >{**so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away, and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back. Remember Lot's wife.**>>>Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it**, but whoever loses his life will keep it.**<<<**I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed. One will be taken and** the other left**. There will be two women grinding together. One will be taken and** the other left**.”**}<  And they said to him, “Where, Lord?”  He said to them, “Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.”  {**And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.** He said, “In a certain city **there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man.** **And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’**  **For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’”**  And the Lord said, **“Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And**>>**will not God give justice to his** elect**, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.**<<**Nevertheless,**>>>**when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”**<<<}  >**He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: “Two men went up into the temple to pray,** one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’**  **But**>>>**the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a** sinner**!’   I tell you, this man went down to his house justified,**<<<**rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”**<  Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying,>>{**“Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child** shall notenter it**.”**}<<  >**And a ruler asked him,** **“Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”**  And Jesus said to him, **“Why do you call me good?**>>>{**No one is good except God alone.**}<<<**You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.’”**  And he said, **“All these I have kept from my youth.”**  When Jesus heard this, he said to him, **“One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”**  **But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, said, “How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! For 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.”**  Those who heard it said,{**“Then who can be saved?”**  But he said,>>**“What is impossible with man is possible with God.”**<<<    >>**And Peter said, “See, we have left our homes and followed you.”**}  And he said to them, **“Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.”**<<  >**And taking the twelve, he said to them, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and** will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon**. And** after flogging him, they will kill him, **and on the third day he will rise.”**  **But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.**<  >{**As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.”**    **And he cried out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”**  **And**>>**those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”**<<  **And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?”**    He said, **“Lord, let me recover my sight.”**  And Jesus said to him,>>**“Recover your sight; your faith has made you well.”**<<**And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God.**}<**And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.**  **He entered Jericho and was passing through. And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way.**  >>>**And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” So he hurried and came down and** received him **joyfully.**  **And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “**He **has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a** sinner**.”**  **And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord,**{>>>>**“Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.”**<<<<    And Jesus said to him, **“Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.**}**For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”**<<<  As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because>>{**they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. He said therefore, “A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Engage in business until I come.’**  **But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’**  When **he returned, having received the kingdom,** he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business.  The first came before him, saying,>>>**‘Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.’**  And he said to him, **‘Well done, good servant!**<<<**Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.’**    And the second came, saying, **‘Lord, your mina has made five minas.’**  And he said to him, **‘And you are to be over five cities.’**  Then another came, saying,>>>**‘Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.’**  **He said to him,** >>>>**‘I will condemn you with your own words,**<<<<you wicked servant!>>>>**You knew**<<<<**that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?’**<<<  And he said to those who stood by, **‘Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.’**  **And they said to him, ‘Lord, he has ten minas!’**  **‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.’”**}<<  And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, saying, “Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’” So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?”  And they said, “The Lord has need of it.”  And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road.  As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God  with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”  And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.”  He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”  And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”  >{**And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of robbers.”**  **And he was teaching daily in the temple.** The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, but they did not find anything they could do, for **all the people were hanging on his words.**  One day, as **Jesus was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel,**}<the chief priests and the scribes with the elders came up and said to him, “Tell us by what authority you do these things, or who it is that gave you this authority.”  He answered them, “I also will ask you a question. Now tell me, was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?”  And they discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From man,’ all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet.”  So they answered that they did not know where it came from.  And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”  And he began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out.  Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’  But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.’ And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.  What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.”  When they heard this, they said, “Surely not!”  But he looked directly at them and said, “What then is this that is written: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”  The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, for they perceived that he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people.  So they watched him and sent spies, who pretended to be sincere, that they might catch him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor. So they asked him, “Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?”  But he perceived their craftiness, and said to them, “Show me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?”  They said, “Caesar's.”  He said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.”  And they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him in what he said, but marveling at his answer they became silent.  There came to him some Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection, and they asked him a question, saying, “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife but no children, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife, and died without children. And the second and the third took her, and likewise all seven left no children and died. Afterward the woman also died. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had her as wife.”  And Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but >>{>>>**those who are considered worthy**<<<**to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the** dead<<**neither marry nor are given in marriage, for**>>**they cannot** die **anymore, because they are equal to angels and**>>>**are sons of God,**<<<**being sons of the resurrection.**}<<But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him.”  Then some of the scribes answered, “Teacher, you have spoken well.” For they no longer dared to ask him any question.  But he said to them, “How can they say that the Christ is David's son? For David himself says in the Book of Psalms, “‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”’ David thus calls him Lord, so how is he his son?”  And in the hearing of all the people he said to his disciples, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”  Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. And he said, “Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.”  And while some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, he said, “As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.” And they asked him,  “Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?”  And he said, “See that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and, ‘The time is at hand!’ Do not go after them. And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once.”  Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.  But before all this>>{they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons**, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be your opportunity to bear witness. Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, for**>>>**I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.**<<<**You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and** some of you they will put to death**.** You will be hated by all **for my name's sake. But not a hair of your head will perish.**>>>**By your endurance you will gain your lives.**<<<}<<  “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.    **“And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.**>>{**Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”**}<<  And he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So also,when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.  Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place.{**Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.**}  >>>{**“But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. For** it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth**. But stay awake at all times,**>>>>**praying that you may**>>>>>**have strength to escape**<<<<<all these things that are going to take place**, and to stand before the Son of Man.**<<<<**”**}<<<  {**And every day he was teaching in the temple, but at night he went out and lodged on the mount called Olivet. And early in the morning all the people came to him in the temple to hear him.**}  Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people. Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd.  Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.”  They said to him, “Where will you have us prepare it?”  He said to them, “Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters and tell the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there.”  And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.  And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”  And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”  And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying,>>**“**This is my body, which is given for you**. Do this in remembrance of me.”**  And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, **“**This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood**.**<<But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!” And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.  A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. And he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you. Rather,^**let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But**^^**I am among you as the one who serves.**<<**“**>>{**You are those who have stayed with me in my** trials**,**<**and**>>>**I assign to you,**>>>>**as my Father assigned to me,**<<<<**a kingdom,**<<<**that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom**}<<**and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**  {>**“Simon, Simon, behold,** Satan **demanded to have you,** that he might sift you like wheat**, but**>>>**I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.**<<<**And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”**<  **Peter said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to** prison **and to** death**.”**}  **Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.”**  And he said to them,{**“When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?”**  They said, **“Nothing.”**  He said to them,>**“But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one.**<}**For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: ‘And he was numbered with the** transgressors**.’ For what is written about me has its fulfillment.”**  And they said, **“Look, Lord, here are two swords.”**  And he said to them, **“It is enough.”**  And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. And when he came to the place, **he said to them,**>>>{**“Pray that you may not enter into** temptation**.”**}<<<And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying,>>{**“Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of** bloodfalling down to the ground**.**}<<  And when he rose from prayer, **he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, and he said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Rise and**>>>{**pray that you may not enter into** temptation**.”**}<<<  While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus said to him, “Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?”  And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, “Lord, shall we strike with the sword?” And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.  But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him.  Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? **When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But**>{this is your hour, and the power of darkness**.”**}<  Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance. And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, “This man also was with him.”  But he denied it, saying, “Woman, I do not know him.”  And a little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.”  But Peter said, “Man, I am not.”  And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, “Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean.”  But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.” And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.  Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him. They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, “Prophesy! Who is it that struck you?” And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him.  **When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council, and they said, “If you are the Christ, tell us.”**  **But he said to them, “**{**If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I ask you, you will not answer.**}**But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.”**  **So they all said, “Are you the Son of God, then?”**  **And he said to them, “You say that I am.”**  Then they said, “What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips.”  Then the whole company of them arose and brought him before Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king.”  **And Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”**  And he answered him, **“You have said so.”**  **Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “I find no guilt in this man.”**  But they were urgent, saying, “He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place.” When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean.  And when he learned that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time.  When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him. So he questioned him at some length, but he made no answer. The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him. Then, arraying him in splendid clothing, he sent him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other.  Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was misleading the people. And after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him. Neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him. I will therefore punish and release him.”  But they all cried out together, “Away with this man, and release to us Barabbas”— a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city and for murder.   **Pilate addressed them once more, desiring to release Jesus, but they kept shouting,** “Crucify, crucify him!”   A third time he said to them, “Why? What evil has he done? I have found in him no guilt deserving death. I will therefore punish and release him.”  But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed. So Pilate decided that their demand should be granted. He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, for whom they asked, but he delivered Jesus over to their will.  And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. But turning to them Jesus said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us,’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”  **Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be** put to death **with him. And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they** crucified **him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said,**^{**“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”**}<**And they cast lots to divide his garments.**    And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!”  The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!”    There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.”  One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying,>{**“Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!”**  **But the other rebuked him, saying,**>>>**“Do you not fear God,**<<<**since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for** **we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.**”  And he said, **“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”**  And he said to him, **“Truly, I say to you,**>>>**today you will be with me in paradise.**<<<**”**}<  >{**It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And having said this he breathed his last.**  **Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, “Certainly this man was innocent!”**}<And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things.  **Now there was a man named Joseph,** from the Jewish town of Arimathea. **He was a member of the council,**>>**a good and righteous man,** **who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God.** **This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.**<<Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning.  The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.  >{**But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the** dead**? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of** sinful **men and** be crucified **and on the third day rise.” And they remembered his words,**}<    and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.  That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.  And he said to them, “What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?”  And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”  And he said to them, “What things?”  And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.”  And he said to them,>{>>**“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe**<<**all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should** suffer these things **and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.**}<  So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them.  When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?”  And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!”  But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. And he said to them,> >>{**“Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?**}<<**See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see.** **For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”**<  And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.{**And while they still disbelieved for joy** **and were** **marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?”**}They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them.    Then he said to them,{**“These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”**}  >{**Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should** suffer **and on the third day rise from the** dead**, and that**>>**repentance for the forgiveness of** sins **should be proclaimed in his name**<<**to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold,**>>>**I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”**<<<}<  And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. **And they worshiped him** and returned to Jerusalem with **great joy,** and were continually in the temple blessing God.  **============**  >{**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.**  **All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.**>>**In him was life, and the life was the light of men.**<<}**The light shines in the** darkness**, and the** darkness **has not overcome it.**<  >**There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.**<He was not the **light**, but came to bear witness about the light.>**The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.**<  **He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.**>>{**But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name,**>>>**he gave the right to become**<<<**children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.**}<<  >{**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.**}<  {**(John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said,** ‘**He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”)**>>>**For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.**<<<}  And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.”  And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?”  He said, “I am not.”  “Are you the Prophet?”  And he answered, “No.”  So they said to him, “Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”  He said,>{**“I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,**>>>**‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’**<<<**as the prophet Isaiah said.”**}<  (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) They asked him, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”  John answered them, “I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”  These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.  >**The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said,**{**“Behold, the Lamb of God,**>>>**who takes away the** sin **of the world!**<<<}<This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.”  **And John bore witness:**>>**“I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.**<<**I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me,**>{**‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is**>>>**he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’**<<<}**And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”**<  **The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”**  **The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.** Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?”  And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?”  He said to them, “Come and you will see.”  So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.  **One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus.**  Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter).  The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.”  Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”  Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”  Philip said to him, “Come and see.”  Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!”  Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?”  Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”  Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”  Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”  On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.”  And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.”  His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”  Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.  Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim.  And he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.”  So they took it. When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.”  This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.  After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples, and they stayed there for a few days.  The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. >{**In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, “Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.”**  **His disciples remembered that it was written,**>>**“Zeal for your house will consume me.”**<<}<    So the Jews said to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?”  Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”  The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.  Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast,>**many believed in**  **his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But** Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.<  Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.”  Jesus answered him,>>{**“Truly, truly, I say to you,** unless one is b**orn again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”**}<<  Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?”  Jesus answered,>>{**“Truly, truly, I say to you,** unless one is b**orn of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and** that which is b**orn of the Spirit is spirit.** Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ >>>**The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”**<<<}<<  Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?”  Jesus answered him, **“Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?** **Truly, truly, I say to you,**>>**we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do** not **receive our testimony.**<<**If I have told you earthly things and you do** not **believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.**>>>{**And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man** be lifted up**, that** whoever believes in him may have e**ternal life.**}<<<  >>{**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that** whoever **believe**s in him should not perish **but** have e**ternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to** condemn **the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.** Whoever believes in him is not condemned**,**}**but whoever does** not **believe** is condemned already**, because he has** not **believed in the name of the only Son of God.**<<**And this is the judgment:**>>>>{**the light has come into the world, and people loved the** darkness **rather than the light because their works were** evil**. For everyone who does** wicked **things hates the light and does** not **come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”**}<<<<  After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing. John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized (for John had not yet been put in prison). Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification. And they came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him.”  John answered, “A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.’ The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease.”  He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way.{**He who comes from heaven is above all. He bears witness to what he has seen and heard**}**, yet** no one receives his testimony**.**{**Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true.** **For**>>>**he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.**<<<**The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.**>>Whoever believes in the Son has e**ternal life; whoever**>>>**does not obey**<<<**the Son** shall not see **life, but the** wrath of God remains on him**.**}<<  Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples), he left Judea and departed again for Galilee.  And he had to pass through Samaria. So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.  A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.)  The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)  Jesus answered her,>{**“If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and**  >>>**he would have given you living water**<<<**.”**}<  The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. **Where do you get that living water?** Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.”    Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,>{**but** **whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The**>>>**water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.**<<<**”**}<  The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”  Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”  The woman answered him, “I have no husband.”   Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”  The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers **worshiped** on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to **worship.**”  Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You **worship** what you do not know; we **worship** what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when^**the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth**<**.”**  The woman said to him, **“I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.”**  Jesus said to her, **“I who speak to you am he.”**  Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you seek?” or, “Why are you talking with her?”  So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” They went out of the town and were coming to him.  Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”  But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.”  So the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought him something to eat?”  ^^^{**Jesus said to them,“My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.**}<<<Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. **Already**{**the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life**}**, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”**  **Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.”** So when the Samaritans came to him,>**they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word.**  They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we b**elieve, for**>>>**we have heard**<<<**for ourselves, and** we know that this is **indeed the Savior of the world.”**<  After the two days he departed for Galilee. (For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown.) So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast.  So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.  So Jesus said to him,>**“Unless you see signs and wonders you will** not **believe.”**<  The official said to him, **“Sir, come down before my child dies.”**  Jesus said to him, **“Go; your son will live.”**  >**The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering.** So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, **“Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.”**  **The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” And he himself believed, and all his household.**<    This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.  After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed.>{**One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.** When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him,>>>**“Do you want to be healed?**<<<**”**}<    The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me.”  Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.” And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.  Now that day was the Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed.”  But he answered them, “The man who healed me, that man said to me, ‘Take up your bed, and walk.’”  They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk’?”  Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place.  ^{**Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you are well!**^^^**Sin no more, that** nothing worse may happen to you**.**<<<**”**}<  The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.  And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them,^^^{**“My Father is working until now, and I am working.”**}<<<This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but>>{**he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.**}<<  So Jesus said to them, **“Truly, truly, I say to you,**>>{**the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.**}<<**For**>>>{**the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing.**}<<<  And greater works than these will he show him, **so that** you may marvel.>{**For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also**>>>**the Son gives life to whom he will**<<<**. For the Father judges no one, but has given all** judgment **to the Son,**}<**that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.**  >>{**Truly, truly, I say to you,** whoever hears my word and b**elieves him who sent me** has **eternal life.** He does not come into judgment**, but** has passed from death to **life.**}<<“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when>{**the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and** those who hear w**ill live. For**>>**as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself**<<**. And he has given him authority to** execute judgment**, because he is the Son of Man.**}<  Do not marvel at this, for{>>>**an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done** evil **to** the resurrection of judgment**.**<<<**“I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.**}  If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true. There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true.  >**You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that**  you may be s**aved. He was a burning and shining lamp, and**>>**you were willing to rejoice for a while in** his l**ight**<<**.**  **But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John.**{**For** **the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me.**>>>**His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, and you do not have his word abiding in you,**<<<**for you do not believe the one whom he has sent. You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet** you refuse to come to me **that you may have life.**}<  **I do not receive glory from people. But**{>>>>**I know that you do not have the love of God within you.**<<<< >>**I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me.** **If another comes in his own name, you will receive him.**<< >>>>**How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?**<<<<}  **Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father.**>{**There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do** not **believe his writings,** how will you **believe my words?”**}<  After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.  Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?” He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.  Philip answered him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.”   One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?”   Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted.  And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, “Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.” So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten.  When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!” Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.  When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. **When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw** Jesus walking on the sea **and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.”** Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.  On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.  When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?”  Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.>>{**Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.”**  Then they said to him,>>>**“What must we do, to be doing the works of God?”**  Jesus answered them,>>>>**“This is the work of God, that** you **believe** in **him whom he has sent**<<<<**.”**<<<}<<  So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”  Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.>>{**For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”**  They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”  **Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life;**>>>whoever comes to me s**hall not hunger, and** whoever believes in me shall never **thirst**<<<. **But I said to you that you have seen me and yet** do not b**elieve.**>>>**All that the Father gives me will come to me,**<<<**and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”**}<<  So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?”  Jesus answered them,>>{**“Do not grumble among yourselves.**>>>**No one can come to me** unless **the Father who sent me draws him.**<<<**And I will raise him up on the last day.**>>>**It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me**<<<**—not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven.**>>>**If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.**<<< **And the bread that I will give for the life of the world** is my flesh**.”**}<<  The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”  So Jesus said to them,>>{**“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his** blood**, you have** no **life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and**>>>**I in him. As the living Father sent me, and** >>>>**I live because of the Father,**<<<<**so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.**<<<**This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died.**>>>**Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.”**<<<}<<**Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.**  When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?”  But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?>>{>>>**It is the Spirit who gives life;**<<<**the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.**<<**But there are some of you who** do not b**elieve.”**}**(For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who** did not b**elieve, and who it was who would betray him.) And he said, “This is why I told you that**{>>>no one can come to me **unless it is granted him by the Father.”**<<<  >**After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.**  So Jesus said to the twelve, **“Do you want to go away as well?”**  **Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go?**>>**You have**>>>**the words of eternal life,**<<<**and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are**>>>**the Holy One of God**<<<.**”**  Jesus answered them,>>>**“Did I not choose you,**<<<**the twelve?**<<}**And yet one of you is a devil.” He spoke of Judas** the son of Simon Iscariot,for he, **one of the twelve,** was going to betray him.  After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand. So his brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.” **For not even his brothers believed in him.**  Jesus said to them, **“**My time has not yet come, **but your time is always here.**^^^{**The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are** evil**.**}<<<**You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come.”** After saying this, he remained in Galilee.    **But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private.** The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, “Where is he?”  And there was much muttering about him among the people. While **some said, “He is a good man,”**  **others said,** **“No, he is leading the people astray.”** Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.  **About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. The Jews therefore** **marveled, saying**,>>**“How is it that this man** **has learning, when he has never studied?”**<<  So Jesus answered them,>>**“My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.**>>>{**If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God**}<<<**or whether I am speaking on my own authority.**<< **The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood.** Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?”  The crowd answered, “You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?”    Jesus answered them, **“I did one work, and you all marvel at it.** Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. **If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision,** so that the law of Moses may not be broken, **are you angry with me because on the Sabbath** I made a man's whole body well? **Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”**  Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, “Is not this the man whom they seek to kill? And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ? But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.”  **So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple,** “You know me, and you know where I come from.But{**I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know. I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me.”**}  **So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.**>**Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, “When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?”**<  The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him.    Jesus then said, “I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come.”  The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What does he mean by saying, ‘You will seek me and you will not find me,’ and, ‘Where I am you cannot come’?”  >{**On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out,**>>{**“If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.**>>>**Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”**<<<**Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive**<<}**, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.**<  >{**When they heard these words, some of the people said, “This really is the Prophet.”**  **Others said, “This is the Christ.”**  But some said, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?” So there was a division among the people over him. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.  **The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why did you not bring him?”**  The officers answered,>>>**“No one ever spoke like this man!”**<<<}<  The Pharisees answered them, “Have you also been deceived? Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.”  Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, “Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?”  They replied, “Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee.”  They went each to his own house,  but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him.  Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground.  But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus stood up and said to her,>**“Woman, where are they? Has no one** condemned **you?”**  She said, **“No one, Lord.”**  And Jesus said, **“Neither do I** condemn **you; go, and**>>>**from now on** sin **no more.**<<<**”**<Again Jesus spoke to them, saying,>>>{**“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not** walk in darkness**, but will have the light of life.”**}<<<  So the Pharisees said to him, “You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true.”  Jesus answered, “Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.”  They said to him therefore, “Where is your Father?”  Jesus answered,>>{**“You know neither me nor my Father.**>>>**If you knew me, you would know my Father also**<<<**.”**}<<**These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple;** **but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.**  So he said to them again, “I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.”  So the Jews said, “Will he kill himself, since he says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come’?”  He said to them,>>**“You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would** die **in your** sins, **for unless you believe that I am he** you will die in your sins.**”**<<  So they said to him, **“Who are you?”**  Jesus said to them, **“Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. I have much to say about you and much to** judge**, but**>**he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.”**<  **They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said to them,**>**“When you have** lifted up **the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that**{**I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me**<**.**>>>**And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.”**<<<}**As he was saying these things, many believed in him.**  **So**>>>{**Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”**}<<<  They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?”  Jesus answered them,>>>{**“Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is** a slave to sin**. The slave** does not remain **in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.**<<<**I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet**>>>**you seek to** kill **me because my word finds no place in you.**<<<>>**I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from** your father**.”**}<<  They answered him, **“Abraham is our father.”**  Jesus said to them,>>>{**“If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did,**<<<**but**>**now you seek to** kill **me,** a man who has told you the **truth that I heard from God.**}**This is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works your father did.”**<  They said to him, **“We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.”**  Jesus said to them, **“If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.**{>>>**Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.**<<<>>**You are of your father the** devil, **and your will is to do your father's desires.**<<He **was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in** him**. When** he **lies,** he **speaks out of his own character, for** he **is a liar and the** father **of lies.**>>>**But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me.**<<<**Which one of you convicts me of** sin**? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?**>>>**Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”**<<<}  The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?”  Jesus answered, **“I do not have a** demon**, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge.**>>>{**Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see** death**.”**}<<<  The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.’ Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?”    Jesus answered, **“If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing.**{**It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’**>>**But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you,**<<**but**>>>**I do know him and I keep his word.**<<<}our father Abraham rejoiced **that he would see** my day. He saw it and was glad.”  So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?”  >>{**Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”**}<<**So they picked up stones to throw at him, but** Jesus hid himself **and went out of the temple.**  **As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who** sinned, **this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”**  Jesus answered, **“It was not that this man** sinned, **or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.**>{**We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day;**>>night is coming**, when no one can work.**<<**As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”**}<  Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.   The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” Some said, “It is he.”  Others said, “No, but he is like him.”  He kept saying, “I am the man.”  So they said to him, “Then how were your eyes opened?”  He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed and received my sight.”  They said to him, “Where is he?”  He said, “I do not know.”  They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.”  Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.”  But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them.  So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?”  He said, “He is a prophet.”  The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?”  His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.) Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”  So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, “Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.”  He answered, “Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”  They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”  He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?”  And they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.”  **The man answered,**>**“Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes.**{>>>**We know that God does not listen to** sinners**, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him.**<<<**Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind.**>>**If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”**<<}  They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out.  **Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”**  He answered, **“And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?”**    Jesus said to him, **“You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.”**  He said, **“Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.**  Jesus said, **“For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see** may become blind**.”**<  Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?”  Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.  **“Truly, truly, I say to you,** he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But **he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens.**>>{**The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”**}<<This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.  So Jesus again said to them,>>{**“Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he** will **be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and** kill **and** destroy**.**>>>**I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.**<<<}<<    >>{**I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd** lays down his life **for the sheep.** He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.  **I am the good shepherd. I know** my own **and** my own **know me,**>>>**just as**<<< **the Father knows me and I know the Father; and** I lay down my life **for the sheep.**}<<And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.{>>>>**For this reason the Father loves me, because I** lay down my life **that I may take it up again.**<<<<**No one takes it from me,**>>**but** I lay it down **of my own accord. I have authority to** lay it down**, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”**<<}  There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?”  Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”  At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. So **the Jews gathered around him and said to him,**>>{**“How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.”**    Jesus answered them, **“I told you, and** you do not **believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, but** you do not **believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never** perish**, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one.”**}<<  The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, “{**I have shown you many good works from the Father**}**;** for which of them are you going to stone me?”  The Jews answered him, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.”  Jesus answered them, **“Is it not written in your Law, ‘I said, you are gods’? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be broken— do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?**>**If I am not doing the** works **of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the** works**, that you may know and understand that** >>>{**the Father is in me and I am in the Father.**}<<<**”**<**Again they sought to arrest him, but** he escaped from their hands**.**  >**He went away again across the Jordan to**>>**the place where John had been baptizing at first,**<< **and there he remained. And**>>**many came to him.**<<**And they said, “John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true.” And many believed in him there.**<  Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent to him, saying, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.”  But when Jesus heard it he said, “This illness does not lead to death. It is for **the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified** through it.” Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.  Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.”  The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?”  Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.”  After saying these things, he said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.”  The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep.  Then Jesus told them plainly,>**“Lazarus has** died**,** **and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe.**<But let us go to him.”  ^^**So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go,** that we may die with him**.”**<<  Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house.  >>{**Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have** died**. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.”**  Jesus said to her, **“Your brother will rise again.”**  Martha said to him, **“I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”**  **Jesus said to her,**>>>**“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and**>>>>**everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.**<<<<**Do you believe this?”**<<<  She said to him, **“Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”**}<<  When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.  Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”  When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, “Where have you laid him?”  They said to him, “Lord, come and see.”  Jesus wept.  So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”  But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?”  Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, “Take away the stone.”  Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.”  Jesus said to her,>>>{**“Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?”**}<<<  So they took away the stone. **And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me.**>**I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.”**<  When he had said these things,>**he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” The man who had died came out,**<his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth.  Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”  >**Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him,**<but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So **the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council**  and said, **“What are we to do? For**>>**this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him,**<<and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”  But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.”  He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.  Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.  Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, “What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?” Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.  ^**Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from** the dead**. So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.**  But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, “Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.  **Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial.**<For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.”  When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So>**the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to** death **as well, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.**<  The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, “Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!”  His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.  The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him.”  Now among those who **went up to worship** at the feast were **some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.**  **And Jesus answered them,**>{**“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and** dies, **it remains alone; but if it** dies, **it bears much fruit.**>>>**Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me;**<<<**and where I am, there will my servant be also.**>>>**If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.**<<<}<    “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. **Father, glorify your name.**”  **Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”** The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.”  Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.>>**And I, when** I am lifted up from the earth**, will draw all people to myself.”**<<He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.  So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?”  **So Jesus said to them,**>**“The light is among you for a little while longer.**{**Walk while you have the light, lest** darkness overtake you**. The one who walks** in the darkness **does not know** where he is going**. While you have the light,**>>>**believe in the light, that you may** become sons of **light.”**<<<}**When Jesus had said these things, he departed and** hid himself from them**.**<  >**Though he had done so many signs before them, they** still did not **believe in him, so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:**<**“Lord,**>>**who has believed what he heard from us, and**>>>**to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”**<<<<<  >>>**Therefore they could** not **believe. For again Isaiah said, “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.”**<<<**Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him.**  >**Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for**>>**they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.**<< <  And Jesus cried out and said,>>**“Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And**>>>**whoever sees me sees him who sent me.**<<<**I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not** remain in darkness**.**<<  >>{**If anyone hears my words and does** not **keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.**>>>The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge**; the word that I have spoken will** judge him on the last day**.**<<<**For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the** Father **who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”**}<<  Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, **having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.**  During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,>**Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper.** **He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.**<  He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, do you wash my feet?”  Jesus answered him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.”  **Peter said to him, “You shall never wash my feet.”**  **Jesus answered him,**>{**“If I do not wash you, you** have no share with me**.”**  Simon Peter said to him, **“Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!”**   Jesus said to him,>>**“The one who** has bathed **does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean.**<<**And you are clean,**}<but not every one of you.” For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, “Not all of you are clean.”  **When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.**^^**If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.**<<**Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.** **If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.**  I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, ‘He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.’  **I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place**>**you may believe that I am he.**<**Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.”**  After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.”  The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking.  So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?”  Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.”So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Then **after he had taken the morsel,** Satan entered into him**.**  **Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.”** Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor. So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.  **When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once.**  Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come.’  {**A**>>**new commandment**<<**I give to you, that you**>>>**love one another:**  >>>>**just as I have loved you,**<<<<**you also are to love one another.**<<<  >>**By this all people will know that**>>>you are my disciples**,**<<<**if you have love for one another.”**<<}  Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?”  Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.”  Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”  Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.  >>{**“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.**}<<And you know the way to where I am going.”  Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”  Jesus said to him,>>{**“I am the way, and the truth, and the life.** No one **comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”**}<<  Philip said to him, **“Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”**  Jesus said to him,>{**“Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?**>>**Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.**<<>>>**Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me,**<<<**or else believe on account of the works themselves. “Truly, truly, I say to you,**>>>>**whoever believes in me** will also do the **works that I do; and greater works than these** will he do**,**<<<<**because I am going to the Father.**>>>>**Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.**<<<<}<  {>>>>**“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.**<<<< >>**And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper,**>>>**to be with you forever,**<<<**even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for**>>>**he dwells with you and will be in you.**<<< **“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me.**>**Because I live, you also will live.**< **In that day you will know that**>>>**I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.**<<< >>>>**Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.**<<<<**And**>>>**he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”**<<< <<}  Judas (not Iscariot) said to him,{>>>**“Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?”**  Jesus answered him,>>>>**“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.**<<<<**Whoever does** not **love me does** not **keep my words.**<<<**And the word** that you hear **is not mine but the Father's who sent me.**}  “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you.But  {>>>**the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name,**>>>>**he will teach you all things**<<<<**and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.**<<< >>>**Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.**<<<**Not as the world gives do I give to you.**>>**Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.**<<}  **You heard me say to you,**{**‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for**>>>**the Father is greater than** I**.**<<<**And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe.** **I will no longer talk much with you, for**>**the ruler of this world is coming.**<**He has no claim on me, but**>>>>>**I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father.**<<<<<}  **Rise, let us go from here.**  {>>>**“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that** does not bear fruit **he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.**<<<**Already**  >>**you are clean because of the word**<<**that I have spoken to you.**>>**Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch** cannot **bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.**<<}    >{**I am the vine;** you are the branches**.**>>>>**Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit,**<<<<**for apart from me you can do nothing.**>>>**If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered,** thrown into the fire, and burned<<<.>>>**If you** abide **in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.**<<<**By this my Father is glorified,**>>>**that you bear much fruit and**>>>>**so prove**<<<<**to** be my disciples**.**<<<}<  {>>>**As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.**<<<**Abide in my love.**>>>>**If you keep my commandments, you** will abide **in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.**<<<<**These things I have spoken to you,**>>>**that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full**<<<**.**>>>>>**“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone** lay down his life **for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.**<<<<<**No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but**>>>>**I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.**<<<< >>**You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that**>>>**you should go and** bear fruit **and that your** fruit **should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.**<<<**These things I command you,**>>>**so that**<<<**you will love one another.**<<}  **“If the world** hates **you, know that it has** hated **me before it** hated **you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because**>**you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world** hates **you.**<**Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they** persecuted **me, they will also** persecute **you. If they kept my word, they will also keep** yours**.**{**But** all these things they will do to you **on account of my name, because they** do not know him **who sent me.**}**If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been** guilty of sin**, but now they have no excuse for their** sin**.**{**Whoever** hates **me** hates **my Father also.**} **If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of** sin**, but now they have seen and** hated **both me and my Father. But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: ‘They** hated **me without a cause.’**    >>{**“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.**}<<  >>{**“I have said all these things to you**>>>**to keep you from** falling away**.**<<<}**They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when** whoever kills you will think he is offering service to **God. And they will do these things because they have** not **known the Father,** nor **me.**<<But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you. “I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.  But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless,>**I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.**<**And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning** sin **and righteousness and** judgment**: concerning** sin**, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning** judgment**, because the ruler of this world is** judged**.**  **“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.** >>{**When the Spirit of truth comes,**>>>**he will guide you into all the truth,**<<<**for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for**>>>**he will take what is mine and declare it to you.**<<<**All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.**}<<  “A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me.”  So some of his disciples said to one another, “What is this that he says to us, ‘A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me’; and, ‘because I am going to the Father’?” So they were saying, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We do not know what he is talking about.”  Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, “Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, ‘A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me’? Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into **joy**. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and>>{**no one will take your joy from you. In that day you will ask nothing of me.**>>>**Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.**<<<Until now you have asked nothing in my name. **Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.**}<<  {**“I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father.**>>**In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; for**>>>**the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.**<<<**I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.”**  His disciples said, **“Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech! Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God.”**  Jesus answered them, **“Do you now believe?**<<}**Behold,**>{**the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet**>>>**I am not alone, for the Father is with me.**<<<}<  **I have said these things to you, that**>>>{**in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”**}<<<  When **Jesus** had spoken these words,{**he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said,**  **“Father, the hour has come;**>**glorify your Son** that **the Son may glorify you, since**>>>**you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to** all **whom you have given him.**>>>>>>>**And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.**<<<<<<<**I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.**<<<**And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.**<}  >{**“I have manifested your name to the** people **whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and**>>>**they have kept your word.**<<<**Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for** those **whom you have given me, for** theyare yours**.**<**All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and**  >>>I am glorified in them**.**<<<**And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to** **you.**>>>**Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me,**>>>>**that they may be one, even as we are one.**<<<<**While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost**<<<**except the son of** destruction**, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.**}  {**But now I am coming to you, and**>**these things I speak in the world,** >>>**that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.**<<<**I have given them your word,**<**and the world has** hated **them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.**>**I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but**>>>**that you keep them from the** evil one**.**<<< **They are not of the world,**>>>**just as**<<<**I am not of the world.**  >>>**Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.**<<<**As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.**<}  >{**“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me** through their w**ord,**>>>**that they may all be one,**>>>>**just as**<<<<**you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us,**<<<**so that the world may believe that you have sent me.**>>>>>**The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one,**<<<<<**so that the world may know that you sent me and**>>>>**loved them even as you loved me.**<<<<}<  >{**Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am,**>>**to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me**<<**before the foundation of the world.**}<  >{**O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me.**>>>>**I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known**<<<<,>>>>>**that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”**  <<<<<}<  When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.  Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons.  Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, “Whom do you seek?”  They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth.”  Jesus said to them, “I am he.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.  So he asked them again, “Whom do you seek?”  And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.”  Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go.” This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: “Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one.”  Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)  **So Jesus said to Peter,**>**“Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?”**<  So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.  Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door, and brought Peter in.  The servant girl at the door said to Peter, “You also are not one of this man's disciples, are you?”  He said, “I am not.”  Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.  The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.  Jesus answered him, “I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them; they know what I said.”  When he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, “Is that how you answer the high priest?”  Jesus answered him, “If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?” Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.  Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, “You also are not one of his disciples, are you?”  He denied it and said, “I am not.”  One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?” Peter again denied it, and at once a rooster crowed.  Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover. So Pilate went outside to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this man?”  They answered him, “If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you.”  Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.”  The Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.” This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die.  So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”  Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?”  Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?”  **Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”**  **Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?”**  Jesus answered,{**“You say that I am a king.**>>**For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth.**>>>**Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”**<<<    **Pilate said to him,** **“What is truth?”**<<**After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, “I find no guilt in him.**}But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?”  They cried out again, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.  Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. They came up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and struck him with their hands.  Pilate went out again and said to them, “See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him.” So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, **“Behold the man!”**  When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!”  Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him.”  The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.”  When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. So Pilate said to him, “You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?”  Jesus answered him, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.”  From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.”  So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour.  He said to the Jews, “Behold your King!”  They cried out, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him!”  Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?”  The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.”   So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.   So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.  **Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but rather, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’”**  **Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”**  **When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom,**  so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.”  This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, “They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.” So the soldiers did these things,  but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.  >{**After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.** **When Jesus had received the sour wine,** **he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.**}<  Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.” And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have pierced.”  After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about  seventy-five pounds in weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.  Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.”  **So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the** dead**.**  Then the disciples went back to their homes. But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet.  They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?”  She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus.  Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”  Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.”  Jesus said to her, “Mary.”  She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher).  **Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”**  Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.  On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.  Jesus said to them again,>{**“Peace be with you.** >>>**As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”**<<<**And when he had said this,**>>>**he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.**<<<**If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”**}<  Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.”  But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”  Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, **“Peace be with you.”** Then he said to Thomas, **“Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side.**>**Do not disbelieve, but believe.”**  **Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”**  Jesus said to him, **“Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”**<  >{**Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that**>>**by believing you may have**>>>**life**<<<**in his name**<<**.**}<  After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will go with you.” They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.   Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.   Jesus said to them, “Children, do you have any fish?”  They answered him, “No.”  He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish.  That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread.  Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.”  So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.  When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?”  He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.”  He said to him, “Feed my lambs.”  He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?”  He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.”  He said to him, “Tend my sheep.”  He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?”  Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.”  Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.”  Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, “Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?” When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about this man?”  Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!” So the saying spread abroad among the brothers that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?”  This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.  >{**Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.**}< **============**  **In the first book, O Theophilus, I** **have dealt with** **all that** Jesus **began to do and teach, until the day** whenhe **was taken up, after**>>he **had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom** he **had chosen.**<<He **presented** himself **alive to them after his** suffering **by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for**>>{**the promise of the Father,**}<< **which, he said, “you heard from** me**; for John baptized with water, but**{>>**you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”**<< }  **So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”**  **He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.**>>>**But**{**you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses**} **in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”**<<<  And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.  And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”  Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.  In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.”  (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)   “For it is written in the Book of Psalms, “‘May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it’; and “‘Let another take his office.’ So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.”  And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.  When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.>>**And**{**they were all filled with the Holy Spirit**}**and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.**<<  Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?”  But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”  But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.But **this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:**>>>{**“‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.**}<<<**And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below,** blood**, and** fire**, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to** darkness **and the moon to** blood**, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.**>>**And** {**it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’**}<<  **“Men of Israel, hear these words:**{**Jesus of Nazareth,**>>**a man attested to you by God**<<**with mighty works and wonders and signs**>>**that God did through him**<<**in your midst, as you yourselves know— this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you** crucified **and** killed **by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the** pangs of death, **because it was not possible for him to be held by it.**>>>**For David says concerning him, “**‘I saw **the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to** Hades**,**<<<**or let your Holy One see** corruption**.**>>>>**You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’**<<<<}  **“Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of** the Christ**, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This** Jesus **God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.**>{**Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and**>>>**having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit,** he **has poured out this**<<<**that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.**}<For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, “‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”’    Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”  Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”  **And Peter said to them,**>>{**“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of** Jesus Christ **for the forgiveness of your** sins**, and**>>>**you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**<<<**For**>>>**the promise**<<<**is for** **you** **and for your children and for all who are far off,** everyone **whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”**}<<  **And**^**with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them,**<**saying,**>>>{**“Save yourselves from this crooked generation.”**}<<<**So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.**  And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.  Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, “Look at us.” And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them.  But Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God, and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.  While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's. And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: “Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. **But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and you** killed{**the Author of life, whom God raised from the** dead}**. To this we are witnesses.**>{**And** his **name—by faith in** his **name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and**>>**the faith that is through** Jesus **has given the man this perfect health**<<}<**in the presence of you all.**  “And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But{**what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his** Christ **would** suffer**,** he **thus fulfilled.**>**Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out,**>>**that times of refreshing may come from**>>>**the presence of the Lord**<<<, **and that he may send**<<**the** Christ **appointed for you,** Jesus**,**<whom **heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.**>**Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you** a prophet **like me from your brothers. You shall listen to** him **in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul** who does not listen **to** that prophet **shall be destroyed from the people.’**<  **And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days.**}You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’>{**God, having raised up his servant,**>>**sent him to you first,**>>>**to bless you by turning every one of you from your** wickedness<<<**.”**<<}<  And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. **But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.**  On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander and all who were of the high-priestly family. And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?”  Then>>{**Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said**}<<to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And>{**there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.**}<**”**  {**Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished.**}And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, saying, “What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.”  So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them,>**“Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God,**<**you must judge,** **for**>{**we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.**}<**”**  And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened. For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old.  When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, **“Sovereign Lord,** **who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them,** who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by **the Holy Spirit,** “‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’— **for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant** Jesus**, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.**>**And now, Lord, look upon their threats**>>>{**and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness,**}<<<**while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant** Jesus**.”**    **And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and**>>>{**they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.**}<<< <  ^^**Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And**^^^{**with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the** Lord Jesus**, and great grace was upon them all**}<<<. **There was not a needy person among them,** **for as many as were owners** **of lands or houses** **sold them** **and brought the proceeds of what was sold and** **laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.**<<  Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.  But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet.  But Peter said, >>**“Ananias,**>>>**why has** Satan **filled your heart**<<<**to lie to the Holy Spirit**<<and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.”  When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.  After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter said to her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for so much.”  And she said, “Yes, for so much.”  But Peter said to her, “How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.”  Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.  >>>{**Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.**}<<<  >**But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and**{**filled with jealousy they arrested the apostles and put them in the public** prison**. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said,**>>**“Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people**>>>>**all the words of this Life.**<<<<**”**  **And when they heard this,**>>>**they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach.**<<<<<}  Now when the high priest came, and those who were with him, they called together the council, all the senate of the people of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison, so they returned and reported, “We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them we found no one inside.” Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them, wondering what this would come to.  And someone came and told them, “Look! The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.” Then the captain with the officers went and brought them, but not by force, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people.  And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, “We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us.”  **But Peter and the apostles answered,**>{>>**“We must obey God rather than men.**<<**The God of our fathers raised** Jesus**, whom you** killed by hanging him on a tree**. God exalted** him **at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of** sins**. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is**>>>**the Holy Spirit,** whom **God has given to those who obey him.**<<<**”**}<  When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. And he said to them, “Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!”    So they took his advice, and^^{when **they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of** Jesus**, and let them go.**  **Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And**^^^**every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that** the Christ is Jesus**.**<<<}<<  Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, **a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said,** **“It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers,**>**pick out from among you seven men of good repute,** >>>>{**full of the Spirit and of wisdom,**}<<<<**whom we will appoint to this duty. But**>>**we will devote ourselves to prayer**<<**and to the ministry of the word.”**<  **And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man**>>>>{**full of faith and of the Holy Spirit,**}<<<<and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.  >**And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.**<  **And**>>**Stephen,**>>>{**full of grace and power**}<<<, **was doing great wonders and signs among the people.**<<**Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. But**>>{**they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.**}<<  Then they secretly instigated men who said, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.”  And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, and they set up false witnesses who said, “This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.”    >>>{**And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.**}<<<  And the high priest said, “Are these things so?”  And Stephen said: “Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, ‘Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.’  Then he went out from the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living. Yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him as a possession and to his offspring after him, though he had no child. And God spoke to this effect—that his offspring would be sojourners in a land belonging to others, who would enslave them and afflict them four hundred years. ‘But I will judge the nation that they serve,’ said God, ‘and after that **they shall come out and worship me in this place.**’ And he gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day, and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs.  >>**“And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph** sold him **into Egypt;**{**but God was with him and rescued him out of all his** afflictions **and**>>>**gave him favor and wisdom**<<<**before Pharaoh,**}**king of Egypt, who made him ruler over Egypt and over all his household.**<<  Now there came a famine throughout all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction, and our fathers could find no food. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers on their first visit. And on the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. And Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all. And Jacob went down into Egypt, and he died, he and our fathers, and they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.  “But as the time of the promise drew near, which God had granted to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt until there arose over Egypt another king who did not know Joseph. He dealt shrewdly with our race and forced our fathers to expose their infants, so that they would not be kept alive.  **At this time**>>{**Moses was born; and**>>>**he was beautiful in God's sight.**<<<}**And he was brought up for three months in his father's house, and when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son. And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and**>>>{**he was mighty in his words and deeds.**}<<<<<  **“When he was forty years old,**>>>**it came into his heart**<<<**to visit his brothers, the children of Israel.** And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian. He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand. And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, ‘Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?’  But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, **‘Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?’ At this retort Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian,** **where he became the father of two sons.**  **“Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight, and as he drew near to look,** **there came the voice of the Lord: ‘I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob**.’ **And Moses trembled and did not dare to look.**  **Then the Lord said to him,** **‘Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.** **I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them.** **And now come, I will send you to Egypt.’**  **“This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge?’—this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years.**    **This is**{**the Moses who said to the Israelites,**>>**‘God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers.’**<<**This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers.**>>**He received**>>>**living**<<<**oracles to give to us.**<<}  >>**Our fathers refused to obey him, but thrust him aside, and in their hearts they turned to Egypt, saying to Aaron, ‘Make for us gods who will go before us. As for this Moses who led us out from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ And**{**they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. But**>>>**God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven,**<<<}**as it is written in the book of the prophets:** **“‘Did you bring to me slain beasts and sacrifices, during the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?** **You took up** **the tent of Moloch and the star of your god Rephan,**>>>**the images that you made to worship;**<<<**and**{**I will send you into exile beyond Babylon.’**}<<  “Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness, just as he who spoke to Moses directed him to make it, according to the pattern that he had seen. Our fathers in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our fathers. So it was until the days of David, who found favor in the sight of God and asked to find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. But it was Solomon who built a house for him.  Yet **the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophet says, “‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?’**  >>**“You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears,**>>>**you always resist the Holy Spirit.**<<<<<As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand **the coming of the Righteous One,** whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.”  Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him.>>>**But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and** Jesus **standing at the right hand of God.**<<<And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”  **But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and** stoned **him.** And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.  And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, **“Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”** And when he had said this, he fell asleep.  And Saul approved of his execution.  >**And there arose on that day** a great persecution **against the church in Jerusalem,** **and they were all scattered** throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. But **Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to** prison**.**<  >>**Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.**<<**Philip went down to the city of Samaria and**>>**proclaimed to them the** Christ**.**<<And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city.  But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the power of God that is called Great.” And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.  **Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them**>**Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them**>>>**that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet fallen**<<<**on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the** Lord Jesus. **Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.**<    Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, **he offered them money, saying, “Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.”**  **But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!**>>**You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for**>>>**your heart is not right before God. Repent, therefore, of this** wickedness **of yours,**<<<**and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.”**  And Simon answered, **“Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.”**<<  ^**Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.**<  Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert place. And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. **He had come to Jerusalem to worship** and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.”  So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?”  And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.  Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.”  And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.  And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.>**And when they came up out of the water,**>>**the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away,**<<**and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But**>>**Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns**<<**until he came to Caesarea.**<  But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”  And he said, “Who are you, Lord?”  And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.”  The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.   Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.”   And he said, “Here I am, Lord.”  And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.”  But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.”  But the Lord said to him,>**“Go,**>>**for he is a chosen instrument of** mine **to carry** my **name**<<**before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him**>>>**how much he must** suffer<<<**for the sake of** my **name.”**<  **So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul,**>**the** Lord Jesuswho **appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and**  >>>{**be filled with the Holy Spirit**}<<<**.”**<**And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; and taking food, he was strengthened.**    For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus.>>>{**And immediately he proclaimed** Jesus **in the synagogues, saying, “**He **is the Son of God.”**}<<<And all who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?” But{>>Saul increased all the more **in strength, and confounded the Jews**<<who lived in Damascus **by**>>>**proving that** Jesus **was the** Christ<<<}**.**<  >**When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to** kill **him, but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to** kill **him, but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.**<  And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how>{**at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of** Jesus**. So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to** kill **him. And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.**}<  >>**So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And**{**walking in the fear of the Lord and in**  >>>**the comfort of the Holy Spirit,**<<<**it multiplied.**}<<  Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed.” And immediately he rose. And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.  Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. In those days she became ill and died, and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, “Please come to us without delay.”  So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them.  But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then, calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. And he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner.  At Caesarea there was a man named>**Cornelius, a centurion**<of what was known as the Italian Cohort,>>>{**a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God.**}<<<**About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, “Cornelius.”**    **And he stared at him in terror and said, “What is it, Lord?”**  And he said to him,>>>{**“Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God.**}<<<**And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter.** He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea.”  When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.  The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him: “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.”  But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.”  And the voice came to him again a second time, “What God has made clean, do not call common.”  This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.  Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there.   And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them.”  And Peter went down to the men and said, “I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?”  And they said,>>{**“Cornelius, a centurion,**>>>**an upright and God-fearing man,**<<<**who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say.”**}<<So he invited them in to be his guests.  The next day he rose and went away with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. **When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I too am a man.”**  And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered. And he said to them, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me.”  And Cornelius said, “Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.’ So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.”  **So Peter opened his mouth and said:**>>**“Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation**>>>{**anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.**}<<< <<**As for**>**the word that he sent to Israel,** preaching **good news of peace through** Jesus Christ<**(**he **is Lord of all),** you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how>>>{**God anointed** Jesus **of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.** He **went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by** the devil**, for God was with** him.}<<<  And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.>**They** put him to death by hanging him on a tree**, but God raised** him **on the third day and made** him **to appear, not to all the people but** to us who h**ad been chosen by God as** witnesses**, who ate and drank with** him **after** he **rose** from the dead<**.**>>**And** he **commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that** he **is the one appointed by God to be** judge **of the living and the dead. To** him **all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in** him **receives forgiveness of** sins **through** his **name.”**<<  >{**While Peter was still saying these things,**>>>**the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word**<<<.}<And the **believers** from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because>>>{**the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out**}<<<**even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing them** >{**speaking in tongues and**>>>>>**extolling God**<<<<<**.**}<  **Then Peter declared, “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing**>>>**these people, who have received the Holy Spirit**<<<**just as we have?” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of** Jesus Christ**. Then they asked him to remain for some days.**  Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.”  But Peter began and explained it to them in order: “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me. Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’  But I said, ‘By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’  But the voice answered a second time from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, do not call common.’ This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven.  And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called **Peter; he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’**  >>>{**As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them**}<<<just as on us at the beginning. **And I remembered**>>{**the word of the** Lord**, how** he **said, ‘John baptized with water, but**>>>**you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’**<<<If then **God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the** Lord Jesus Christ}<<, who was I that I could stand in God's way?”  **When they heard these things they fell silent. And** **they glorified God, saying,**>{**“Then to the Gentiles also**>>>**God has granted repentance**<<<**that leads to life.”**}<  **Now those who were scattered because of the** persecution **that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch,** >>>**speaking the word**<<<**to no one except Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also,**>**preaching the** Lord Jesus**. And**>>>**the hand of the Lord was with them**<<<**, and**>>**a great number who believed turned to the Lord.**<< <  The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and >**they sent Barnabas to Antioch.** **When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to**>>{**remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose,**}<<**for**>>{**he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.**}<<**And a great many people were added to the Lord.**<  So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.  Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.  About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword, and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people.  So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.  Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, “Get up quickly.” And the chains fell off his hands.  And the angel said to him, “Dress yourself and put on your sandals.” And he did so. And he said to him, “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.” And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him.  When Peter came to himself, he said, “Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.”  When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate.  They said to her, “You are out of your mind.” But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, “It is his angel!”  But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed. But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, “Tell these things to James and to the brothers.” Then he departed and went to another place.  Now when day came, there was no little disturbance among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. And after Herod searched for him and did not find him, he examined the sentries and ordered that they should be put to death.  Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and spent time there. Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, and they came to him with one accord, and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country depended on the king's country for food.  >**On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. And the people were shouting, “The voice of a god, and not of a man!” Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last.**  **But the word of God increased and multiplied.**<  And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had completed their service, bringing with them John, whose other name was Mark.  Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. **While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said,** “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.  So,>{**being**>>>**sent out by the Holy Spirit,**<<<}**they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis,** >>>{**they proclaimed the word of God**}<<<**in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them.**<  When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. But Saul, who was also called>>{**Paul,**>>>**filled with the Holy Spirit**<<<, **looked intently at him**}**and said, “You son of** the devil**, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time.”**<<  Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.   Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem, but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. And on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, “Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it.”   So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said: “Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen. The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance. All this took about 450 years.  And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said,>>>{**‘I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.’**}<<<  Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised. Before his coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was finishing his course, he said, ‘What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but behold, after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.’  “Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation. For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people.  And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, “‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you.’ And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, “‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.’ Therefore he says also in another psalm, “‘You will not let your Holy One see corruption.’  For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, but he whom God raised up did not see corruption.  Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that>>{**through** this man **forgiveness of** sins is proclaimed **to you, and by** him **everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could** not **be freed by the law of Moses.**}<<Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about: “‘Look, you scoffers, be astounded and perish; for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you.’”  As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.  The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him.  >{**And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since**>>>>**you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life,**<<<<**behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, “‘I have made** you **a light for the Gentiles, that** you **may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’”**}<  **And when the Gentiles heard this,**>{**they began** rejoicing **and glorifying the word of the Lord, and**>>**as many as were appointed**<<**to eternal life believed.**}<  And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. But **the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up** persecution **against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium.**>>>{**And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.**}<<<    >>{Now at Iconium **they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So**>>>**they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord,**<<<**who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.**}<<But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country, and there they continued to preach the gospel.    >>**Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was**{**crippled from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul,**>>>**looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well,**<<<**said in a loud voice, “Stand upright on your feet.” And he sprang up and began walking.**}<<  **And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!” Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds.**  But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, “Men, why are you doing these things? **We also are men, of like nature with you, and** **we bring you good news, that**>>>{**you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.**}<<<**In past generations**>>**he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.**<<**” Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them.**  >**But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they** stoned Paul and dragged him out **of the city, supposing that he was** dead**. But** when the disciples gathered about him, **he rose up and entered the city,**<and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.  **When they had preached the gospel to that city and** had made many disciples**, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,** >>**strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying**>>>>{**that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.**}<<<<**And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the** Lord **in** whom **they had believed.**<<**Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia,**  and from there **they sailed to Antioch,**>**where**>>>**they had been commended to the grace of God**<<<**for the work that they had fulfilled.**<**And when they arrived and gathered the church together,**>{**they declared**>>>**all that God had done with them,**<<<**and how**>>>**he had opened a door of faith**<<<**to the Gentiles.**}<**And they remained no little time with the disciples.**  But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them.  But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses.”  The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that **in the early days**>{**God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by**>>>**giving them the Holy Spirit**<<<}<just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between us and them,>>>{**having cleansed their hearts by faith.**}<<<Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But>{**we believe that we will be saved**>>**through the grace**<<**of the** Lord Jesus**,**}<just as they will.”  And all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. After they finished speaking, James replied, “Brothers, listen to me. **Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written,**>>>{**“‘After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it,**>>>>**that the remnant of mankind may** seek the L**ord,**<<<<**and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.’**}<<<  Therefore my judgment is that>**we should not trouble**>>**those of the Gentiles who turn to God,**<<**but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from** sexual immorality**,**<**and from what has been strangled, and from blood. For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues.”**  Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers, with the following letter: “The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings.  Since we have heard that some persons have gone out from us and troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, ^^^**men who have risked their lives for the name of our** Lord Jesus Christ**.**<<<We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.”  So when they were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words. And after they had spent some time, they were sent off in peace by the brothers to those who had sent them. But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.  And after some days **Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.”** Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.  Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.  And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.  So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days.  And on the Sabbath day **we went outside the gate to the riverside,** **where we supposed there was a place of prayer,** **and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together.** **One who heard us was** a woman named{**Lydia,** **from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods,** **who** **was**>**a worshiper of God.**>>**The Lord opened her heart to pay attention**<<**to what was said by Paul. And after she was baptized**}<, **and her household as well, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us.**  **As we were going to the place of prayer,**>{**we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.”**}<**And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of** Jesus Christ **to come out of her.” And it came out that very hour.**    But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, “These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.”  The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.  About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.”  **And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said,**>{**“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”**  And they said,>>**“Believe in the** Lord Jesus**, and you will be saved**<<, **you and your household.”**}<**And they spoke the word of the** Lord **to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them.**>**And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.**<  But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, “Let those men go.” And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, “The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace.”  But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out.”  The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.  Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where>**there was a synagogue** of the Jews. **And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the** Christ **to** suffer **and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This** Jesus**, whom I proclaim to you, is the** Christ**.”**<**And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.**  But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, **“These men** who have turned the world upside down **have come here also, and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king,** Jesus**.”** And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. And when they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.  **The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue.**>**Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness,**>>**examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.**<<**Many of them therefore believed,**<**with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men.**    **But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too, agitating and stirring up the crowds Then the brothers immediately sent Paul off** on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there. Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens, and after receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they departed.  **Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols.**>{**So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and**>>**in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.**<<**Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, “What does this babbler wish to say?”**}<**Others said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities”—because he was preaching** Jesus **and the resurrection.** **And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.” Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.**  So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. **For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship,** I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ **What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.**  The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. **And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth,**>{**having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,**>>>**that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.**<<<**Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for “‘In him we live and move and have our being’;**}<**as even some of your own poets have said, “‘For we are indeed his offspring.’**  **Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.**>**The times of ignorance God overlooked, but**>>>**now he commands all people everywhere to repent**<<<, **because he has fixed a day on which he will** judge **the world in righteousness by a** man whom **he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising** him **from the dead.”**<  **Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, “We will hear you again about this.” So Paul went out from their midst.**>But **some men joined him and believed,**<among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.    After this **Paul** left Athens and **went to Corinth.** And he **found a Jew named Aquila,** a native of Pontus, **recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla,** **because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them, and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks.**  **When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that** the Christ was Jesus**.**^**And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, “**Your blood be on your own heads! **I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”**<  And he left there and went to the house of a man named **Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.** His house was next door to the synagogue. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized.  And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.” And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.  But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, saying, “**This man is persuading people to worship God** contrary to the law.”  But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint. But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of these things.” And he drove them from the tribunal. And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this.  After this, **Paul** stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow. And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there, but>**he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined. But on taking leave of them he said, “I will return to you if God wills,” and he set sail from Ephesus.**<When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch.  After spending some time there, he departed and went from one place to the next through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.  {**Now** **a Jew named Apollos,** a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was **an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures.** **He had been instructed in the way of the Lord.** **And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning** Jesus**, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue,**}but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.  And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived,{**he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was** Jesus**.**}  And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, **Paul** passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There>**he found some disciples. And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”**  And they said,>>**“No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”**<<  And he said, **“Into what then were you baptized?”**  They said, **“Into John's baptism.”**  And Paul said, **“John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the** one who **was to come after him, that is,** Jesus**.” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord** Jesus**. And when Paul had laid his hands on them,**>>>**the Holy Spirit came on them,**<<<**and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.**<  **There were about twelve men in all.**  >{**And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.**}<  >**And God was doing extraordinary miracles by** the hands of Paul**, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them.**<  **Then**>**some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of** the Lord Jesus **over those who had** evil spirits**, saying, “I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims.” Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. But the** evil spirit **answered them,**>>**“Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?”**<<**And the man in whom was the** evil spirit **leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.**<  **And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks.**^**And fear fell upon them all, and the name of** the Lord Jesus **was extolled. Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices.** **And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all.** **And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver.**<**So**>>>**the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.**<<<  Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, “After I have been there, I must also see Rome.” And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.  About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way. For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, “Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, **she whom all Asia and the world worship.**”  When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” So the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's companions in travel. But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not let him. And even some of the Asiarchs, who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture into the theater.  Now some cried out one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together. Some of the crowd prompted Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward. And Alexander, motioning with his hand, wanted to make a defense to the crowd. But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all cried out with one voice, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”  And when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, “Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky? Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess. If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. For we really are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion.” And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.  After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed for Macedonia. When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece. There he spent three months, and when a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus. These went on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas, but we sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we came to them at Troas, where we stayed for seven days.  On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread,^**Paul talked with them,** **intending to depart on the next day, and** **he** **prolonged his speech until midnight.** **There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered**. And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as **Paul talked still longer.** And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down and bent over him, and taking him in his arms, said, “Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him.” And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, **he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed.**<And they took the youth away alive, and were not a little comforted.    But going ahead to the ship, we set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul aboard there, for so he had arranged, intending himself to go by land. And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and went to Mitylene. And sailing from there we came the following day opposite Chios; the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after that we went to Miletus. For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia, for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.    Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. And when they came to him,he said to them: **“You yourselves know**{^^^**how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and** with trials **that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks**<<<>**of repentance toward God and of faith in** our Lord Jesus Christ**.**<}    >**And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that** imprisonment **and afflictions await me. But**{>>>**I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the** Lord Jesus<<<, **to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.**}<  **And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. Therefore**^^^{**I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the** blood **of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.**}<<<>>**Pay careful attention to yourselves**<<**and**>**to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which** he **obtained with** his own blood**.**<**I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and**>>**from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to** draw away **the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.**<<  **And now**>>{**I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which**  >>>**is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance**<<<**among** all those who are s**anctified.**}<<^**I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the** Lord Jesus**, how** he himself **said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”**<  And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.  And when we had parted from them and set sail, we came by a straight course to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. And having found a ship crossing to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. When we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left we sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unload its cargo. And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home.  When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for one day. On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.  While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, “Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’”  When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, “What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, “Let the will of the Lord be done.”  After these days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. And some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us, bringing us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.  When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly. On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.  And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed. They are all zealous for the law, and they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs. What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law. But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality.”    Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for each one of them.  When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.  Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut. And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. He at once took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.  Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He inquired who he was and what he had done. Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another. And as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. And when he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd, for the mob of the people followed, crying out, “Away with him!”  As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, “May I say something to you?”  And he said, “Do you know Greek? Are you not the Egyptian, then, who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?”   Paul replied, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city. I beg you, permit me to speak to the people.”   And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying: “Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you.”  And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet.  And he said: “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.  **“As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me,** **‘Saul, Saul, why are you** persecuting me**?’**  And I answered, **‘Who are you, Lord?’**  And he said to me, **‘**I **am** Jesus **of Nazareth,** whom **you are** persecuting**.’** Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me.  And I said, **‘What shall I do, Lord?’**  **And the** Lord **said to me, ‘Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.’ And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.**  **“And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me, and standing by me said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him.**  **And he said,**>>**‘The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to** seethe Righteous One **and to** hear a voice **from** his mouth**; for you will be a witness for** him **to everyone of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you wait? Rise and**>>>{**be baptized and wash away your** sins**, calling on his name**}<<<**.’**<<  **“When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I** >>**fell into a trance**<<**and saw** him **saying to me,** ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’  And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.’  And he said to me, ‘Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”  Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live.”  And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, the tribune ordered him to be brought into the barracks, saying that he should be examined by flogging, to find out why they were shouting against him like this. But when they had stretched him out for the whips, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?”  When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and said to him, “What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen.”  So the tribune came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?”  And he said, “Yes.”  The tribune answered, “I bought this citizenship for a large sum.”    Paul said, “But I am a citizen by birth.”  So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately, and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him.  But on the next day, desiring to know the real reason why he was being accused by the Jews, he unbound him and commanded the chief priests and all the council to meet, and he brought Paul down and set him before them.  >>**And looking intently at the council, Paul said, “Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day.”**<<**And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth.** Then Paul said to him, “God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?”  Those who stood by said, “Would you revile God's high priest?”    And Paul said, “I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’”  Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.” And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.  Then a great clamor arose, and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' party stood up and contended sharply, “We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?” And when the dissension became violent, the tribune, afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him away from among them by force and bring him into the barracks.  **The following night**>the Lord stood by him and said, “Take courage, for **as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.”**<  When it was day, the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. There were more than forty who made this conspiracy. They went to the chief priests and elders and said, “We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food till we have killed Paul. Now therefore you, along with the council, give notice to the tribune to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case more exactly. And we are ready to kill him before he comes near.”  Now the son of Paul's sister heard of their ambush, so he went and entered the barracks and told Paul.  Paul called one of the centurions and said, “Take this young man to the tribune, for he has something to tell him.” So he took him and brought him to the tribune  and said, “Paul the prisoner called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, as he has something to say to you.”  The tribune took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, “What is it that you have to tell me?”  And he said, “The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire somewhat more closely about him. But do not be persuaded by them, for more than forty of their men are lying in ambush for him, who have bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they have killed him. And now they are ready, waiting for your consent.”  So the tribune dismissed the young man, charging him, “Tell no one that you have informed me of these things.”  Then he called two of the centurions and said, “Get ready two hundred soldiers, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go as far as Caesarea at the third hour of the night. Also provide mounts for Paul to ride and bring him safely to Felix the governor.”  And he wrote a letter to this effect: “Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings.  This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen. And desiring to know the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their council. I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment. And when it was disclosed to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers also to state before you what they have against him.”  So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. And on the next day they returned to the barracks, letting the horsemen go on with him. When they had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him. On reading the letter, he asked what province he was from. And when he learned that he was from Cilicia, he said, “I will give you a hearing when your accusers arrive.” And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod's praetorium.  And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a spokesman, one Tertullus. They laid before the governor their case against Paul. And when he had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying: “Since through you we enjoy much peace, and since by your foresight, most excellent Felix, reforms are being made for this nation, in every way and everywhere we accept this with all gratitude. But, to detain you no further, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly.  For we have found this man a plague, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world and is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. He even tried to profane the temple, but we seized him. By examining him yourself you will be able to find out from him about everything of which we accuse him.”  The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that all these things were so.  And when the governor had nodded to him to speak, Paul replied: “Knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defense. **You can verify that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem,** and they did not find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd, either in the temple or in the synagogues or in the city. Neither can they prove to you what they now bring up against me. But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect,>**I worship the God of our fathers,**>>>**believing everything**<<<**laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. So** {>>**I always take pains**<<**to have**>>**a clear conscience**<<**toward both God and man.**}<  Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings. While I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple, without any crowd or tumult. But some Jews from Asia— they ought to be here before you and to make an accusation, should they have anything against me. Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council, other than this one thing that I cried out while standing among them: ‘It is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you this day.’”  But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way, put them off, saying, “When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case.” Then he gave orders to the centurion that he should be kept in custody but have some liberty, and that none of his friends should be prevented from attending to his needs.  **After some days** **Felix came** with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and>**he** **sent for Paul and**{**heard him speak about faith in** Christ Jesus**. And as he reasoned about**>>**righteousness and self-control**<<**and the coming** judgment**, Felix was alarmed and said, “Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you.”**}<**At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul. So he sent for him often and conversed with him.**  When two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.  Now three days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews laid out their case against Paul, and they urged him, asking as a favor against Paul that he summon him to Jerusalem—because they were planning an ambush to kill him on the way. Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea and that he himself intended to go there shortly. “So,” said he, “let the men of authority among you go down with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them bring charges against him.”  After he stayed among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought. When he had arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many and serious charges against him that they could not prove.  Paul argued in his defense, “Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense.”  But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, “Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and there be tried on these charges before me?”  But Paul said, “I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourself know very well. If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar.”   Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered, “To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go.”   Now when some days had passed, Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived at Caesarea and greeted Festus. And as they stayed there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, “There is a man left prisoner by Felix, and when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews laid out their case against him, asking for a sentence of condemnation against him.  I answered them that it was not the custom of the Romans to give up anyone before the accused met the accusers face to face and had opportunity to make his defense concerning the charge laid against him. So when they came together here, I made no delay, but on the next day took my seat on the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought. When the accusers stood up, they brought no charge in his case of such evils as I supposed. Rather they had certain points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul asserted to be alive. Being at a loss how to investigate these questions, I asked whether he wanted to go to Jerusalem and be tried there regarding them. But when Paul had appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of the emperor, I ordered him to be held until I could send him to Caesar.”  Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I would like to hear the man myself.”  “Tomorrow,” said he, “you will hear him.”  So on the next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp, and they entered the audience hall with the military tribunes and the prominent men of the city. Then, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. And Festus said, “King Agrippa and all who are present with us, you see this man about whom the whole Jewish people petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. But I found that he had done nothing deserving death. And as he himself appealed to the emperor, I decided to go ahead and send him. But I have nothing definite to write to my lord about him. Therefore I have brought him before you all, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after we have examined him, I may have something to write. For it seems to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not to indicate the charges against him.”    So Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.”    Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense: “I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.  “My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, **as they earnestly worship night and day.** And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king! Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?  “I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.  “In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language,>**‘Saul, Saul, why are you** persecuting me**? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’**<  And I said, **‘Who are you, Lord?’**  And the Lord said,>>**‘**I **am** Jesuswhom **you are** persecuting**. But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and**>>>**to those in which I will appear to you,**<<<**delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom**{I **am sending you to open their eyes,**>>>**so that they may turn from** darkness **to light and from the** power of Satan **to God,**<<<**that they may receive forgiveness of** sins **and a place among** those who are **sanctified by faith** in me**.’**}<<  “Therefore, O King Agrippa, **I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that** >>{**they should repent and turn to God,**>>>**performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.**<<<}<<**For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and** tried to kill me.>>>**To this day I have had the help that comes from God,**<<<**and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: that the**>>{Christ **must** suffer **and that,** by being the first to rise from the dead**,** he would proclaim **light**}<<**both to our people and to the Gentiles.”**  And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind.”  But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.”  And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?”  And Paul said, “Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.”   Then the king rose, and the governor and Bernice and those who were sitting with them. And when they had withdrawn, they said to one another, “This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment.”    And Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”  And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort named Julius. And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica.  The next day we put in at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him leave to go to his friends and be cared for. And putting out to sea from there we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us. And when we had sailed across the open sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia. There the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy and put us on board. We sailed slowly for a number of days and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, and as the wind did not allow us to go farther, we sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmone. Coasting along it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea.  Since much time had passed, and the voyage was now dangerous because even the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, saying, “Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.” But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said. And because the harbor was not suitable to spend the winter in, the majority decided to put out to sea from there, on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing both southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there.  Now when the south wind blew gently, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close to the shore. But soon a tempestuous wind, called the northeaster, struck down from the land. And when the ship was caught and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along. Running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we managed with difficulty to secure the ship's boat. After hoisting it up, they used supports to undergird the ship. Then, fearing that they would run aground on the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and thus they were driven along. Since we were violently storm-tossed, they began the next day to jettison the cargo. And on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.  Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them and said, “Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and incurred this injury and loss. Yet now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. **For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, and he said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.’**>{**So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told.**}<**But we must run aground on some island.”**  When the fourteenth night had come, as we were being driven across the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. So they took a sounding and found twenty fathoms. A little farther on they took a sounding again and found fifteen fathoms. And fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come. And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, and had lowered the ship's boat into the sea under pretense of laying out anchors from the bow, Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.” Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it go.  As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having taken nothing. Therefore I urge you to take some food. For it will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you.” And when he had said these things, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all he broke it and began to eat. Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves. (We were in all 276 persons in the ship.) And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea.  Now when it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned if possible to run the ship ashore. So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the ropes that tied the rudders. Then hoisting the foresail to the wind they made for the beach. But striking a reef, they ran the vessel aground. The bow stuck and remained immovable, and the stern was being broken up by the surf.  The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any should swim away and escape. But the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land, and the rest on planks or on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land.  After we were brought safely through, we then learned that the island was called Malta. The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold. When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.” He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.  Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him, healed him. And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. They also honored us greatly, and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed.  After three months we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island, a ship of Alexandria, with the twin gods as a figurehead. Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days. And from there we made a circuit and arrived at Rhegium. And after one day a  south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli. There we found brothers and were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome. And the brothers there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage. And when we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who guarded him.  After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he said to them, “Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. But because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar—though I had no charge to bring against my nation. For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain.”  And they said to him, “We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you. But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against.”  When they had appointed a day for him, **they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers.**>>{**From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about** Jesus **both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.**}**And** some were convinced **by** what he said**, but others** disbelieved**.** And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: **“**>>>**The Holy Spirit was right**<<<**in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: “‘Go to this people, and say, “You will indeed hear but** never understand**, and you will indeed see but** never perceive**.” For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.’**<<  Therefore let it be known to you that>**this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles;**>>**they will listen.**<<**”**<  **He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and**^**welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the** Lord Jesus Christ **with all boldness and without hindrance.**<  **============** **Paul, a servant of** Christ Jesus**,**>**called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,**<**which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his** Son**,** whowas descended from David according to the flesh and>{**was declared to be the** Son **of God in power according to**>>>>>>>**the Spirit of holiness**<<<<<<<**by** his **resurrection from the dead,** Jesus Christ **our Lord, through** whom **we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of** his **name**}**among all the nations, including**>>**you who are called**<<**to belong to** Jesus Christ**,**<    **To all** those in Rome **who are**{**loved by God and called to be** saints}**:**  **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the** Lord Jesus Christ**.**    First, I thank my **God** through Jesus Christ for all of you, because  > >>**your faith**<<**is proclaimed in all the world.**<**For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his** Son**,** **that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers,** asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.  For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles.  I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.  **For I am not ashamed of**>>**the gospel, for** **it is**{**the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,**}<<to the Jew first and also to the Greek.>**For in it**{>>>**the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith,**<<<**as it is written,**>>**“The righteous shall live by faith.”**<<}<  >**For the** wrath **of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who**>>**by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.**<<**For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For**{**his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made**}**. So** they are without excuse**.**  **For although they knew God,**>>**they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were** darkened**.**<<**Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.**    >>{**Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for** a lie **and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator**<<, **who is blessed forever! Amen.**  >>**For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions.**}**For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men**<<**and**>{**receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.**<}  >>**And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled**<< **with all manner of unrighteousness,** evil**, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of** evil**, disobedient to parents, foolish,** faithless**, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things** deserve to die**, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.**<    **Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. We know that the** judgment **of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the** judgment **of God? Or**>>{**do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that**>>>**God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?**<<<}<<  >>{**But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up** wrath **for yourself on the** day of wrath **when God's righteous** judgment **will be revealed.**>>>>**He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be** wrath and fury.<<<<**There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does** evil**,** the Jew first and also the Greek, **but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good,** the Jew first and also the Greek. **For God shows no partiality.**}<<  For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.  But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”  For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law.  For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical.>**But a Jew is one inwardly, and**>>{**circumcision is a matter of the heart,**>>>**by the Spirit,**<<<}<<**not by the letter.**>>**His praise is not from man but from God.**<<    Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God.   What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written, “That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged.”   But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) By no means! For then how could God judge the world? But if through my lie God's truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? And why not do evil that good may come?—as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.  What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that>{**all,** both Jews and Greeks, **are under** sin**, as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one;**>>**no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;**<<**no one does good, not even one.” “Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.” “The venom of asps is under their lips.” “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.” “Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known.”** >>**“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”**<<}<    Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.  >**But now**{>>**the righteousness of God has been manifested**<<**apart from the law,** **although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—**>>**the righteousness of God through faith in** Jesus Christ **for all who believe.**<<For there is no distinction:>>**for all have** sinned **and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in** Christ Jesus**,** whom **God put forward as a propitiation by** his **blood, to be received by faith.**<<**This was**>>**to show God's righteousness,**<<}**because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former** sins**. It was**>>**to show his righteousness**<<**at the present time, so that he might be just and**>>{**the justifier of the one who has faith in** Jesus}<<**.**<  **Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded.** By what kind of law? **By a law of works? No, but by**>> >>>>{**the law of faith.**}<<<<**For we hold that**{**one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.**}<<Or is **God** the **God** of Jews only? Is he not the **God** of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since>>>**God is one—who will justify** the circumcised **by faith** and the uncircumcised **through** **faith.**<<<**Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.**  What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For{**what does the Scripture say?** >**“Abraham believed God, and it was** **counted** to him **as righteousness.”<**}  >{**Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And**>>**to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,**<<**just as David also speaks of**>>**the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are those whose** **lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose** sins **are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his** sin**.”**<<}<  **Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that**>>{**faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness.**}<<**How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of**>>{**the righteousness that he had by faith**}<<**while he was still uncircumcised.** >>{**The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe**}<<**without being circumcised,**>>{**so that righteousness would be counted to them**}<<  **as well, and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but**>>>{**who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had**}<<<**before he was circumcised.**    >{**For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through**>>**the righteousness** >>>**of**<<<**faith**<<**.**}<**For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings** wrath**, but where there is no law there is no** transgression**.**  **That is why**>{>>>**it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace**<<<**and be guaranteed to all his offspring<—not only to the adherent of the law but also**>>**to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—**>>>**in the presence**<<<**of the God in whom he believed,**>>>**who gives life**<<<**to the dead and**>>>**calls into existence the things that do not exist.**<<< <<}  > >>{**In hope he believed against hope**}<<, **that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.”**>>{**He did not weaken in faith**}<<**when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.**>>>{**No unbelief made him waver**}<<<**concerning the promise of God, but**>>>{**he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,** **fully convinced**}<<<**that God was able to do what he had promised.**>>>{**That is why**<<<**his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.”**}**But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also.**{**It will be counted to us who believe in** him **who raised from the dead** Jesus **our Lord,** who **was delivered up for our** trespasses **and raised for our justification.**}<  >**Therefore,**>>{**since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our** Lord Jesus Christ**.**<< >>**Through** him **we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand,**}<<**and**>>{**we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**}<<**Not only that, but**>>{**we rejoice in our** sufferings**, knowing that** suffering **produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because**>>>**God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us**<<<**.**}<<<  For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.>**For one will scarcely** die **for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to** die**— but**>>>**God shows his love for us in that while we were still** sinners**,** Christ died **for us**<<<**.**<  Since, therefore,>>>**we have now been justified by** his blood**, much more shall we be saved by** him **from the wrath of God.**<<<For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.  Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.  **But**>>**the free gift**<<**is not like the** trespass**. For if many** died **through one man's** trespass**,**>>>**much more have** **the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man** Jesus Christ **abounded for many.**<<<  **And**>>**the free gift**<<**is not like the result of that one man's** sin**. For the** judgment **following one** trespass **brought** condemnation**,** but>>**the free gift following many** trespasses **brought justification.**<<**For if, because of one man's** trespass**,** death **reigned through that one man,**>>{**much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and**  >>>>**the free gift of righteousness reign in life**<<<<**through the one man** Jesus Christ**.**}<<  **Therefore, as one** trespass **led to** condemnation **for all men, so**>>**one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made** sinners**, so**{**by the** one man's **obedience the many will be**>>>**made**<<<**righteous.**}<<  >**Now the law came in to increase the** trespass**, but where** sin **increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as** sin **reigned in** death**,**{>> >>>>**grace also might reign through righteousness**<<<< >>>**leading to**<<<**eternal life**<<**through** Jesus Christ **our Lord.**}<  **What shall we say then?**>>**Are we to continue in** sin **that grace may abound? By no means!**{**How can**>>>**we who** died **to** sin<<<**still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into** Christ Jesus **were baptized into** his death**? We were** buried **therefore with** him **by baptism into** death**,**>>>**in order that,**<<<**just as** Christ **was raised from the** dead **by the glory of the Father,**>>>**we too might walk in newness of life**<<<.}<<  >>{**For if we have been united with** him **in a** death **like** his**, we shall certainly be united with** him **in**>>>**a resurrection like** his<<<**.**>>>**We know that our old self was crucified with** him **in order that the body of** sin **might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to** sin**.**<<<**For one who has** died **has been set free from** sin**.**}<<    >>{**Now if we have** died **with** Christ**, we believe that we will also live with** him**.**}<<**We know that** Christ**, being raised from the** dead**, will never** die **again;** death **no longer has dominion over** him**.**>>**For the** deathhediedhedied **to** sin**, once for all, but the life** he **lives** he **lives to God.**<<  >>{**So you also**>>>**must**<<<**consider yourselves** dead **to** sin **and alive to God in** Christ Jesus**.**>>>**Let not** sin **therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to** sin **as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from** death **to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For** sin **will have no dominion over you,**<<<**since you are not under law but under grace.**}<<  **What then?**>**Are we to** sin **because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!**<>>{**Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of** sin**, which leads to** death**, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that**>>>**you who were once slaves of** sin **have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,**<<<**and,**>>>**having been set free from** sin**,**<<<**have become slaves of righteousness.**}<<  **I am speaking in human terms**, **because of your natural limitations.**{>>>**For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.**<<<**For**>>**when you were slaves of** sin**, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is** death<<**.**>>>**But now that you have been set free from** sin **and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end,**>>>>**eternal life.**<<<<**For the wages of** sin **is** death**, but the free gift of God is eternal life in** Christ Jesus **our Lord.**<<<}  Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.  **Likewise, my brothers, you also have** died **to the law through the** body of Christ**, so that**>>**you may belong to** another**, to** himwho **has been raised from the** dead<<**,**>>>{**in order that we may bear fruit for God**}**. For** {**while we were living in the flesh, our** sinful **passions,** aroused **by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for** death**.**}**But now we are released from the law,**{**having** died **to that which held us captive,**}<<<**so that**>>>{**we serve in the new way of the Spirit**}**and not in the old way of the written code.**<<<  What then shall we say? That **the law** is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the **law,** I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if **the law** had not said, “You shall not covet.” But sin, seizing an opportunity through **the commandment,** produced in me all kinds of covetousness**.** For apart from **the law,** sin lies dead. I was once **alive** apart from **the law,** but when **the commandment** came, sin came alive and I died**.** The very **commandment** that promised **life** proved to be death to me. For sin**,** seizing an opportunity through **the commandment,** deceived me and through it killed me. **So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.**    Did that which is **good,** then, bring death to me? By no means! **It was** sin**, producing** death **in me through what is good, in order that** sin **might be shown to be** sin**, and through the commandment might become** sinful **beyond measure.**  **For we know that the law is spiritual, but**>**I am of the flesh, sold under** sin**. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but** sin **that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the** evil **I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but** sin **that dwells within me.**  **So**>>{**I find it to be a law that when I want to do right,** evil **lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members** another law waging war against **the law of my mind and** making me captive **to** the law of sin **that** dwells **in my members.**<< **Wretched man that I am!**>>**Who will deliver me from this body of** death**? Thanks be to God through** Jesus Christ **our Lord!**<<}  **So then,**>>>{**I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of** sin**.**}<<<<  >{**There is therefore now no** condemnation **for those who are in** Christ Jesus**.**<**For**>>>**the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in** Christ Jesus **from the law of** sin **and** death**.**<<<}**For**>>>**God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do.**<<<**By sending his own** Son **in the likeness of** sinful **flesh and for** sin**,**>>>{**he condemned** sin **in the flesh**<<<**,**>>>**in order that**>>>>**the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us,**<<<<**who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**}<<<  >>>{**For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is** death**, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**}<<<  {>>>>**You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of** Christ **does not belong to** him**.**<<<<**But**>>**if** Christ **is in you, although the body is** dead **because of** sin**,**>>>>>>>>>>**the Spirit is life because of righteousness.**<<<<<<<<<<<**If**>>>**the Spirit of him who raised** Jesus **from the** dead **dwells in you,**<<<**he who raised** Christ Jesus **from the** dead **will also give life to your mortal bodies through**>>>**his Spirit who dwells in you**<<<**.**<<}  **So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For**>>>>{**if you live according to the flesh you will** die**, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.**<<<<  **For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit**}**of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”**>>{**The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are** children **of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with** Christ**,**>>>**provided we** suffer **with** him<<<**in order** >>>**that we may also be glorified with** him**.**<<<}<<  >>>{**For I consider that the** sufferings **of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.**}<<<**For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it,**>**in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption**<**and obtain**>>>{**the freedom of the glory of** the children of **God.**}<<<    **For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but**>{**we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of**>>>**the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons,**<<<**the redemption of our bodies. For**>>>**in this hope we were saved.**<<<**Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see,** >>**we wait for it with patience**<<**.**}<  >>{**Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought**, **but**>>>**the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.**<<<**And**>>>>**he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because**>>>**the Spirit intercedes for the** saints<<<**according to the will of God.**<<<<}<<  >>>{**And we know that**>>>>**for those who love God**<<<<**all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.**<<<**For**>>>**those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be**>>>>**conformed to the image of his** Son<<<<, **in order that** he **might be the firstborn among many** brothers**.**<<<**And**>>>**those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.**}<<<  **What then shall we say to these things?**{>>**If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own** Son **but gave** him **up for us all,**>>>**how will he not also with** him **graciously give us all things?**<<<  **Who shall bring any charge against God's** elect**? It is God who justifies.**<<**Who is to condemn?**>>>Christ Jesus **is the** one **who** died**—more than that,** who **was raised—**who **is at the right hand of God,** who **indeed is interceding for us.**<<<>>>**Who shall separate us from the love of** Christ**? Shall tribulation, or distress, or** persecution, **or** famine**, or nakedness, or** danger**, or** sword**? As it is written, “**For your sake we are being killed all the day long**;**>>>>**we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through** him **who loved us.**<<<<**For**>>>>**I am sure that neither** death **nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in** Christ Jesus **our Lord.**<<<< <<<}    >**I am speaking the truth in** Christ**—I am not lying;**>>>{**my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit**}<<<<**—** that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. **They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.** To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.  But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.”    And not only so, but also **when Rebekah had conceived children by** one man, our forefather **Isaac,**>>**though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of** election **might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”**<<  What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means!{>>>**For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.**<<<**For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”**>>>**So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.**<<<}    **You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?”** >>>**Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?**<<<  >**What if God, desiring to show his** wrath **and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of** wrath **prepared for** destruction**, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? As indeed he says in Hosea, “Those who were not my people I will call ‘my** people**,’ and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’” “And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called**>>>{**‘**sons **of the living God.’**}<<<**”**<  **And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel:**>>**“Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea,**>>>**only a remnant of them will be saved,**<<<**for the Lord will carry out his** sentence **upon the earth fully and without delay.”**  **And as Isaiah predicted, “If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah.”**<<    **What shall we say, then? That**>>{**Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith;**<<**but that**>>**Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. Why? Because**  >>>**they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works.**<<<}<<**They have stumbled over the stumbling** stone**, as it is written, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a** stone **of stumbling, and a** rock **of offense; and** >>**whoever believes in** him **will not be put to shame.”**<<  Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to **God** for them is that they may be **saved.** For I bear them witness that>>**they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge**<<**.**>>>{**For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For** Christ **is the** end **of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.**}<<<  **For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. But**>>{**the righteousness based on faith**}<<**says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring** Christ **down) “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring** Christ **up from the** dead**). But what does it say?**{>>>**“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith**<<<**that we proclaim); because,**>>>**if you confess with your mouth that** Jesus **is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised** him **from the** dead**, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.**}<<<**For the Scripture says,**>>**“Everyone who believes in** him **will not be put to shame.”**<<For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for>>{**the** same **Lord is Lord of all,**>>>**bestowing his riches**<<<**on all who call on him. For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”**}<<  How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”  But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for “Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.” But I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, “I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry.”>{**Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, “I have been found by those who did not seek me;**>>>**I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me.**<<<**” But of Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.”**}<  I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of>>{**Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? “Lord, they have** killed **your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.” But what is God's reply to him?**>>>**“I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.”**<<<**So too**>>>**at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.**<<<**But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works;**}**otherwise grace would no longer be grace.**<<  **What then?**>**Israel** failed to obtain **what it was seeking. The** elect **obtained it, but**>>>**the rest were hardened, as it is written, “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day.”**<<<**And David says, “Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them; let their eyes be** darkened **so that they cannot see, and bend their backs forever.”**<  So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!  Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches.  **But if**>**some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot,**>>>**were grafted in**<<<**among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree,**<**do not be arrogant toward the branches.** If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” That is true.>>>{**They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.**}<<<  >>>{**Note then the kindness and the** severity **of God:** severity **toward those who have** fallen**, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be** cut off**. And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again.**}<<<For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.  Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved,>{**as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion,**>>>>**he will banish ungodliness**<<<<**from Jacob”; “and**>>**this will be my covenant with them**<<**when I take away their** sins**.”**}<  As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.>{**For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but**>>>**now have received mercy**<<< <because of their disobedience,>**so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy.**>>>**For God has consigned** **all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.**<<<**Oh,**>>>**the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord,**<<<**or who has been his counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.**}<    >>{**I appeal to you therefore, brothers,**>>>**by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,**<<<**that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.**}<<  **For**>**by** **the** **grace** **given** **to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to**>>>{**the measure of faith that God has assigned**}<<<.<For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.>>>**Having gifts** **that differ** **according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophec**y, in proportion to our f**aith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.**<<<  ^^^^{**Let love be genuine. Abhor what is** evil**; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in** tribulation**, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the** saints **and seek to show hospitality.**  **Bless those who** persecute **you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.**  **Repay no one** evil **for** evil**, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the** wrath **of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by** evil**, but overcome** evil **with good.**}<<<<  Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.  For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.  ^^^{**Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.** For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: **“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.**}<<<  ^^^{**Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of** darkness **and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the** Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.**}<<<  {^**As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.**<One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, **for** >>>**God has welcomed him**.<<< >**Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or** falls**.**<**And**>>>**he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.**<<<}  One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the **Lord.** The one who eats, eats in honor of the **Lord,** since he gives thanks to **God,** while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the **Lord** and gives thanks to **God.**^{**For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For**^^**if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord.**<<**So then, whether we live or whether we die,** we **are the Lord's.**}<    **For to this end** Christdied **and lived again**, **that** he **might be Lord** **both of the dead and of the living.**>{**Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother?**>>>**For we will all stand before** the judgment seat of God**; for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.**<<<  **Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer,**}<but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in **love.** By what you eat,>>**do not** destroy **the one for whom** Christ died**. So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as** evil**.**{>>>**For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.**<<< **Whoever thus serves** Christ **is acceptable to God**}<<**and approved by men.**    ^**So then**{**let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.**}**Do not, for the sake of food,**>>>destroy **the work of God.**<<<**Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.**<  {>**The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God**<**.**>>>**Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. But whoever has doubts is** condemned **if he eats, because the eating is not from faith.**>>>>>**For whatever does not proceed from faith is** sin**.**<<<<< <<<}  {^^^**We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak,**<<<**and not to please ourselves.**^^^**Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.**<<<**For** Christ **did not please** himself**, but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on** me**.”**}**For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that**>>>{**through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.**}<<<  {>>>**May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with** Christ Jesus**, that together** you may with one **voice glorify the God and Father of our** Lord Jesus Christ**.**<<<  ^^**Therefore welcome one another**>>>**as** Christ **has welcomed you,**<<< >>**for the glory of God**<<**.**<<}For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, “Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name.” And again it is said, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.” And again, “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him.” And again Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope.”  >>>{**May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit** you may abound in h**ope**.}<<<  ^{**I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that** you yourselves are >>>full of g**oodness,** filled with all **knowledge**<<<}**and** able to instruct one another.<**But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of**{>**the grace given me by God to be a minister of** Christ Jesus **to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God,**<**so that**>>**the offering of the Gentiles** may be acceptable**,**>>>**sanctified by the Holy Spirit.**<<< <<}    >**In** Christ Jesus**, then,** I have reason to be proud of **my work for God.**< **For I will not venture to speak of anything except** >>>{**what** Christ **has accomplished through me to**>>>>**bring the Gentiles to obedience—**by word and deed**,**<<<<**by the power of signs and wonders, by**>>>>**the power of the Spirit of God**<<<<}<<<**—so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum** I have **fulfilled the ministry** of the gospel of Christ**; and thus**>>**I make it my ambition to preach the gospel,**<<**not where** Christ **has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, but as it is written, “Those who have never been told of** him **will see, and those who have never heard will understand.” This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you.**  But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while. At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings. When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you.>>>{**I know that when I come to you** I will come in t**he fullness of the blessing of** Christ**.**}<<<    **I appeal to you, brothers, by our** Lord Jesus Christ **and by**>>>{**the love of the Spirit,**}<<<**to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, that I may be delivered from the unbelievers** in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. **May the God of peace be with you all. Amen.**    I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well. Greet Prisca and Aquila, {^^^**my fellow workers in** Christ Jesus**, who risked their necks for my life,**<<<to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia. Greet^**Mary, who has worked hard for you.**<Greet Andronicus and Junia,^^**my kinsmen and my fellow** prisoners**.**<<They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me. Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. **Greet Apelles,**>>>**who is approved in** Christ**.**<<<  Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. Greet my kinsman Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet **the beloved Persis,**^**who has worked** hard in the **Lord.**<Greet **Rufus,**>>>**chosen in the Lord;**<<<}**also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well.** Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them.Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. **Greet one another with a holy kiss.** All the churches of Christ greet you.    I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive. For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but^^**I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is** evil**.**<<  >>>{**The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.**}<<<  **The grace of our** Lord Jesus Christ **be with you.**  Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.  I Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord.  Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you.  Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you.  >>{**Now**>>>**to him who is able to strengthen you**<<<**according to my gospel and** the preaching of Jesus Christ**,**}<<**according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations,**{**according to**>>>**the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith**<<<**— to the only wise God be glory forevermore through** Jesus Christ! **Amen.**} **============** **Paul,**>>**called by the will of God to be an apostle of** Christ Jesus,<<  and our brother Sosthenes,  To the church of **God** that is in Corinth,>>{**to those**>>>**sanctified in** Christ Jesus,<<<**called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our** Lord Jesus Christ,}<<**both their Lord and ours:**  **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the** Lord Jesus Christ.  I give thanks to my **God** always for you because of>{**the grace of God that was**>>>**given you**<<<in Christ Jesus, **that**>>>**in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge**<<<}**— even as the testimony about** Christ **was confirmed among you— so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of**>>>{**our** Lord Jesus Christ, who **will sustain you to the end, guiltless**}<<<**in the day of our** Lord Jesus Christ.{>>>**God is faithful,**<<<**by whom**>>**you were called into the** fellowship **of his** Son**,**<<Jesus Christ **our Lord.**}<  **I appeal to you, brothers,**^**by the name of our** Lord Jesus Christ, **that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.**<For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. What I mean is that each one of you says, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Cephas,” or “I follow Christ.”  Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.)>**For** Christ **did not send me to baptize but** to preach the gospel**, and** not with words of **eloquent wisdom, lest the** cross **of** Christ **be emptied of its power.**<  **For**>>{**the word of the** cross **is folly to those who are** perishing**, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**}<<**For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”**  **Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom,**>**it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach** Christ crucified**, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks,**>>>{Christ **the power of God and the wisdom of God**}<<<**. For**{**the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.**}<    **For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.**>>**But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of**{**God. And** >>>**because of him you are in** Christ Jesus,<<<who **became to us** wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,}<<**so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”**  >**And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except** Jesus Christ **and** him crucified**. And**>>**I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling,**<<**and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but**>>>**in demonstration of the Spirit and of power**<<<, **so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in**>>>**the power of God.**<<< <    **Yet**>**among the mature we do impart wisdom,**<**although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But**>>**we impart**>>>**a secret and hidden wisdom of God**<<<, **which God decreed before the ages for** our g**lory**<<. **None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have** crucified **the**>>>{**Lord of glory**}<<<**.But,**>>>>{**as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”— these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.**}<<<<  >>>>{**For the Spirit searches everything, even**>>>**the depths of God**<<<**.**} **For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also**{**no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God,**<<<<**that**>>**we might understand the** >>>**things freely given us by God.**<<<}**And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but**>>>**taught by the Spirit,**<<<**interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.**<<**The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.**>>{**“For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But**>>>>we have the mind of Christ.<<<<}<<  But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not being merely human?  What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.  According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— **each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.** If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. **If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.**  >>>{**Do you not know that** you **are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you**?}<<< **If anyone** destroys **God's** temple**, God will** destroy **him. For**>>>{**God's** temple **is holy, and you are that** temple**.**}<<<  **Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their craftiness,” and again, “The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.” So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or** death **or the present or the future—all are yours, and** you are Christ's**, and** Christ **is God's.**  >**This is how one should regard us, as** servants of Christ **and**>>stewards **of the mysteries of God.**<<**Moreover,**>>>**it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.**<<<**But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted.**>>>**It is the Lord who judges me.**<<<**Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the** Lord **comes,** who **will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.**<  I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another.>**For who sees anything different in you?**>>**What do you have that you did not receive?**<<<**If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?**  Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you! **For**>>{**I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. We are fools for** Christ's sake**, but you are wise in** Christ**. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when** persecuted, **we endure; when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.**}<<  I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me. That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.  Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. **But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power.**>>>{**For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.**}<<<**What do you wish?**^**Shall I come to you with a rod, or** with love in a spirit of g**entleness**?<    It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.>**For though absent in body,** I am present in spirit**; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. When you are assembled in the name of the** Lord Jesus **and my spirit is present, with the power of our** Lord Jesus**,**>>{**you are to deliver this man to** Satan **for the** destruction **of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.**}<< <  **Your boasting is not good.**{>>**Do you not know that a little** leaven **leavens the whole lump?**<<^**Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For** Christ, **our Passover lamb, has been** sacrificed**.**}**Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and** evil**, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.**<  I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. **But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.**  For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”  When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers?  To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? hy not rather be defrauded? But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers!  >>>{**Or do you not know that the unrighteous** will not inherit **the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers** will inherit **the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of** the Lord Jesus Christ **and by the Spirit of our God.**}<<<  >{**“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful.**}**“All things are lawful for me,” but**>>{**I will not be** dominated **by anything.**}<<**“Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will** destroy **both one and the other.**{>>>**The body is not meant for** sexual immorality, **but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.**<<<**And God raised the** Lord **and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that**>>>**your** bodiesare members of Christ<<<**?**} **Shall I then take the** members **of** Christ **and make them members of a** prostitute**? Never!**<**Or do you not know that** **he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her**? **For,** **as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” But**>>>>>>{**he who is joined to the** Lord **becomes one spirit with him.**}<<<<<<  >>>{**Flee from sexual immorality. Every other** sin **a person commits is outside the body, but the** sexually immoral person sins **against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.**}<<<  Now concerning the matters about which you wrote:>**“It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”**<**But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.** **Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.** Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. I wish that all were as I myself am.>>>**But** each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another**.**<<<  To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am. But **if they cannot exercise self-control,** they should marry. For **it is better to marry than to burn with passion.**  To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.  To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.  But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved.>>**God has called you to peace.**<< For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?  ^**Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him.**<**This is my rule in all the churches.** Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision.>>{**For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision,**>>>**but keeping the commandments of God.**<<<}<<Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) **For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise**>>{**he who was free when called is a bondservant of** Christ**.**>>>**You were bought**<<<**with a price; do not become bondservants of men.**}<<^**So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.**<    Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that.  ^^{**This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.**  **I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.**}<<  **If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well. So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better.**  A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is.>**And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.**<  Now concerning food offered to idols:>**we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This “knowledge” puffs up, but**>>>{**love builds up.**}<<<  ^^^{**If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know.**}<<<**But**>>>{**if anyone loves God, he is known by God.**}<<< <  Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols,{**we know that** >>**“an idol has no real existence,”**<<}and that “there is no God but one.” For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”— yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.  >>**However, not all possess this knowledge.**<<But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do.  ^**But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so**>>>**by your knowledge this weak person is** destroyed**, the brother for whom** Christ **died. Thus,** sinning **against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you** sin **against** Christ**.**<<<**Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.**<  >**Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen** Jesus **our Lord? Are not you my workmanship**>>>**in the Lord**<<<**?**<If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.  **This is my defense to those who would examine me. Do we not have the right to eat and drink? Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the** Lord **and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living?**  **Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? For it is written in the Law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.”** Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop. If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more?  **Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but**^^**we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of** Christ<<**.**<<Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.  But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision. For I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting. For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship. What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.  ^^**For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.**<<To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the **law** I became as one under the **law** (though not being myself under the **law**) that I might win those under the **law.** To those outside the **law** I became as one outside the **law** (not being outside the **law** of **God** but under the **law** of Christ) that I might win those outside the **law.**^^**To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.**<<  {>>>**Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but**>>>>**only one**<<<<**receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be** disqualified.<<<}    **For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that**>>>{**our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was** Christ. **Nevertheless,**>>>>**with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness**<<<<**.**}<<<  >>>{**Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire** evil **as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand** fell **in a single day. We must not put** Christ **to the test, as some of them did and were** destroyed **by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were** destroyed **by the Destroyer.**<<<  >>>**Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he** fall**. No** temptation **has overtaken you that is not common to man.**>>>>  **God is faithful, and he will not let you be** tempted **beyond your ability, but with the** temptation **he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.**<<<<  **Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.**}<<<**I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say.** The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.    **Consider the people of Israel:** **are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? What do I imply then?** **That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything?** **No,**>>>{**I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to** demons **and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with** demons**. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of** demons**. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of** demons**.**}<<<**Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?**  ^^{**“All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up.**<<}^^^{**Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.**}<<<  Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. For “the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof.”  If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience— I do not mean your conscience, but his. For **why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?**  So, whether you eat or drink, or^^^{**whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**}<<<Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of **God,** just as^^^{**I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.**}<<<**Be imitators of me, as I am of** Christ.  Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you.   But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.  Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice, nor do the churches of God.  But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because^**when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse.** For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, **I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, for**^^**there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.**<< <When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.  For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.  Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.{>>>**But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be** judged**.**<<<**But**>>>**when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be** condemned **along with the world.**<<<}  So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another— if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.    Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that **when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “**Jesus **is accursed!” and**>>>{**no one can say “**Jesus is **Lord” except in the Holy Spirit**}<<<.  Now there are varieties of gifts, but>>>**the same Spirit**; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and **there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.**  **To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.**  For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.**For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—**Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—**and all were made to drink of one Spirit.**<<<  For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.  The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.  Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But ^^^{**earnestly desire the higher gifts.**}<<<    **And I will show you**{>>>**a still more excellent way.**  **If** I speak **in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if** I have **prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if** I have **all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.**<<<  >>>>**Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.**<<<<  >>>>**Love never ends.** As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but **when the perfect comes,** the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now **we see** in a mirror dimly, but **then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.**<<<<  >>>>**So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.**<<<<}  ^^^{**Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.**}<<<**For**>>**one who speaks in a tongue** **speaks not to men but to God;** **for no one understands him, but** **he utters mysteries in the Spirit.** **On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.**<<  Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning, but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me.^^**So with yourselves, since you are** >>>**eager for manifestations of the Spirit**<<<, **strive to excel in building up the church.**<<    Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say “Amen” to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up.  I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.  ^**Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in** evil**, but in your thinking be mature.**<**In the Law it is written, “By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.”**  Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds?>>>{**But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.**}<<<  What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God.  Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. For>>{**God is not a God of confusion but of peace.**}<<  As in all the churches of the saints, **the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission,** as the Law also says. If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For **it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.**  **Or was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones it has reached? If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.**  **So, my brothers,**^^{**earnestly desire to** >>>**prophesy**<<<}<<, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But all things should be done decently and in order.  **Now I would remind you, brothers, of**>{**the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and**>>>**by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.**<<<}<  For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.  For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But>>>{**by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was** not in vain. **On the contrary,**>>>>I worked harder than any of them, **though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.**<<<<}**Whether then it was I or they, so w**e preach **and so you believed.**<<<  Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.^^{**If in** Christ **we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.**}<<  But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. **For as by a man came** death**,** **by** a man **has come also the resurrection of** the dead**.** **For** **as in Adam all** die**, so also** in Christ shall all b**e made alive.** But each in his own order: Christ **the firstfruits, then at** his **coming** those who belong **to** Christ**. Then comes the end, when** he **delivers the kingdom to God the Father** after destroying every rule and every authority and power**. For** he **must reign until** he **has put all** his **enemies under** his **feet. The last enemy to be** destroyed **is** death**. For “God has put all things in subjection under** his feet**.”** But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. **When all things are subjected to** him**, then the** Son himself **will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under** him**, that God may be all in all.**  Otherwise, **what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead?** If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?>>**Why are we in danger every hour? I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in** Christ Jesus our Lord**, I die every day!**<<**What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”**{**Do not be deceived**}**:**>**“Bad company ruins good morals.”**{**Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and**>>**do not go on** sinning**.**}<<**For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.**<  **But**>**someone will ask,** **“How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.** **And what you sow is not the body that is to be,** but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. **But God gives it a body as he has chosen,** and to each kind of seed its own body. For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. **There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies,** but **the glory of the heavenly** is of one kind, and **the glory of the earthly** is of another. There is one **glory of the sun,** and another **glory of the moon,** and another **glory of the stars;** for **star differs from star in glory.**  **So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.**<  **If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”;**>>>{the last Adam **became a life-giving spirit.**}<<<But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. **The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the** second man **is from** heaven**. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and**>>{**as is** the man of heaven,>>>**so also are** those **who** are **of heaven.**<<<**Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust,**>>>we **shall also bear the image of** the man of heaven.<<<}<<  **I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:** >{**“**Death **is swallowed up in victory.” “O** death**, where is your victory? O** death**, where is your sting?”**>>**The sting of** death **is** sin**, and the power of** sin **is the law.**<<**But**>>>**thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our** Lord Jesus Christ.<<<}<  ^^^{**Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.**}<<<  Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.  I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for **I intend to pass through Macedonia,** and **perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter,** so that you may help me on my journey, **wherever I go.** For I do not want to see you now just in passing. **I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits.** But **I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.**  ^**When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for** he is doing **the work of the Lord**, as I am**.**^^**So let no one despise him.**<<**Help him on his way in peace,**<that he may return to me, for I am expecting him with the brothers.  Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brothers, but it was not at all his will to come now. He will come when he has opportunity.  ^^^{**Be watchful,**>>**stand firm in the faith,**<<**act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.**}<<<  Now I urge you, brothers—you know that^^**the household of Stephanas** were the first converts in Achaia, and that **they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints— be subject to such as these, and to every fellow worker and laborer.**<<I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because **they have made up for your absence, for they refreshed my spirit** as well as yours. Give recognition to such people.  The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. All the brothers send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.  I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand.  >>{**If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be** accursed**. Our** Lord**, come!**}<<  **The grace of the** Lord Jesus **be with you.**  **My love be with you all in** Christ Jesus**. Amen.**  **============**  **Paul,**>**an apostle of** Christ Jesus **by the will of God,**<and Timothy our brother,To the church of God that is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia:  **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the** Lord Jesus Christ**.**  **Blessed be the God and Father of our** Lord Jesus Christ,>>>**the Father of mercies** **and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction,**<<< **so that**^**we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with**{**the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.**<**For**>**as we**>>**share abundantly**<<**in** Christ's sufferings, **so**>>>**through** Christ **we share abundantly in comfort too.**<<<}**If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same** sufferings **that we** suffer**. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our** sufferings**, you will also share in our comfort.**<  For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of>**the affliction we experienced in Asia. For**>>**we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the** sentence of death.<<**But that was**>>**to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the** dead.<< >>>**He delivered us from such a** deadly peril, **and he will deliver us.**<<<**On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.**<You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.  >>{**For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but**>>>**by the grace of God**<<<, **and supremely so toward you.**}<<For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and understand and I hope you will fully understand— just as you did partially understand us—that on the day of our Lord Jesus you will boast of us as we will boast of you.  Because I was sure of this, **I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a second experience of grace.** I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on my way to Judea. Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my **plans according to the flesh, ready to say “Yes, yes” and “No, no” at the same time**?  >>>**As surely as God is faithful**<<<, **our word to you has not been Yes and No. For the** Son **of God,** Jesus Christ**,** **whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I,** **was not Yes and No, but in** him **it is always Yes. For**{>>**all the promises of God find their Yes in** him**.**<<**That is why it is through** him **that we utter our Amen to God for** his **glory.**}  >>>{**And it is God who establishes us with you in** Christ**, and has anointed us, and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.**}<<<  But I call God to witness against me—it was to spare you that I refrained from coming again to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith, but{^we work with you<for>>yourj**oy**, **for you stand firm in your** **faith.**<<}For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you. For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for>**I felt sure of all of you,**>>**that my joy would be the joy of you all**<<.<For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.  Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.  ^**When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of** Christ,>>>**even though a door was opened for me in the Lord**<<<, **my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.**<  **But thanks be to**>>>**God, who in** Christ **always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of** him **everywhere.**<<<**For**>>we are the aroma of Christ **to God** among those who are being **saved and among those who are** perishing**, to one a fragrance from** death **to** death**, to the other a fragrance from life to life.** **Who is sufficient for these things? For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity,**>>>**as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in** Christ.<<< <<  Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. And you show that>{you are **a letter from** Christ **delivered by us, written not with ink but**>>**with the Spirit of the living God,**<< **not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.**}<  >{**Such is** **the confidence that we have through** Christ **toward God. Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but**>>>**our sufficiency is from God, who has made us sufficient**<<<  **to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but**>>>**of the Spirit.**<<< **For the letter** kills, **but**>>>**the Spirit gives life.**<<<}<  >>{**Now if the ministry of** death, **carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, will not**>>>**the ministry of the Spirit**<<<**have even more glory? For if there was glory in the ministry of** condemnation,>>>**the ministry of righteousness**<<<  **must far exceed it in glory. Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory.**}<<  >{>>**Since we have such a hope, we are very bold,**<<**not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through** Christ **is it taken away. Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.**>>>**Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.**<<<**And** we all, with unveiled face,>>>beholding the glory of the **Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.**<<<**For**>>**this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.**<<}<  >**Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God,**<^^^**we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are** perishing**. In their case** the god of this world has blinded the minds **of the unbelievers,** to keep them from seeing **the light of the gospel of the glory of** Christ, who **is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but** Jesus Christ as Lord, **with ourselves as your servants for** Jesus' **sake.**<<< >{**For God, who said, “Let light shine out of** darkness**,”**>>**has shone in our hearts to give**>>>**the light of the knowledge of the glory of God**<<<**in the face of** Jesus Christ.<<}<  >{**But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that**>>>**the surpassing power belongs to God**<<<**and not to us.**>>> **We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to** despair**;** persecuted**, but not forsaken;** struck down**, but not** destroyed**; always carrying in the body the** death **of** Jesus, **so that the life of** Jesus **may also** be manifested in our bodies**. For we who live are always being given over to** death **for** Jesus' **sake, so that the life of** Jesus **also** may be manifested in our mortal flesh**.** <<<**So** death **is at work in us, but life in you.**}<  {>>>**Since** we have the same spirit of f**aith according to what has been written, “I believed, and so I spoke,”** we also b**elieve, and so we also speak,**<<<**knowing that**>>**he who raised the** Lord Jesus **will raise us also with** Jesus **and bring** us **with** you>>>**into his presence**<<<}. **For it is all for your sake,** **so that as grace extends to more and more people**<<**it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.**  **So**{^**we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away,**<  >>>**our inner self is being renewed day by day.**<<<**For**>>>**this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,**<<<**as**>>>**we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.**<<<}  **For**>>{**we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is** destroyed**, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.**}<<**For** ^**in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent,**{**we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed,**<**but**>**that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be**>>>**swallowed up by life.**<<< >>>**He who has prepared us for this very thing is God,**<<<>>>**who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.**<<< <}  ^^{**So we are always of good courage.**<<**We** know that **while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord,**>>>**for** we walk by f**aith, not by sight.**<<<**Yes,**^^**we are of good courage,**<<}**and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away,**{^^**we make it our aim to please him.**<<>>>**For we must all appear before the judgment seat of** Christ, **so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good** orevil**.**<<<}  **Therefore,**>>>{**knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others.**}<<<  **But**>{**what we are is known to God,**}<**and**^**I hope it is known also to your conscience.**<We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may **be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart.** >{**For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For**>>>the love of Christ **controls us**<<<, **because we have concluded this: that** one **has** died **for all, therefore all have** died**; and** hedied **for all,**>>>**that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for** him who **for their sake** died **and was raised.**<<<}<  **From now on, therefore,**{^^^**we regard no one according to the flesh.**<<<  Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.>>**Therefore,**>>>>**if anyone is in** Christ, **he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God,**<<<<**who through** Christ **reconciled us to himself**<<}**and**>**gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in** Christ **God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their** trespasses **against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for** Christ**, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of** Christ**,**{**be reconciled to God. For our sake he made** him **to be** sinwho **knew no** sin**,**<**so that**>>>>**in** him **we might** become t**he righteousness of God.**<<<<}  {>>**Working together with** him<<**, then, we appeal to you**>>>**not to receive the grace of God in vain.**<<<**For he says,**>**“In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you.”**} **Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.**<  **We put no obstacle in anyone's way,** so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but>>>{**as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities,** beatings**,** imprisonments**, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as** punished**, and yet not** killed**; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.**}<<<  **We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians;**^**our heart is wide open. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. In return (I speak as to children) widen your hearts**<**also.**  ^^**Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with** darkness**? What accord has** Christ **with** Belial**? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?**<< >>>{**For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and** they **shall be my** people**. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and**>>>>**touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,**<<<<**and I will be a father to you, and you shall be** sons **and** daughters **to me, says the Lord Almighty.”**}<<<  >>>>{**Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.**}<<<<  Make room in your hearts for us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. **I am acting with great boldness toward you;** I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort.>>{**In all our** affliction**, I am overflowing with joy.**}<<  **For even**{**when we came into Macedonia,**>**our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within. But** >>**God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us**<<**by the coming of Titus,**}**and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more.**<  For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because>>{**you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief,** so that you suffered no loss through us. **For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces** death**. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.**}<<So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the one who did the wrong, nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong, but in order that your earnestness for us might be revealed to you in the sight of God. Therefore we are comforted.  And besides our own comfort, we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. For whatever boasts I made to him about you, I was not put to shame. But just as everything we said to you was true, so also our boasting before Titus has proved true. And his affection for you is even greater, as he remembers^**the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling.**<I rejoice, because **I have complete confidence in you.**  We want you to know, brothers, about^^^**the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.**<<<Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace.>>**But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you**<<**—**^^**see that you excel in this act of grace also.**<<  **I say this not as a command, but**>>**to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine**<<. **For**>**you know the grace of our** Lord Jesus Christ**, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.**<  And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it.^^**So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.**<<  For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. As it is written, “Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack.”  But thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same **earnest care I have for you.** For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest he is going to you of his own accord. With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel. And not only that, but he has been appointed by the churches to travel with us as we carry out this act of grace that is being ministered by us, **for the glory of the Lord himself** and to show our good will. We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man.  And with them we are sending^^**our brother whom we have often tested and found earnest in many matters,**<<but who is now more earnest than ever because of his great confidence in you. As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. And as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. So>>**give proof before the churches of your love**<<and of our boasting about you to these men.  Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the ministry for the saints, for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year. And **your zeal has stirred up most of them.** But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you may not prove empty in this matter, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be. Otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—for being so confident. So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction.  {^^**The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.** **Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**<<>>>**And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.**<<<**As it is written,** >>**“He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor;**>>>**his righteousness endures forever.” He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest**>>>>**of** your **righteousness**<<<<.You **will be enriched in every way**<<<**to be generous in every way,**<<}which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.  For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to **God. By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of**  {^^**your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of** Christ,<< **and**^**the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others,**<**while they long for you and pray for you,**>>**because of the surpassing grace of God upon** you**.**}**Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!**<<  ^**I, Paul, myself entreat you, by**{>>>**the meekness and gentleness of** Christ<<<—I **who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!**}<— I beg of you that when I am present I may not have to show boldness with such confidence as I count on showing against some who suspect us of walking according to the flesh.>>{For though we **walk in the flesh,** we are not waging war **according to the flesh. For** the **weapons of our warfare** are not **of the flesh but**>>>have **divine power**<<<to **destroy strongholds.**>>>We **destroy arguments** and **every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God,** and take every thought captive to obey Christ,<<<being ready to punish every **disobedience, when your obedience is complete.**}<<  **Look at what is before your eyes.**>**If anyone is confident that he is** Christ's<, let him remind himself that just as he is Christ's, so also are we. For even **if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you,** I will not be ashamed. I do not want to appear to be frightening you with my letters. For they say, “His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account.” Let such a person understand that what we say by letter when absent, we do when present.  Not that we dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who are commending themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding. But we will not boast beyond limits, but will boast only with regard to the area of influence God assigned to us, to reach even to you. For we are not overextending ourselves, as though we did not reach you. For we were the first to come all the way to you with the gospel of Christ. We do not boast beyond limit in the labors of others. But>{**our hope is that**>>**as your faith increases,**<<**our area of influence among you may be greatly enlarged**}, **so that we may preach the gospel in lands beyond you,**<without boasting of work already done in another's area of influence. **“Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.” For**>**it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.**<  I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since **I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to** Christ**.**>>>{**But I am afraid that as** the serpent deceived **Eve by** his cunning**, your**>>**thoughts**<<**will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to** Christ**. For if someone comes and proclaims another** Jesus **than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.**}<<<Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles. **Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge;** **indeed, in every way we have made this plain to you in all things.**  Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God's gospel to you free of charge? I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way. As>>{**the truth of** Christ **is** in me}<<, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do.  >**For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of** Christ**. And no wonder, for even** Satan **disguises** himself **as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if** his **servants, also,** disguise themselves **as servants of righteousness. Their** end **will correspond to their deeds.**<  I repeat, let no one think me foolish. But even if you do, accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little. What I am saying with this boastful confidence, I say not as the Lord would but as a fool. Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast.^^^{**For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves**! **For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you, or devours you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face. To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that!**}<<<  **But whatever anyone else dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that.** Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I.^^^{**Are they servants of** Christ**? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near** death**. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the** forty lashes less one**. Three times I was** beaten with rods**. Once I was** stoned**. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in** danger **from rivers,** danger **from robbers,** danger **from my own people,** danger **from Gentiles,** danger **in the city,** danger **in the wilderness,** danger **at sea,** danger **from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.**>>**Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?**<<    **If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.**}<<<  {**The God and Father of the** Lord Jesus**, he who is blessed forever**}**,** knows that I am not lying. At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.  I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses— though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth; but I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me.  >>{**So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh,** a messenger of Satan to **harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for**>>>**my power is made perfect in weakness**<<<**.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses,**>>>**so that the power of** Christ **may rest upon me**<<<. **For the sake of** Christ**, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships,** persecutions**, and calamities**. **For when I am weak, then I am strong.**}<<  I have been a fool! You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you.>{**For I was not at all inferior to these super-apostles,**>>**even though I am nothing.**<<}**The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.**<For in what were you less favored than the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!  Here for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours but you. For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.^^^**I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?**<<<But granting that I myself did not burden you, I was crafty, you say, and got the better of you by deceit. Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you? I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not act in the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?  Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you?^**It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in** Christ**, and all for your upbuilding, beloved.**<**For I fear that perhaps when I come** I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—^**that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who** sinned **earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.**<  This is the third time I am coming to you. Every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. I warned those who sinned before and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again I will not spare them— since you seek proof that>>{>>>Christ **is speaking in me.**<<<He **is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. For** he **was** crucified **in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in** him**, but in dealing with you we will live with** him **by the power of God.**}<<  >>>{**Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or**>>>>**do you not realize this about yourselves, that** Jesus Christ **is in you?—unless indeed** you fail to meet the test!<<<<**I hope you will find out that we have not** failed **the test. But we pray to God** >>>>**that you may not do** wrong<<<<**—not that we may appear to have met the test, but**>>>>**that you may do what is right**<<<<**, though we may seem to have** failed**. For**>>>>**we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth**<<<<**.**}<<< >**For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong.**<>>>{**Your restoration is what we pray for.**}<<<For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.  ^^**Finally,**{**brothers, rejoice.**>>**Aim for restoration**<<, **comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace;**<<**and**>>>**the God of love and peace will be with you.**<<<}  **Greet one another with a holy kiss.** All **the** saints **greet you.**  >>>{**The grace of** the Lord Jesus Christ **and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.**}<<<  **============**  **Paul,**>**an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through** Jesus Christ **and God the Father**,<**who raised** him **from the** dead— and all the brothers who are with me,  To the churches of Galatia:  >**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and**{the Lord Jesus Christ,who **gave** himself **for our** sins>>**to deliver us from the present** evil **age,**<< a**ccording to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever.**}<**Amen.**  **I am astonished that**>>>**you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of** Christ **and are turning to a different gospel— not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of** Christ.<<<**But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.**  **For**^^{**am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of** Christ.}<<  For I would have you know, brothers, that>>{**the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of** Jesus Christ.}<<  **For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I** persecuted **the church of God** violently **and tried to** destroy **it.** And **I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when**>>{**he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his** Son **to me, in order that I might preach** him **among the Gentiles**}<<**,**>**I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.**  **Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the** Lord's **brother.**<**(In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!)** Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only were hearing it said, “He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.” And they glorified God because of me.  **Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem** with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain. But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery— to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.  And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me. On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.  But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.  But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?”  We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet>**we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in** Jesus Christ, **so**>>**we also have believed in** Christ Jesus, **in order to be justified by faith in** Christ<<**and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.**<  **But if, in our endeavor to be justified in** Christ**, we too were found to be** sinners**, is** Christ **then a servant of** sin**? Certainly not! For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a** transgressor.>**For through the law I** died **to the law, so that**>{**I might live to God.**>>>**I have been** crucified **with** Christ. **It is no longer I who live, but** Christ **who lives in me.**<<<**And**>>**the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the** Son of God<<,>>>who **loved me and gave** himself **for me.**<<<}<**I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then** Christ died **for no purpose.**  **O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that** Jesus Christ **was publicly portrayed as** crucified**. Let me ask you only this:**>>>{**Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?**}**Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you** suffer so **many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?**{**Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the**  **law, or by hearing with faith**}<<<**—**  >>{**just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.**}<<**And the Scripture, foreseeing that**>>**God would justify the Gentiles by faith**<<, **preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” So then,**>>**those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.**<< <  For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for> >>{**“The righteous shall live by faith.”**}<< **But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.”** Christ **redeemed us from the** curse **of the law by becoming a** curse **for us—for it is written, “**Cursed **is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— so that in** Christ Jesus **the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles,**<**so that**>>>{**we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.**}<<<  To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ. This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the **promise** void.>**For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but**>>**God gave it to Abraham by a promise**<<**.**<  Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, **until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made,** and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.  Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not!>{**For if a law had been given that**>>>**could give life, then righteousness**<<<  **would indeed be by the law. But the Scripture imprisoned everything under** sin, **so that**>>**the promise by faith in** Jesus Christ **might be given to those who believe**<<.}<  >**Now**>>>**before faith came,**<<<**we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until**>>>**the coming faith**<<<**would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until** Christ **came, in order that**>>**we might be justified by faith.**<<**But now that**>>>**faith has come,**<<<**we are no longer under a guardian,**  **For**{>>**in** Christ Jesus **you are all** sons **of God, through faith.**<<**For as many of you as were baptized into** Christ>>>**have put on** Christ.<<<}  There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **And if you are** Christ's, **then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.**  **I mean that**>**the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come**, **God sent forth his** Son, **born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as** sons<**. And**{**because you are** sons**,**>>>**God has sent the Spirit of his** Son **into our hearts,**<<<}**crying, “Abba! Father!” So**>**you are no longer a slave, but a** son**, and if a** son**, then an heir through God.**<  {>>**Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that**>>>**you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God,**<<<**how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?**<<You observe days and months and seasons and years!>>>**I am afraid I may have labored over you** in vain**.**<<<}  Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You did me no wrong. You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first, and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. What then has become of **your blessedness**? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me.^^^**Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?**<<<  **They make much of you, but for no good purpose.** **They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them. It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose,** and not only when I am present with you,>{**my little children, for whom**>>>**I am again in the anguish of childbirth until** Christ **is formed in you!**<<<I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for **I am perplexed about you.**}<  Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise.  Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written, “Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband.”  >**Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are** children **of promise. But just as at that time**{**he who was born according to the flesh** persecuted **him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now.**}**But what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman** shall not inherit **with the son of the free woman.” So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.**<  {>>>>**For freedom** Christ **has set us free;**<<<< >>>**stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.**<<<}  Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law.>>{**You are severed from** Christ**, you who would be justified by the law;**>>>**you have** fallen away **from grace.**<<<**For**>>>>**through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.**<<<<**For in** Christ Jesus **neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but**>>>>**only faith working through love.**<<<<}<<  >**You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion is not from** him **who calls you.**>>>>**A little leaven leavens the whole lump**<<<<**.**<I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!  >>{**For**>>>>**you were called to freedom**<<<<**, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but**>>>>**through love serve one another**<<<<. **For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.**}<<  **But I say,**>>>{**walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit,**}**you are not under the law.**<<<  >>>{**Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will** not inherit **the kingdom of God.**}<<<  >>>{**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to** Christ Jesus **have** crucified **the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.**}<<<^**Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.**  **Brothers,**{**if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be** tempted**.**}>>>{**Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of** Christ.}<<<**For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. For each will have to bear his own load.**<  Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.  >>>{**Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.**}<<<^^{**And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.**}<<  See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.   It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.>**But far be it from me to boast except in**>>>{**the** cross **of our** Lord Jesus Christ, **by which the world has been** crucified **to me, and I to the world.**}<<<{**For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but**>>>**a new creation.**<<<**And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them,**}<**and upon the Israel of God.**  **From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of** Jesus.  **The grace of our Lord** Jesus Christ **be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.**  **============**  **Paul,**>**an apostle of** Christ Jesus **by the will of God,**<  >{**To the** saints **who are in Ephesus, and**>>**are faithful**<<**in** Christ Jesus:}<  **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the** Lord Jesus Christ.  **Blessed be**>{**the God and Father of our** Lord Jesus Christ,>>>**who has blessed us in** Christ **with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,**<<<**even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world,**>>>**that we should be holy and blameless before him.**<<<**In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through** Jesus Christ,} **according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in** the Beloved. **In** him **we have redemption through** his blood, **the forgiveness of** our trespasses, **according to**>>>**the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us,**<<< **in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in** Christ **as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in** him, **things in heaven and things on earth.**<  >{**In** him **we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,**}**so that we who were the first to hope in** Christ **might be to the praise of his glory.**{**In** him **you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in** him,>>**were sealed with**>>>**the promised Holy Spirit,**<<<**who is the guarantee of our inheritance**<<**until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.**}<  {**For this reason, because**>**I have heard of your faith in the** Lord Jesus **and your love toward all the** saints**,**<**I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in**>>>**my prayers,** **that the God of our** Lord Jesus Christ**,**>>>>>**the Father of glory,**<<<<<**may**>>>>**give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the** saints**, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe,**<<<<**according to the working of his great might**}**that he worked in** Christ **when he raised** him **from the** dead **and seated** him **at his right hand in the heavenly places,**<<<**far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under** his **feet and gave** him **as head over all things to the church, which is** his **body, the fullness of** him **who fills all in all.**  >>>{**And you were dead in the** trespasses **and** sins **in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the** prince of the power of the air**,** the spirit that is now at work **in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of** wrath**, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were** dead **in our** trespasses**,**>>>>**made us alive together with** Christ<<<<**—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with** him **and seated us with** him **in the heavenly places in** Christ Jesus**, so that in the coming ages he might show**>>>>**the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in** Christ Jesus**.**<<<<**For**>>>>**by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works,**<<<<**so that no one may boast. For**>>>>**we are his workmanship, created in** Christ Jesus **for good works, which God prepared beforehand,**<<<<**that we should walk in them.**}<<<  **Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh,** called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— **remember that you were at that time separated from** Christ**, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But**>>>**now in** Christ Jesus **you who once were far off have been brought near by the** blood **of** Christ.  **For** he himself **is our peace,**<<<who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, **so making peace, and might reconcile us** both **to God in one body through the** cross**, thereby killing the hostility. And** he **came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.**>>{**For through** him **we both**  >>>>**have access in one Spirit to the Father.**<<<<}<<  **So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow** citizens **with the** saints **and** members **of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,** Christ Jesus himself **being the cornerstone, in** whom>**the whole structure, being joined together,**>>>**grows into a holy temple in the Lord.**{**In** him **you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.**}<<<  **For this reason I, Paul, a** prisoner **of** Christ Jesus **on behalf of you Gentiles—**  **assuming that you have heard of**>**the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation,**<**as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive**>my **insight into the mystery of** Christ, **which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.**<**This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in** Christ Jesus **through the gospel.**    >{**Of this gospel I was made a minister according to**>>>**the gift of God's grace,**<<<**which was given me by**>>>**the working of his power.**<<<}**To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given,**{**to preach to the Gentiles**>>>**the unsearchable riches of** Christ,<<<}**and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to**>>>>{**the eternal purpose that he has realized in** Christ Jesus our Lord, **in** whom **we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in** him.}<<<<**So I ask you not to lose heart over what** I am suffering for you, **which is your glory.**<  **For this reason**>>{**I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that**>>>>**according to the riches of his glory**<<<<**he**>>>>**may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that** Christ **may dwell in your hearts through faith**<<<<**—that you,**>>>**being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend**<<<**with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and**>>>>**to know the love of** Christ **that surpasses knowledge**<<<<**,**>>>>>**that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**<<<<<}<<  **Now to**>>>>{**him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,**}<<<<**to him be glory in** the church **and in** Christ Jesus **throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.**  **I therefore, a** prisoner **for the Lord,**^^^^{**urge you to**>>>**walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called**<<<, **with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**}<<<<**There is one** body **and one Spirit—just as**>**you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all,**<**who is over all and through all and in all.**  >>>**But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of** Christ's **gift. Therefore it says, “When** he **ascended on high** he **led a host of captives, and** he **gave gifts to men.”**<<<**(In saying, “**He **ascended,” what does it mean but that** he **had also descended into the lower regions, the earth?** He who **descended is** the one who **also ascended far above all the heavens, that** he **might fill all things.)** >>**And** he **gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the** saints **for the work of ministry, for building up the body of** Christ,{**until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God,**<<**to mature manhood,**>>>>**to the measure of the stature of the fullness of** Christ,<<<<}  ^^**so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.**<<**Rather,**^^^{**speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into** him who **is the head, into** Christ,}<<<**from** whom^^**the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.**<<  **Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that**^^{**you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are** darkened **in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.**}<<  **But that is not**>>**the way you learned** Christ!**— assuming that you have heard about** him **and were taught in** him**,**{>>>**as the truth is in** Jesus**, to put off your old self,**<<<**which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,**<<**and**>>>**to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,**<<<**and**>>>>**to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.**<<<<}  ^**Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.**{^^**Be angry and do not** sin; **do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to** the devil.<<}**Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.**<  {^^**Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths,**<<**but**^^^**only such as is good for building up,**<<<**as fits the occasion,**^^^**that it may give grace to those who hear.**<<<**And do not grieve**>>>**the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**<<<**Let**^^^**all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in** Christ **forgave you.**<<<}  {^^^^**Therefore be imitators of God,**<<<<**as**>>>**beloved children**<<<. **And** ^^^^**walk in love, as** Christ **loved us and gave** himself **up for us, a fragrant offering and** sacrifice **to God.**<<<<}  {>>>**But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you**<<<,>>**as is proper among** saints. **Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.**>>>**For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has** no inheritance **in the kingdom of** Christ **and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for** because of these things **the** wrath **of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.**<<< **Therefore do not become partners with them;**<<}  {>>**for at one time you were** darkness,>>>**but now**>>>>**you are light in the Lord.**<<<<**Walk as** children **of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.**<<<**Take no part in the unfruitful works of** darkness,<<}**but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for**>>**anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore**{**it says, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the** dead, **and** Christ **will shine on you.”**}<<  ^^{**Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are** evil. **Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but**>>>>**be filled with the Spirit,**<<<<}**addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,**  {^^^**giving thanks always and for everything**<<<**to God the Father in the name of our** Lord Jesus Christ,  **submitting to one another out of reverence for** Christ.}<<  Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.  ^^**Husbands, love your wives,**<<**as**>>>{Christ **loved the church and gave** himselfup **for her,**>>>>**that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,**<<<<**so that**>>>>he **might present the church to** himself **in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.**<<<<}<<<{**In the same way** ^^**husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh,**  >>**but nourishes and cherishes it,**<<**just as** Christ **does the church,**<<**because we are members of** his **body**}**.**^^^**“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to** Christ **and the church.**<<<**However,**^^{**let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.**}<<  Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”  Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.  **Bondservants,**>>>>{**obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would** Christ,}<<<<**not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but**>>>{**as bondservants of** Christ, **doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord,**}<<<**whether he is a bondservant or is free.**  Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.  **Finally,**{>>>**be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.**<<<>>**Put on the whole armor of God,**>>>**that you may be able to stand against** the schemes of the devil**. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the** rulers**, against the** authorities**, against the cosmic** powers **over this present** darkness**, against the** spiritual forces of evil **in the heavenly places.**<<<**Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the** evil day, **and** >>>**having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore,**<<<**having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.**>>>**In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all** the flaming darts of the evil one;<<<**and take the helmet of salvation, and**>>>**the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,**<<< >>>**praying at all times in the Spirit,**<<<**with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the** saints**,**<<  **and also for me, that**>>>**words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in** chains**, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.**<<<}  So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.  >{**Peace be to the brothers, and**>>>**love with faith, from God the Father and the** Lord Jesus Christ<<<**.**>>>>**Grace be with all who love our** Lord Jesus Christ **with love incorruptible.**<<<<}<  **============**  Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus**,**  >**To all the** saints **in** Christ Jesus<who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:  **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the** Lord Jesus Christ**.**  I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of> >>**your partnership in the gospel**<<**from the first day until now.**>>>{**And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of** Jesus Christ.}<<< <  It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because **I hold you in my heart, for**>>**you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.**<<**For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of** Christ Jesus.  {**And it is my prayer that**>>>**your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment,**<<<s**o that**>>>>**you may approve what is excellent,**<<<<**and so**>>>**be pure and blameless for the day of** Christ, **filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through** Jesus Christ,<<<**to the glory and praise of God.**}  **I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that**^{**my** imprisonment **is for** Christ**. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my** imprisonment**, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.**}<  **Some indeed preach** Christ **from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim** Christ **out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to** afflict **me in my** imprisonment**.** **What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth,** Christ **is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.**  **Yes, and I will rejoice,**>**for I know that through your prayers and** >>>**the help of the Spirit of** Jesus Christ<<<**this will turn out for my deliverance, as it is my**>>**eager expectation and hope**<<**that I will not be at all ashamed, but**>>>**that with full courage now as always** Christ **will be honored in my body**<<<**, whether by life or by** death**. For to me** >>>**to live is** Christ<<<**, and to die is gain.**<**If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with** Christ, **for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that**>**I will remain and continue with you all, for**>>**your progress and**>>>**joy in the faith**<<< <<**, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in** Christ Jesus**,**<**because of my coming to you again.**    {>>>>**Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of** Christ**, so** that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you **that you are standing firm**<<<<^^**in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their** destruction, **but of your salvation, and that from God.**<<**For**>>**it has been granted to you** **that for the sake of** Christ **you should not only believe in** him **but also** suffer **for** his **sake, engaged in the same** conflict **that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.**<<  >>**So if there is any encouragement in** Christ**, any comfort from love,** >>>**any participation in the Spirit,**<<<**any affection and sympathy,**<< ^**complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit,**<**but**^^^**in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.**  **Have this mind among yourselves,**>>**which is yours in** Christ Jesus<<**,**<<< >who**, though**>>he **was in the form of God**<<**, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,**>>**but emptied** himself**, by taking the form of a servant,**<<**being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form,**>>he **humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of** death**, even** death on a cross**.**<<**Therefore God has highly exalted** him **and bestowed on** him **the name that is above every name, so that at the name of** Jesus **every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that** Jesus Christ **is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**<}  >>{**Therefore, my beloved,**>>>**as you have always obeyed**<<<**, so now,** not only as in my presence but much more in my absence,>>>**work out your own salvation**<<<**with**>>>**fear and trembling,**<<<**for**>>>**it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.**<<<}<<  ^^{**Do all things without grumbling or disputing,**>>>**that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish**<<<**in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,**>>>**holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of** Christ **I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.**<<<} **Even**{**if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the**  >>>**sacrificial offering of your faith,**<<<}**I am glad and rejoice with you all.**<<**Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.**  I hope in the Lord Jesus to send **Timothy** to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. For^^^{**I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. For they all seek their own interests, not those of** Jesus Christ. **But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.**}<<<I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.  I have thought it necessary to send to you **Epaphroditus** my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. So **receive him in the Lord with all joy,** **and honor such men, for**^^^**he** nearly died **for the work of** Christ**,** risking his life<<<  **to complete what was lacking in your service to me.**  **Finally, my brothers,**{**rejoice in the Lord.**}**To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.**  **Look out for the dogs, look out for the** evil**doers,** look out for those who mutilate the flesh**. For**>>{**we are the circumcision,**>>>**who worship by the Spirit of God**<<<**and glory in** Christ Jesus}<<**and put no confidence in the flesh— though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also.**  If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.    >>{**But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of** Christ**. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of** >>>**knowing** Christ Jesus **my Lord.**<<<**For** his **sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain** Christ **and be found in** him**, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but**>>>**that which comes through faith in** Christ**, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—**<<<**that**>>>**I may know** him **and the power of** his **resurrection,**<<<**and**>>>**may share** his **sufferings,**<<<**becoming like** him **in his death, that**>>>**by any means possible**<<<**I may attain the resurrection from the dead.**}<<  >>{**Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but**>>>**I press on to make it my own, because** Christ Jesus **has made me his own.**<<<**Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in** Christ Jesus**.**}<<  **Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only**>>**let us hold true to what we have attained.**<<  Brothers, join in imitating me, and^**keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.**<>{**For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as** enemies **of the** cross **of** Christ**. Their end is** destruction**, their god is their belly, and**>>**they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.**<<**But**>>our **citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord** Jesus Christ,<<**who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body,**}<**by the power that enables** him **even to subject all things to** himself**.**  **Therefore, my brothers,** whom I **love** and long for, my joy and crown, >>{**stand firm thus in the Lord**}<<, **my beloved.**  I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of^**my fellow workers,**>>>{**whose** names **are in the book of life.**}<<<<  {>>**Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.**<<^^**Let your reasonableness be known to everyone.**<<^^^**The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**<<<**And**>>>**the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in** Christ Jesus**.**<<<}  ^^^**Finally, brothers,**{**whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things,**<<<and>>>  **the God of peace will be with you.**<<<}  I rejoiced in the **Lord** greatly that **now at length you have revived your concern for me.** You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity.>>{**Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.**>>>**I can do all things through** him **who strengthens me.**<<<}<<    {**Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble.** And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica^^**you sent me help for my needs once and again.**<<Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.>>>**And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in** Christ Jesus**.**<<<}  **To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.**  Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.  >>>**The grace of the** Lord Jesus Christ **be with your spirit.**<<< **============ Paul,**>**an apostle of** Christ Jesus **by the will of God,**<and Timothy our brother,  >{**To the** saints **and**>>>**faithful brothers**<<<**in** Christ}< **at Colossae:**  **Grace to you and peace from God our Father.**  We always thank **God, the Father** **of our** Lord Jesus Christ**,** when we pray for you, since>>>{**we heard of your faith in** Christ Jesus **and of the love that you have for all the saints,**>>>>**because of the hope laid up for you in heaven**<<<<**.**}<<<**Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth,** just as you learned it from>{**Epaphras** our beloved fellow servant. **He is a**>>**faithful**<<**minister of** Christ **on your behalf**}<and has made known to us>>>{**your love in the Spirit.**}<<<  **And so,** from the day we heard,>{**we have not ceased to pray for you, asking**>>>>**that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;** being **strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy;**<<<<**giving thanks**>>>**to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the** saints **in light. He has delivered us from** the domain of darkness **and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved** Son<<<, **in** whom **we have redemption, the forgiveness of** sins**.**}<    {He **is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by** him **all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through** him **and for** him**. And** he **is before all things, and in** him **all things hold together. And** he **is the head of the body, the church.** He **is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything** he **might be preeminent. For** >>>**in** him **all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,**<<<**and**>>>**through** him **to reconcile to** himself **all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the** bloodof his cross**.**<<<}    >>{**And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing** evil **deeds,** he **has now reconciled in** his **body of flesh by** his death**,**>>>**in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before** him**, if indeed you continue in the faith,**>>>>**stable and steadfast**<<<<**,**<<<  **not shifting from the hope of the gospel**}<<**that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.**  **Now I rejoice in my** sufferings **for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in** Christ's afflictions **for the sake of** his **body, that is, the church, of which** I became **a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you,**>>**to make the word of God fully known,**<<**the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his** saints**. To them**>>>{**God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is**>>>>Christ **in you, the hope of glory**<<<<**.**}<<<  >>{Him **we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom,**<<**that**>>**we may** present everyone mature in Christ**. For this I toil, struggling with**>>>**all his energy that he powerfully works within me**<<<.}<<  For **I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face,**>**that their hearts may be encouraged,**>>{**being knit together in love,**>>>**to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding**<<<**and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is** Christ**, in** whom **are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**}<< >>**I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments**<<**.**>**For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see**>>{**your good order and the firmness of your faith in** Christ**.**}<< <  {>**Therefore, as you received** Christ Jesus **the Lord,**>>**so walk in** him**, rooted and built up in** him<<**and established in the faith,**<just as you were taught,>>**abounding in thanksgiving.**<<}  >**See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to** Christ**.**<  {>>>**For in** him **the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in** him<<<, who **is the head of all rule and authority. In** him **also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands,**>>>**by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of** Christ**,**<<< >**having been** buried **with** him **in baptism, in which you were also raised with** him>>>>>**through faith in the powerful working of God**<<<<<**, who raised** him **from the** dead**.**<}  >>{**And you, who were** dead **in your** trespasses **and the uncircumcision of your flesh,**>>>>**God made alive together with** him<<<<}, **having forgiven us all our** trespasses**, by canceling the** record of debt that stood against us **with its legal demands. This he set aside,** nailing it to the cross**.**<<**He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in** him**.**  **Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink,** or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of>>>{**the things to come,** but **the substance belongs to** Christ}<<<**.**>>**Let no one** disqualify you**, insisting on asceticism**<<**and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions,**>>**puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind**<<**, and not holding fast to the** Head**, from** whom>**the whole body,**<**nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments,**>>>**grows with a growth that is from God**<<<**.**  >>>{**If with** Christ you died **to the elemental spirits of the world,**}<<<  **why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” (referring to things that all** perish **as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.**  >>{**If then you have been raised with** Christ**,**>>>**seek the things that are above,**<<<**where** Christ **is, seated at the right hand of God.**>>>**Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.**<<<**For you have died, and**>>>**your life is hidden with** Christ **in God.**<<<**When** Christ who **is your life appears, then you also will appear with** him **in glory.**}<<  >>>{**Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion,** evil **desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account** of these **the** wrath **of God** is coming**. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.**}<<<**Do not lie to one another, seeing that**>>>>{**you have put off the** old **self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.**}<<<<**Here** there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but>>{Christ **is all, and**>>>**in all**<<<**.**}<<    ^^^{**Put on then,**>>**as God's** chosen **ones, holy and beloved,**<< **compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And**^^^^**above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.**<<<<}<<<  **And**>>>{**let the peace of** Christ **rule in your hearts**}<<<**, to which indeed you were called in one body.**^^**And be thankful. Let the word of** Christ **dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.**{**And**^^^^**whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the** Lord Jesus<<<<, **giving thanks to God the Fathe**r through him**.**}<<  ^**Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.**  **Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.**<  Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.  Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.  **Bondservants,**{^**obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart,**<>>>**fearing the Lord.** **Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord**<<<**and not for men,**>>>**knowing that**>>>>**from the Lord you will receive** theinheritance **as your reward.**<<<<**You are serving the** Lord Christ**.**<<<**For the wrongdoer will be** paid back **for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.**}  **Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.**  ^**Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time,**{**pray also for us,**>**that God may open to us a door for the word,**<**to declare the mystery of** Christ**, on account of which I am in** prison<**—**^^**that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.**<<^^**Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.**<<}  Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.  Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may^^^{**stand mature and**>**fully assured**<  **in all the will of God.**}<<<For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.  And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea.  And say to Archippus,^^{**“See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.”**}<<  I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. **Remember my** chains**. Grace be with you.  ============** Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,  To **the church** of the Thessalonians **in God the Father and** the Lord Jesus Christ**:**  **Grace to you and peace.**  We give thanks to **God** always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our **God and Father**>>>{**your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our** Lord Jesus Christ**.**}<<<  >{**For we know, brothers**>>>**loved by God,**<<<**that**>>>**he has chosen you,**<<< **because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also**>>>>**in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.**<<<<}**You know**>>what kind of men we proved to be among you **for your sake.**<<**And** you became imitators of us and of the L**ord, for**>>{**you received the word in much affliction,**>>>**with the joy of the Holy Spirit**<<<,}<<**so that** you became an example to all the **believers**<in Macedonia and in Achaia. **For not only has**{**the word of the Lord sounded** forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia**, but**>>your f**aith in God has gone forth everywhere**<<}**, so that we need not say anything.** For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how>{**you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his** Son **from heaven,** whom **he raised from the** dead**,** Jesus **who delivers us from the** wrath **to come.**}<  For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. But^^{**though we had already** suffered **and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know,**>>>**we had boldness in our God**<<<**to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict.**<<**For**^^**our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please**>>>**God who tests our hearts**<<<. **For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others,**}<<  {**though we could have made demands as apostles of** Christ**.**^^^**But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.**<<<**So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because** you had become very dear to us**. For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.**}  **You are witnesses, and God also,**{>>>how holy and righteous and b**lameless was our conduct towar**d you b**elievers**<<<**. For you know how,**^^^like a father with his children<<<,>>we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to>>>w**alk in a manner worthy of God,**<<<**who calls you into his own kingdom and glory**<<**.**}  And we also thank God constantly for this, that>{**when** you received t**he word of God, which you heard from us,** you accepted it **not as the word of men but**>>>**as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.**<<<}<**For you, brothers,** became imitators of the churches of **God in** Christ Jesus **that are in Judea. For you** suffered **the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, who** killed **both the** Lord Jesus **and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their** sins**. But** wrath **has come upon them at last!**  But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us. For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For>**you are our glory and joy.**<  Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone, and **we sent Timothy,** our brother and **God's** coworker **in the gospel of** Christ**,** to **establish and exhort** you in your **faith, that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know.** For this reason, when I could bear it no longer,>>>{**I sent to learn about your faith, for fear** that somehow the tempter had tempted you **and our labor would be in** vain**.**}<<<    But **now** that **Timothy** has come to us from you, and **has brought us the** >>{**good news** of your **faith** and **love**}<<and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you— for this reason, brothers, **in all our** distress **and affliction we have been comforted about you through**>>{your **faith. For now we live, if** you are **standing fast in the Lord.**}<<**For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for**>all the joy tha**t we feel for your sake before** our **God,**<**as** {**we pray most earnestly night and day that we may**>**see you face to face and**>>supply what is lacking in your **faith**<<}**?**<    **Now may our God and Father himself, and our** Lord Jesus**, direct our way to you, and**{>>>**may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all**<<<, **as we do for you,**>>>**so that** he **may establish your hearts blameless in holiness**<<<**before our God and Father, at the coming of our** Lord Jesus **with all his saints.**}  Finally, then, brothers,^**we ask and urge you in the** Lord Jesus**, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God,** just as you are doing, that you do so more and more**. For you know what instructions we gave you through the** Lord Jesus**.**<  {>>>**For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God;**<<<that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you.>>>**For God has not called us for** impurity, **but in holiness.**<<<**Therefore**>>>**whoever** disregards **this,** disregards **not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.**<<<}    **Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for**>>>{you yourselves **have been taught by God to love one another,**}<<<**for**^**that indeed is** what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia**. But we urge you, brothers,** to{do this more and more}<,  and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.    But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.  >**Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For** you yourselves are fully aware **that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden** destruction **will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman,** and they will not escape**.**  **But** you **are not in** darkness**, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For**{you are all children **of light,** children **of the day. We are not of the night or of** the darkness**. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for** wrath**, but to obtain salvation through our** Lord Jesus Christ**,** whodied **for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with** him**.**}<^**Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.**<  ^**We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of** their work**.**^^^{**Be at peace among yourselves.**}<<<**And we urge you, brothers,** admonish the idle,{encourage the fainthearted, help the weak,^^be patient with them all**. See that no one repays anyone** evil **for** evil**, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone**}<<**.**<  {^^**Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for**>>**this is the will of God in** Christ Jesus **for you**<<}**.**  **Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but**{**test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of** evil**.**}<<  {**Now**>>>**may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely**<<<, **and** >>>**may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless**<<<**at the coming of our** Lord Jesus Christ**.**>>>>>**He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.**<<<<<}  Brothers, pray for us. Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.  **The grace of our** Lord Jesus Christ **be with you. ============ Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,**  **To the church of the Thessalonians** **in** **God our Father** **and the** Lord Jesus Christ**:**  **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the** Lord Jesus Christ**.**  **We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because**>>>{your faith is growing **abundantly, and** the love of every one of you for one another is increasing}<<<. **Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for**{>>>**your steadfastness** and **faith in all your** persecutions **and in the afflictions that you are enduring.**  This is evidence **of the righteous judgment of God,**>>>>**that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God,**<<<<**for which you are also** suffering<<<}**— since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us,**{**when the** Lord Jesus **is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire,**>>**inflicting vengeance on**>>>**those who** do not **know God and on those who** do not obey **the gospel of our** Lord Jesus<<<**. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction,** away **from**>>>>>**the presence of the Lord**<<<<<**and from**>>>>**the glory of** his **might**<<<<**,**<<**when**>he **comes on that day to be glorified in** his saints**, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.**<}  {**To this end we always pray for you,**>>>**that our God may**>>>>**make you**<<<<**worthy of his calling**<<<**and**>>>**may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our** Lord Jesus **may be glorified in you, and you in** him**, according to the grace of our God and the Lord** Jesus Christ**.**<<<}  **Now concerning the coming of our** Lord Jesus Christ **and our being gathered together to** him**,** we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one deceive you in any way. For **that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and** the man of lawlessness **is revealed,** the son of destruction**,** **who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.**  Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. For{>**the mystery of** lawlessness **is already at work.**<Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one **will be revealed, whom the** Lord Jesus **will** kill **with the breath of** his **mouth and bring to nothing** by the appearance of his coming**.**>>**The coming of the** lawless one **is by the activity of** Satan **with all power and false signs and wonders, and**  >>>**with all wicked deception for those who are** perishing**, because**  >>>>**they refused to love the truth and so be saved**<<<<**. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false,**<<<**in order that**>>>**all may be** condemned **who did not believe the truth but**>>>>**had pleasure in unrighteousness**<<<< <<<.<<}  But we ought always to give thanks to **God** for you,{**brothers beloved by the Lord,** because **God chose you as the firstfruits**>>>>**to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.**<<<<**To this he called you through our gospel, so that**>>>>>**you may obtain the glory of our** Lord Jesus Christ<<<<<. **So then, brothers, stand firm**}**and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us,**<either by our spoken word or by our letter.  >>>{**Now may our** Lord Jesus Christ himself**, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.**}<<<  Finally, brothers, **pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, and that we may be delivered from**{>>wicked and evil **men. For not all have faith**<<**.**>>>>**But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against** the evil one<<<<}. **And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command.**>>>>{**May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of** Christ}<<<<.  Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.  For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. As for you, brothers,^^{**do not grow weary in doing good.**}<<  If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.  >>>{**Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. Th**e **Lord be with you all.**}<<<  I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write.  **The grace of our** Lord Jesus Christ **be with you all.  ============ Paul, an apostle of** Christ Jesus **by command of God our Savior and of** Christ Jesus **our hope,**  **To Timothy,**>>**my true child in the faith**<<**:**  **Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and** Christ Jesus **our Lord.**    As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, **remain at Ephesus so** **that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine,** nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than{>>>>**the stewardship from God that is by faith.**>>>>>The aim of our charge is love<<<<<**that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.**<<<<}  **Certain persons,**^^**by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions**<<.  Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that **the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and** sinners**, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.**  **I thank**>>>{him **who has given me strength,** Christ Jesus **our Lord, because**>>>>he **judged me faithful**<<<<, **appointing me to** his **service**}<<<, **though formerly I was a blasphemer,** persecutor**, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and**>>>{**the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in** Christ Jesus}<<<.  **The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that** >Christ Jesus **came into the world to save** sinners**, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost,**{>>>Jesus Christ **might display** his **perfect patience**<<<**as an example to those who were to believe in** him **for eternal life.**<**To**>**the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever.**<**Amen.**}  >**This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that**>>>**by them you may**{**wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made** shipwreck **of their faith**}<<<, **among whom are** {**Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to** Satan **that they may learn not to blaspheme.**}<  **First of all, then,**^**I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life,**^^**godly and dignified in every way**<<**. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of**<>{**God our Savior, who desires** all people to be **saved and** to come to the knowledge **of the truth.** **For there is one God, and there is** one mediator **between God and men, the man** Christ Jesus**,** who **gave** himself **as a** ransom **for all,**}**which is the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.**<  ^**I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling;**  **likewise also that**^^^**women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control**<<<**, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but**^^**with what is proper for women who profess godliness**<<**—with good works.**< **Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.** For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.  The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to^^^**the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.** Therefore **an overseer**{**must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.**}**He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of** the devil**. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of** the devil**.**  **Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They**{**must hold**>>>>**the mystery of the faith**<<<<**with a clear conscience**}**. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.**  **Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded,**{**faithful in all things**}**.**<<<  **Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well.**>**For**>>>{**those who serve well**}<<<**as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also**>>>>{**great confidence in the faith that is in** Christ Jesus}<<<<**.**<  I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: **He was** manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, **taken up in glory.**    Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.  ^^**If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of** Christ Jesus**, being trained in**>{**the words of the faith**}<**and of the good doctrine that you have followed. Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather**>>>>{**train yourself for godliness;**}<<<<  **For**{**while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come**}**.**<<  {**The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. For**^^**to this end we toil and strive,**<<**because**>>**we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior**<<}**of all people, especially of those who believe.**  **Command and teach these things. Let no one despise you for your youth, but**^^{**set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.** Until I come, **devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy**}**when the council of elders laid their hands on you.**<<  >>>>{**Practice these things,**>>>>>**immerse yourself in them**<<<<<, **so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing** you will save both yourself and your hearers**.**}<<<<  **Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters,**>{**in all purity**}<**.**  ^**Honor widows who are truly widows. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first** learn to s**how godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God.**<>>{**She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives.**}<<**Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach.**>>>{**But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.**}<<<  ^^**Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.**<<  {>**But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when**>>>**their passions draw them away from** Christ<<<, **they desire to marry and so**>>>**incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith**<<<. **Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander**<**.**>>>**For some have already strayed after** Satan**.**<<<}  ^**If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows.**<  Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.” Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear.   In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality.  **Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands,**>>**nor take part in the** sins **of others;**>>>{**keep yourself pure**}<<<**.**<<  (No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.)  The sins of some people are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later. So also good works are conspicuous, and even those that are not cannot remain hidden.  Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled. Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved. Teach and urge these things.  ^^**If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our** Lord Jesus Christ **and**^^^{**the teaching that accords with godliness**}<<<**, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing.**<<**He has**^^^**an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words,**<<<**which produce envy, dissension, slander,** evil **suspicions, and**^^^**constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth**<<<**, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.**  >>**But**>>>{**godliness with contentment is great gain**}<<<, **for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But**{**if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content**}**. But** {**those who desire to be rich** fall into temptation**, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and** destruction**. For**>>>**the love of money** is **a root of all kinds of** evils**. It** is **through this craving that some have** wandered away **from the faith**<<<**and pierced themselves with many pangs.**}<<  >>>>{**But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called**}<<<<**and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.**>**I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of** Christ Jesus**,** who **in** his **testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our** Lord Jesus Christ**,**<**which** he **will display at the proper time—**>>>{**he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion.**}<<<**Amen.**  >>{**As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that**>>>they may take hold of that which is truly life<<<**.**}<<  **O Timothy,**>>{**guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and**>>>**contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,”**<<< **for**>>>**by professing it some have swerved from the faith**<<<**.**}<<  **Grace be with you. ============ Paul,**>**an apostle of** Christ Jesus>>**by the will of God**<<**according to**{**the** >>>**promise of the life that is in** Christ Jesus<<<}**,**<  **To Timothy, my beloved child:**  **Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and** Christ Jesus **our Lord.**  **I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience,** as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. As **I remember your tears,** I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. **I am reminded of**>>your sincere f**aith, a faith that dwelt**<<**first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells** in you **as well. For this reason I remind you to**^**fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands,**<{**for**>>>**God gave us a spirit** not of fear **but of power and love and self-control.**<<<}  >>**Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me** his prisoner**, but**{**share in** suffering **for the gospel**>>>**by the power of God, who saved us**<<<**and**>>>**called us to a holy calling,**<<<**not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in** Christ Jesus **before the ages began**}<<, **and which now has been manifested through the appearing of**>>>{**our Savior** Christ Jesus**,** who **abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,**<<<**for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, which is why I** suffer **as I do**}**.**>>**But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.**<<    {>**Follow the pattern of the sound words**<**that you have heard from me,**>>>**in the faith and love that are in** Christ Jesus<<<**.**>>>**By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us**<<<},>>**guard the good deposit entrusted to you.**<<  You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.  May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me earnestly and found me— may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day!—and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.  **You then, my child,**>>>>>{**be strengthened by the grace that is in** Christ Jesus}<<<<<, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.>{**Share in suffering as a good soldier of** Christ Jesus**.**>>>>**No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.**<<<<}**It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.**>>**Think over what I say**<<, **for**>>>**the Lord will give you understanding in everything.**<<<<  ^**Remember** Jesus Christ, **risen from the** dead**, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am** suffering**,** bound with chains **as a criminal. But**{**the word of God is not bound!**}**Therefore**{**I endure everything for the sake of the** elect**, that**>>**they also may obtain the salvation that is in** Christ Jesus>>>>**with eternal glory**<<<<**.**<<}<  >{**The saying is trustworthy, for:**>>>**If** we have died with him**,** we will also **live with** him**;**<<< >>>**if** we endure**,** we will also reign with him**; if we deny** him**,** he **also will** deny us**;**<<<**if we are faithless,** he **remains faithful— for** he **cannot deny** himself**.**}<  Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.^^{**Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightl**y handling the wor**d of truth.**}<<**But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are** >>{**Hymenaeus and Philetus,**>>>**who have swerved from the truth**<<<, **saying that the resurrection has already happened.**>>>**They are upsetting the faith of some.**<<<**But**>>>**God'**s firm foundation stands<<<, **bearing this seal: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and,**>>>**“Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.”**<<<}<<    >>{**Now in a great house there are not only vessels of** gold **and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore,**>>>**if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable,**<<<**he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good** work.}<<  >>>{**So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.**}<<<**Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels.**>>>{**And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach,**>>>>**patiently enduring** evil<<<<, **correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and** they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil**, after being captured by him to do his will.**}<<<  **But understand this, that**>**in the last days** there will come times of difficulty**. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless,**>>**unappeasable**<<, **slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless,**>>>**swollen with conceit,**{**lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God**<<<, **having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.**>>>**Avoid such people.**}<<< <  **For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women,**>>>{**burdened with** sins **and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith.**}<<<**But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.**    >{You, however, have followed my teaching**,**>>my c**onduct,** my a**im in life,** my f**aith,** my p**atience,** my l**ove,** my s**teadfastness,**<<my persecutions **and** sufferings **that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—**which persecutions I endured**; yet**>**from them all the Lord rescued me**<**. Indeed,**>>**all who desire to live a godly life in** Christ Jesus **will be** persecuted<<**, while** evil **people and** impostors **will go on from bad to worse,** deceiving **and** being deceived**.**>>**But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed**<<**, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with**>>>>**the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in** Christ Jesus<<<<. **All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,**>>>**that the** man of God may be c**omplete, equipped for every good work**<<<**.**}<    ^^^{**I charge you in the presence of God and of** Christ Jesus**,** who **is to judge the living and the dead, and by** his **appearing and** his **kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded,** endure **suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.**}<<<  >>{**For** I am already being poured out as a drink offering**, and**>>>**the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith**<<<. **Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also**>>>**to all who have loved his appearing.**<<<}<<  **Do your best to come to me soon. For**>>{**Demas,**>>>**in love with this present world**<<<, **has deserted me**}<<**and gone to Thessalonica.** Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments.  **Alexander the coppersmith did me great** harm**; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message.**  >{**At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! But**>>>**the Lord stood by me and strengthened me,**<<<**so that**>>>through me the message might be fully proclaimed **and** all the Gentiles might hear it**.**<<<**So I was rescued from the** lion's mouth**.**>>>**The Lord will rescue me from every** evil **deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom**<<<. **To him be the glory forever and ever.**}<**Amen.**  Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus. Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers.  **The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.**  **============ Paul, a servant of God and** an apostle of Jesus Christ**,**>>{**for the sake of the faith of God's** elect **and their knowledge of the truth,**>>>**which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life**<<<, **which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began**}<<**and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior;**  **To Titus, my true child in a common faith:**  **Grace and peace from God the Father and** Christ Jesus **our Savior.**  **This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—**^^**if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of** debauchery **or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must**{**not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.**}<<    **For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers,** especially those of the circumcision party. **They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. One of the Cretans,**>{**a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars,** evilbeasts**, lazy gluttons.” This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith**}**, not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of** >>{**people who turn away from the truth**}<<.{**To the pure, all things are pure, but**>>**to the defiled and unbelieving**<<, **nothing is pure; but**>>**both their minds and their consciences are defiled**<<**.**>>**They profess to know God, but**>>>**they deny him by their works**<<<. **They are detestable,** disobedient**,** unfit for any good work.<<}<  **But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.**^^^{**Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled,** sound **in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.**}<<<  ^^^**Older women likewise are to**{**be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine**}**. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to**{be s**elf-controlled, pure,**}**working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.**<<<  ^^^**Likewise, urge the younger men**{to be s**elf-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned,**}**so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.**    {**Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.**}<<<    >>{**For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,**>>>**training us to renounce** ungodliness **and** worldly passions**, and** to live **self-controlled, upright, and godly lives**<<<**in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and** Savior Jesus Christ**,** who gave himself **for us**>>>**to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for** himself a people **for his own possession** who are **zealous for good works**<<<.}<<  ^^^{**Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority.**^^^^**Let no one disregard you**<<<<}**. Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient,**{**to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people**}**.**<<<  >{**For we ourselves were once foolish,** disobedient**, led astray,**>>slaves **to various** passions **and pleasures**<<, **passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,**>>>**he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy**<<<**,**>>>**by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through** Jesus Christ **our Savior, so that being justified by his grace**<<<**we might** become heirs **according to**>>**the hope of eternal life**}<<. **The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so**{**that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people.**}<  But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the **law,** for they are unprofitable and worthless. **As for a person who stirs up division,** **after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and** sinful**; he is** self-condemned**.**  When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing.^{**And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and**>>**not be** unfruitful<<.}<  All who are with me send greetings to you. **Greet those who love us in the faith.**  **Grace be with you all.**  **============** Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,  To Philemon our beloved fellow worker and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house:  **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the** Lord Jesus Christ**.**  I thank my **God** always when I remember you in my prayers, because>>{**I hear of** your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints**, and I pray that**>>>**the sharing of your faith may become effective for**>>>>**the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us**<<<<**for the sake of** Christ<<<. **For I have derived much joy and comfort from** your l**ove, my brother, because** the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you}<<.  ^^**Accordingly, though I am bold enough in** Christ **to command you to do what is required, yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a** prisoner **also for** Christ Jesus—<<I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.)  I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.  So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.  At the same time, prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you.  Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.  **The grace of the** Lord Jesus Christ **be with your spirit. ============** {**Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days**>**he has spoken to us by his** Son**,** whom **he appointed the heir of all things, through** whom **also he created the world.**>>>He **is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature**<<<, **and** he **upholds the universe by the word of** his **power.**<**After**>>>**making purification for** sins<<<, he sat down **at the right hand of the Majesty on high,** having become **as much superior to angels as the name** he **has inherited is more excellent than theirs.**}<    >{**For to which of the angels did God ever say, “**You **are my** Son**, today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be to** him **a father, and** he **shall be to me a son”? And again, when he brings** the firstborn **into the world, he says, “Let all God's angels worship** him**.” Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.” But of the** Son **he says, “**Your **throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of** your **kingdom.**>>>You **have loved righteousness and hated** wickedness**; therefore God,** your **God, has anointed** you **with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.”**<<<**And,** >>>**“**You**,** Lord**, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of** your **hands; they will perish, but** you **remain; they will all wear out like a garment, like a robe** you **will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But** you **are the same, and** your **years will have no end.”**<<<**And to which of the angels has he ever said, “Sit at my right hand until I make** your **enemies a footstool for** your **feet”?**>>>**Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of** those who **are to inherit salvation?**<<<}<  >{**Therefore**>>>**we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we** drift away **from it.**<<<**For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the** Lord**, and it was attested to us by those who heard,**>>>**while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will**<<<**.**}<    For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. It has been testified somewhere, “What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? You made him for a little while lower than the angels;{**you have crowned** him **with glory and honor**}**,** putting everything in subjection under his feet.” Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely>>>{Jesus**, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of** death**, so that by the grace of God** he **might taste** death **for everyone.**}<<<  {>>>**For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing** many sons **to glory, should make** the founder **of their salvation perfect through** suffering<<<.>>>**For he who sanctifies and** those who are **sanctified all have one source. That is why** he **is not ashamed to call them** brothers**, saying, “**I **will tell of your name to** mybrothers**;**<<<**in the midst of** the congregationI **will sing your praise.” And again, “**I **will put** my **trust in him.” And again, “Behold,** I **and** the children **God has given** me**.”**}  >{**Since therefore the children share in flesh and** blood**,** he himself **likewise partook of the same things**<**,**>>>**that through** death he might destroy the one who has the power of death**, that is,** the devil**,**<<<**and deliver all those who through fear of** death **were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that** he **helps, but** he **helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore** >>he **had to be made like** hisbrothers **in every respect, so that**>>>he **might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God**<<<, **to** make propitiation for the sins of the people**.**<<**For**>>>**because** he himself **has** suffered when tempted**,** he is able to help those who are being tempted.<<<}  {**Therefore,**>**holy** brothers**,** you who share **in a heavenly calling, consider** Jesus**, the apostle and high priest of our confession,**>>who **was faithful**<<**to him who appointed** him**, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.**<**For** Jesus **has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses**}**—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) Now** Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later**, but**{>Christ is faithful over God's house as a son<**.**>>>**And** we are his house**,**>>>>**if indeed**<<<<**we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.**<<<}  {>**Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years.**<**Therefore**>>>**I was provoked with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.’ As I swore in my** wrath**, ‘**They shall not enter my rest**.’”**<<<}  {>>>>**Take care,** brothers**, lest there be in any of** you **an evil,** unbelieving **heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.**<<<< **But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,”** >>>>**that none of you may be** hardened by the deceitfulness of sin**. For we have come to share in** Christ,>>>>>**if indeed**<<<<<**we hold our original confidence firm to the end**<<<<. **As it is said, “Today,** if you hear h**is voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”**  >>>**For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who** sinned**, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they would** not enter his rest**, but**>>>>>>>**to those who were** disobedient**? So we see that they were unable to enter because of** unbelief<<<<<<<.<<<}  {**Therefore,**>**while the promise of entering his rest still stands,**>>>**let us fear lest any of you should seem to have** failed **to reach it.**<<< <  **For**>**good news**<**came to us just as to them, but**>>>>**the message they heard did** not **benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For** we **who have believed enter that rest**<<<<},  **as**>**he has said, “As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall** not enter my rest**,’”**<**although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.” And again in this passage he said,** **“They shall not** enter my rest.”  **Since therefore it remains for** some **to enter it, and**>>>>{**those who formerly received the**>**good news**<failed **to enter because of** disobedience**,**}<<<<**again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted,**  >>>**“Today,**{**if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts**}**.”**<<<**For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for** the people of God**, for**{whoever has entered **God's rest has also rested from** his **works as God did from his.**>>>>**Let us therefore**>>>>>**strive**<<<<<**to enter that rest, so that no one may** fall **by the same sort of** disobedience**.**}<<<<    >>{**For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword,**>>>**piercing to the division of soul and of spirit,**<<<**of joints and of marrow, and**>>>**discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**<<<**And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.**}<<  >>{**Since then** we have a great high priest who has passed through the **heavens,** Jesus**, the** Son **of God, let us hold fast our confession. For** >>>**we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but** one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin**.**>>>>**Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**<<<<  **For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God**<<<, **to offer gifts and** sacrifices **for** sins**.**}<<**He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is obligated to offer** sacrifice **for his own** sins **just as he does for those of the people.**  {**And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. So also** Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest**, but was appointed by him who said to** him**, “You are my** Son**, today I have begotten** you**”; as he says also in another place, “**You **are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.”**}  >{In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and s**upplications,** with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard **because of** his reverence**.**>>>**Although** he was a son**,** he learned obedience through what he suffered**. And being made perfect,**<<<he **became the source of eternal salvation**>>**to all who obey him,**<<**being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.**}<  ^^**About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for**{**everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness,** **since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from** evil**.**}<<  Therefore>{**let us leave the elementary doctrine of** Christ **and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of**>>**repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,**<<and of instruction about **washings,** the laying on of hands,**the resurrection of the** dead**, and** eternal judgment**. And this we will do if God permits.**}<  >>>{**For** it is impossible**, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have** fallen away**, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the** Son of God **to their own harm and holding** him **up to contempt.**}<<<  {>>>**For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.**<<<  >>>**Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. For God is not unjust so as to overlook**>>>>**your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the** saints**, as you still do**<<<<. **And we desire each one of you to**>>>>**show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end**<<<<, **so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of**>>>>those who through **faith** and **patience inherit the promises**<<<<**.**<<<  For **when God made a promise to Abraham,** since he had no one greater by whom to swear, **he swore by himself, saying, “Surely I will bless you and multiply you.”** And thus>>>**Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise**<<<.}  For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So>>{**when God desired to show more convincingly to** the heirs **of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie**,>>>>>>>**we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.** We have this as a s**ure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where** Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf<<<<<<<, **having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.**}<<  {**For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the** Son **of God he continues a priest forever.**  See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils! And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham. But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. **It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior.** **In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives.**}One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for **he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him**.  Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. This becomes even more evident>>>{**when** another **priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek,** **who has become a priest,** not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but **by the power of an indestructible life.** For it is witnessed of him, **“**You **are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.”**}<<<  >{**For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness (**>>>**for the law made nothing perfect**<<<**); but on the other hand,**>>>>**a better hope is introduced, through which** we draw near to G**od**<<<<.}<  And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, but>>>{**this** one **was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to** him**: “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest forever.’”**}<<<This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.  **The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but**{>>he holds his priesthood **permanently, because** he **continues forever. Consequently,**>>>>he is able **to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God** through him**, since** he always lives to make intercession for them<<<<.<<  >**For**>>**it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from** sinners**, and exalted above the heavens**<<**.** He **has no need, like those high priests, to offer** sacrifices **daily, first for his own** sins **and then for those of the people, since** he did this once for all when he offered up himself<**For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but**>>>**the word of the oath**<<<, **which came later than the law, appoints**>>>**a** Son who  >>>>**has been made perfect forever**<<<<.<<<}  Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.  For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, “See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.” But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.  **For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. For he finds fault with them when he says: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when**>{>>**I took them by the hand**<<**to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For**>>>**they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them**<<<, **declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord:**>>>>**I will put my laws into** their minds**, and write them on their hearts**<<<<, **and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.**}**And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know** the **Lord,’ for**{**they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their** sins **no more.”**}<  In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.  {**Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness.** **For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place.** **Behind the second curtain was a second section called** **the Most Holy Place,** **having the** golden altar **of incense and** the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold**, in which was a** golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat**.**}Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.  >{**These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking** blood**, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional** sins **of the people. By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened** as long as the first section is still standing (which is symbolic for the present age). **According to this arrangement,**>>**gifts and** sacrifices **are offered that**>>>cannot **perfect the conscience**<<<**of the worshiper**<<, but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.}<    {>**But when** Christ **appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then**>>**through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)**>>>he **entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the** blood **of goats and calves but**>>>>**by means of** his **own** blood**,**<<<<**thus securing an eternal redemption**<<<. **For if the** blood **of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how** **much more will the** blood **of** Christ**,** who **through the eternal Spirit offered** himself **without blemish to God,**>>>>**purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.**<<<<  **Therefore** he **is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a** death **has occurred that redeems them from the** transgressions **committed under the first covenant.**<  For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. Therefore **not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood.** **For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.”** **And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship.**>>>**Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with** blood**, and** without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins**.**<<<}  **Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For** Christ **has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer** himself **repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then** he **would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world.**>{**But as it is,** he **has appeared once for all at the end of the ages**>>>**to put away** sin **by the sacrifice of** himself<<<. **And just as it is appointed for man to** die **once, and after that comes** judgment**, so** Christ, having been offered once to b**ear the** sins **of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with** sin **but**>>**to save those who are eagerly waiting for** him<<.}<    >{**For since the law has but a shadow of**>>**the good things to come**<< **instead of**>>**the true form of these realities**<<, **it can never, by the same** sacrifices **that are continually offered every year,**>>>**make perfect those who draw near.**<<< **Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers,**>>**having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of** sins**?**<<**But in these** sacrifices **there is a reminder of** sins **every year. For it is impossible for the** blood **of bulls and goats to take away** sins**.**}<  >>{**Consequently, when** Christ **came into the world,** he **said, “**Sacrifices **and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for** me**; in burnt offerings and** sin **offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then** I **said, ‘Behold,** I **have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of** me **in the scroll of the book.’”** When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second.>>>**And by that will we have been sanctified through** the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all<<<.  And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.>>>>>>>>**For by a single offering** he **has perfected for all time** those **who are being sanctified**.<<<<<<<<}<<  >{**And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord:**>>>**I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,”**<<<**then he adds,**>>>**“I will remember their** sins **and their lawless deeds no more.”**<<<**Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for** sin**.**}<  >>>{**Therefore, brothers,**>>>>>**since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the** blood **of** Jesus**,**<<<<<**by**>>>>>**the new and living way that** he **opened for us through the curtain, that is, through** his **flesh,**<<<<< **and since we have a great priest over the house of God,**>>>>**let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,**<<<<**with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of** our h**ope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful**}<<<.^**And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.**<    >>{**For**>>>**if we go on** sinning **deliberately after** receiving **the knowledge of the truth, there** no longer remains a sacrifice for sins**, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.**<<<**Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses** dies **without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the** Son **of God, and has profaned the** blood **of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged**>>>**the Spirit of grace**<<<**? For we know him who said, “**Vengeance **is mine; I will** repay**.” And again, “The Lord will** judge **his people.” It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**}<<    **But recall the former days when,**{**after**>>>**you were enlightened**<<<,  ^^**you endured a hard struggle with** sufferings**, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in** prison**, and**^^^**you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property**<<<, **since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.**<<}  >>>>{**Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For, “Yet a little while, and** the coming one **will come and will not delay; but my righteous** one shall live by f**aith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.” But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but** of those who have faith and pr**eserve their souls.**}<<<<    >{**Now faith is**>>**the assurance**<<**of things hoped for,**>>**the conviction**<< **of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation.**}<  >{**By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.**  **By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith*,* though he** died**, he still speaks.**}<  >{**By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see** death**, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.**>>**And without faith it is impossible to please him,**<<**for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.**}<    >>{**By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen,** >>>in reverent fear<<<**constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness** that comes by f**aith.**}<<  >{By **faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.** By **faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.**}<  >{**By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.**}<    {>>>These all died in f**aith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.**<<<  >>>**For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.**<<<}  {>>**By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son**, **of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.”** **He considered that God was able even to raise him from the** dead<<, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.  >**By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau.**  **By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff.**  **By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.**    **By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.**<}  {>>>**By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be** mistreated **with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of** sin**. He considered the reproach of** Christ **greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward**<<<.>>By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, **for**>>>he e**ndured as seeing him who is invisible**<<<. **By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the** blood**, so that the** Destroyer **of the firstborn might not touch them.**<<}    >>{**By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.**  **By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.**  **By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.**}<<  >>>{**And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— who** through faith **conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the** mouths of lions**, quenched the power of** fire**, escaped the** edge of the sword**, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in** war**, put** foreign armies **to flight**<<<**.**>>>**Women received back their** dead **by resurrection. Some were** tortured**, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others** suffered **mocking and** flogging**, and even** chains and imprisonment**. They were** stoned**, they were** sawn in two**, they were** killed with the sword**. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.**  **And all these, though commended** through their **faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect.**}<<<  {^^^**Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also**^^^^**lay aside every weight, and** sin **which clings so closely**<<<<**, and let us run** with e**ndurance the race that is set before us**<<<,>>**looking to** Jesus**,**>>>**the founder and perfecter**<<<**of** our f**aith**<<,^^^who **for the joy that was set before** him **endured the** cross**, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider** him **who endured from** sinners **such hostility against** himself**, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.**}    {**In your struggle against** sin **you have not yet resisted to the point of** shedding your blood<<<}.>>**And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as** sons**?**{**“My** son**, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For**>>>**the Lord disciplines the** one **he loves, and chastises every** son **whom he receives**<<<**.”**<<  >>**It is for discipline that**>>>**you have to endure**<<<**. God is treating you as** sons**.**}**For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them.**{**Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?**}**For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but**{>>>>>**he disciplines us for our good, that** we may share his **holiness.**<<<<<**For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness** **to those who have been trained by it.**}<<  ^^**Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and**^^^{**make straight paths for your feet**}<<<, **so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.**<<  {^^>>>**Strive**<<<**for peace with everyone, and**>>>>**for the holiness** without which **no one will see the Lord**<<<<.^^^**See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God**<<<;**that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become** defiled**; that no one is** sexually immoral **or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal**<<**.**>>**For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing,**>>>**he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent**<<<, **though he sought it with tears.**<<}    {**For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.”**}  >>{**But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and** to the assembly of the firstborn who **are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and**>>>to the spirits of the righteous made perfect<<<, **and to** Jesus, **the mediator of a new covenant, and to the** sprinkled blood **that speaks a better word than the** blood **of Abel.**}<<    {>**See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.**<**At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.**  ^**Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for** our **God is a consuming fire.**  **Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember those who are in** prison**, as though in** prison **with them, and those who are** mistreated**, since you also are in the body.**<  >**Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled,**<**for**>>**God will judge the** sexually immoral **and adulterous**<<. ^**Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have**<**,**>>>**for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”**<<<  ^^^**So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”**<<<}    Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you{**the** **word of God**}**.** Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their{**faith**}**.** >{Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever**.**}<  >**Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for**>>>{it is go**od** for the heart to be s**trengthened by grace**}<<<, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. **We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat.**<  {>>**For the bodies of those animals whose** blood **is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a** sacrifice **for** sin **are burned outside the camp. So** Jesus **also** suffered **outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through** his **own** blood**.**<<^**Therefore let us go to** him **outside the camp and bear the reproach** he **endured. For**^^^**here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come**<<<**.**<}  ^^{**Through** him **then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.**}<<  Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.  **Pray for us,**>>>{**for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things.**}<<<I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.  >>{**Now may the God of peace who brought again from the** dead **our** Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep**, by the** blood **of the eternal covenant,**>>>**equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through** Jesus Christ,<<<**to** whom **be glory forever and ever.**}<<**Amen.**  I appeal to you, brothers, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.  You should know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon.  Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those who come from Italy send you greetings.  **Grace be with all of you. ============ James,** a servant of **God and** of the Lord Jesus Christ**,**  To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion:  Greetings.  {>>**Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet** trials of various kinds**,**<<**for you know that**>>>**the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect,**<<<**that**>>>>  you may be p**erfect and complete, lacking in nothing.**<<<<}  >>>{**If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.**}<<<  **Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty** perishes**. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.**    >>{**Blessed is**>>>the man who remains steadfast under trial**,**<<<**for**>>>**when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life,**<<<**which God has promised to**>>>**those who love him**<<<**.**}<<  **Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for** >>{**God cannot be** tempted **with** evil**, and he himself** tempts **no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then**>>>**desire when it has conceived gives birth to** sin**,**<<<**and** sin **when it** is fully grown **brings forth** death**.**}<<  >{**Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.**>>>**Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights,**<<< **with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.**>>>>**Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth,**<<<<}**that** we should be a kind of firstfruits of h**is creatures.**<  **Know this, my beloved brothers:**>>{**let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;**>>>**for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.**<<<**Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and**>>>**receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls**<<<.}<<    >**But**>>>{**be doers of the word, and not hearers only,** deceiving **yourselves.**}<<<**For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But**{**the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.**}<  {>>>**If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue**  >>>>**but deceives his heart**<<<<, **this person's religion is worthless.**<<<^^**Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.**<<}  My brothers, show no partiality as>>>{**you hold the faith in our** Lord Jesus Christ**, the Lord of glory.**}<<<For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?  Listen, my **beloved** brothers,>>{**has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and** heirs **of the kingdom, which he has promised**>>>**to those who love him?**<<<}<<But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? Are they not the ones who blaspheme>>>**the honorable name by which you were called**<<<?  ^{If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, **“You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.**}**But if you show partiality, you are committing** sin **and are** convicted **by the law as** **transgressors.**<For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.    >>{**So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.** **For** >>>**judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy**<<<.>>**Mercy triumphs over judgment**}<<.  >>>>{**What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but** does not have works**? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if** it does not have works**, is** dead**.**}<<<<  But someone will say, “You have **faith** and I have **works.**”  >>{**Show me your faith apart from your works, and**>>>>**I will show you my faith** by my works<<<<. **You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the** demons **believe—and shudder!**}<<  >>>{**Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from** works **is** useless**? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that**>>>>**faith was active along with his works,**<<<<**and**>>>>**faith was completed by his works**<<<<; **and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—**>>>>**and he was called** a friend **of God**<<<<**.**>>>>**You see that** a person is justified by works and not by faith alone**.**<<<<}<<<  {>>**And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute**>>>**justified by works**<<<**when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?**<<**For**>>>>>>>**as the body apart from the spirit is** dead**, so also faith apart from** works **is** dead<<<<<<<}.  {>**Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.**<**For**>>>>**we all stumble in many ways.**<<<<**And**>>>if anyone does not stumble in what he says, **he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.**<<<}    If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.{^^^**How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and** set on fire by hell**.**<<<    For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, but^^^**no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless** evil**, full of deadly poison.**  **With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.**<<<}**Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water?** Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.  ^{**Who is wise and understanding among you?**^^**By his good conduct** let him show his works<<**in**^^^^**the meekness of wisdom**<<<<. **But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual,** demonic**. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.**}<  >>>{**But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is**>>>>**sown in peace**<<<<**by those who make peace.**}<<<  ^^**What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.**<<  >{**You** adulterous **people! Do you not know that**>>>>**friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an** enemy **of God.**<<<<**Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”? But**>>**he gives more grace**<<**. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but**>>>**gives grace to the humble**<<<**.”**}<  >>>{**Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the** devil**, and** he will flee from you**.**>>>>**Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.**<<<<>>>>>>>**Cleanse your hands, you** sinners**, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**<<<<<<<**Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.**}<<<  ^{**Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks** evil **against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.**>>**There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to** destroy.<<**But who are you to judge your neighbor?**}<  Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead^{**you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”**}**As it is,** **you boast in your arrogance.** **All such boasting is** evil<.{>>>**So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is** sin.<<<}  Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.  >**Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the** Lord**. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also,**{**be patient.**>>**Establish your hearts,**<<**for the coming of the** Lord **is at hand.**<>>**Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be** judged**; behold, the** Judge **is standing at the door.**<<}  {^**As an example of** suffering **and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we consider those blessed** >>**who remained steadfast.**<<**You have heard of the steadfastness of Job,**< **and**>>>**you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.**<<<}  But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but>>**let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under** condemnation<<.  Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And{>>>**the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed** sins**, he will be forgiven.**<<<**Therefore,**>>>**confess your** sins **to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.**<<<}  >>{**Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.**}<<  >>>{**My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a** sinner **from his wandering will save his soul from** death **and will cover a multitude of** sins**.**}<<<  **============ Peter, an apostle of** Jesus Christ,  >{**To those who are** elect **exiles of the Dispersion** **in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,**>>>**in the sanctification of the Spirit, for** obedience toJesus Christ<<<**and for sprinkling with** his blood**:**}<    {**May grace and peace be multiplied to you.**}  {>**Blessed be the God and Father of our** Lord Jesus Christ! **According to his great mercy,**>>**he has caused us to be born again to a living hope**<< **through the resurrection of** Jesus Christ **from the** dead**, to**>>**an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,**<<**kept in heaven for** you**,**>>>**who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation**<<<**ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though**>>**now for a little while,**>>>**if necessary,**<<<**you have been grieved by various** trials**, so that**>>>**the tested genuineness of your faith**<<<**—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of** Jesus Christ**.**<<**Though you have not seen** him**, you love** him**. Though you do not now see** him**, you believe in** him **and**>>>**rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,** obtaining the outcome of your f**aith, the salvation of your souls**<<<**.**}<  Concerning{**this salvation,** **the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours**}searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time{**the Spirit of** Christ **in them**}was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in>**the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by**>>>{**the Holy Spirit sent from heaven,**}<<<**things into which angels long to look.**<    **Therefore,**{^^**preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded**<<,>>>**set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of** Jesus Christ<<<**.**>>>**As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as** he **who called you is holy,**>>>>**you also be holy in all your conduct,**<<<<**since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”**<<<}  {^**And if you call on him as**>>>**Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds**<<<**,**^^^**conduct yourselves with fear**<<<**throughout the time of your exile,**<**knowing that**>>**you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious** blood **of** Christ, **like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.** He **was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you** **who**>>>through him are b**elievers in God**,<<<**who raised** him **from the** dead **and gave** him **glory, so that** your faith and hope are in God**.**<<}  >>{>>>>**Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love,**<<<< >>>**love one another earnestly from a pure heart,**<<<**since**>>>you have been b**orn again**<<<, **not of perishable seed but of imperishable,**>>>**through the living and abiding word of God**<<<**; for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.**}<<  >>**So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.**<<**Like newborn infants,**{^^^**long for the pure spiritual milk,**<<<**that**>>>**by it** you may grow up i**nto salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.**<<<}  {**As you come to** him**, a living** stone **rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious,**>>you yourselves **like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house,**>>>**to be a holy priesthood**<<<, **to** offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to G**od through** Jesus Christ.<<**For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a** stone**, a** cornerstone **chosen and precious, and**>>whoever believes in him **will not be put to shame.” So the honor is** for you who **believe,**<<**but for those who do not believe, “**The stone **that the builders rejected has become** the cornerstone**,” and “A** stone **of stumbling, and a** rock **of offense.”** >>**They stumble because** they disobey the word**, as they were destined to do.**<<}  >>>{**But** you are **a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a** people **for his own possession,**>>>>**that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out** of darkness **into his marvelous light.**<<<<**Once you were not a people, but now you are God's** people**; once you had not received mercy, but now** you **have received mercy.**}<<<  ^^**Beloved,**{**I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which** wage war **against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable,**}<<**so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see** your good deeds **and glorify God on the day of visitation.**  Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. **For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.**^^{**Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for** evil**, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God.**}**Honor the emperor.**<<  ^^**Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.**{**For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while** suffering unjustly**.**}For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure?{**But** if when you do good and suffer for it you e**ndure,** this is a **gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called,**<<**because**>>Christ also suffered for you**,** leaving you an example**,** so that you might follow in his steps**.** He **committed no** sin**, neither was deceit found in** his mouth**. When** he **was reviled,** he **did not revile in return; when** he suffered**,** he **did not threaten, but continued entrusting** himself **to him who judges justly.**>>>>>>>He himself **bore our** sinsin his body on the tree<<<<<<<**,**>>>>>>>**that** we might die to sin and live to **righteousness. By** his **wounds you have been healed.**<<<<<<<**For you were straying like sheep, but**>>>**have now returned**<<<**to the** Shepherd **and** Overseer **of** your souls**.**<<}    Likewise,{**wives,** be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— but **let your adorning be** **the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.** **For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves,** by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you **do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.**}    **Likewise,**^{**husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of**>>>**the grace of life**<<<, **so that your prayers may not be hindered.**}<  {^^^**Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay** evil **for** evil **or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. For “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from** evil **and his lips from speaking deceit; let him** turn away **from** evil **and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.**<<<**For**>>>**the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do** evil**.”**<<<}    ^{**Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should** suffer **for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,**^^^**but in your hearts honor** Christ the Lord **as holy**<<<**,**^^**always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for** the hope that is in you**; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience,**<<**so that, when you are slandered, those who revile** your good behavior in Christ **may be put to shame.** **For it is better to** suffer **for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing** evil**.**<>>**For** Christ **also suffered once for** sins**, the righteous for the unrighteous, that** he **might**>>>**bring us to God**<<<**, being put to** death **in the flesh but made alive in the spirit**<<**,**>**in which** he **went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.**>>**Baptism, which corresponds to this,**>>>**now saves you,**<<<**not as a removal of dirt from the body but**>>>>**as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of** Jesus Christ<<<<**,** who has gone into heaven and is at **the right hand of God**<<**, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to** him**.**}<  {>>>**Since therefore** Christ suffered in **the flesh,**>>>>**arm yourselves with the same way of thinking,**<<<<**for**>>>>>**whoever has** suffered **in the flesh has ceased from** sin**, so as** to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the w**ill of God.**<<<<<  **For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are** surprised when you do not join them in the **same** flood **of debauchery,** **and they malign you; but they will give account to him who is ready to** judge **the living and the dead.**<<<**For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might**>>>**live in the spirit the way God does**<<<}**.**  ^^{**The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.**^^^^**Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of** sins**.**<<<<**Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as** one who speaks oracles of G**od; whoever serves, as** one who serves by **the strength that God supplies—**^^^**in order that in everything God may be glorified through** Jesus Christ<<<**. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever.**}<<**Amen.**  **Beloved,**{>>>**do not be surprised at the fiery** trial **when it comes upon you to test you,**<<<**as though something strange were happening to you.** >>**But rejoice insofar** as you share Christ's sufferings, **that you may also rejoice and be glad when** his **glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of** Christ**, you are blessed, because**>>>**the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon** you.<<< <<}But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.{**Yet** if anyone suffers as a Christian, **let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. For**>**it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who** do not obey **the gospel of God? And** >>>**“If the righteous is scarcely saved,**<<<**what will become of the** ungodly **and the** sinner**?”**}<  >>{**Therefore let those who** suffer **according to God's will**>>>**entrust their souls**<<<**to a faithful Creator**>>>**while doing good.**<<<}<<  So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as>>{**a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed**}<<**:** shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And>>{**when the chief** Shepherd **appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory**}<<**.**  Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders.^^^{**Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore,** **under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.**}<<<  >>{**Be sober-minded; be watchful.** Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.>>>**Resist him,** firm in your f**aith**<<<**,** **knowing that the** same kinds of suffering **are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.**}<<  {>>>>**And after you have** suffered **a little while, the God of all grace, who**>>>>>**has called you to his eternal glory in** Christ,<<<<<**will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish** you**.**<<<<**To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.**}  >>**By Silvanus,**{**a faithful brother as I regard him,**}**I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that**{**this is**>>>**the true grace of God**<<<**. Stand firm** in **it.**}<<  She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. Greet one another with the kiss of love.    **Peace to all of you** who are in Christ**.**  **============** Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,  {>>**To** those who have obtained a f**aith**>>>**of equal standing with ours**<<<  >>>**by**<<<**the righteousness of our God and Savior** Jesus Christ**:**<<  >>**May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of** Jesus our **Lord.**<<}  >>>{His **divine power has granted to** us **all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of**>>>>**him who called** us **to his own glory and excellence,**<<<<**by which he has granted to** us **his precious and very great promises, so that**>>>>**through them** you **may become partakers of the divine nature,**<<<<**having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of** sinful **desire.**}<<<  >>>{**For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.**>>>>**For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our** Lord Jesus Christ**.**<<<<**For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former** sins**.**}<<<    **Therefore, brothers,**>>>>{**be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never** fall**. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior** Jesus Christ**.**}<<<<  Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.  For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when>>>he **received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to** him **by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved** Son**, with whom I am well pleased,” we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with** him **on the holy mountain**<<<**.**  >{**And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in** a dark place**,** >>>until **the day dawns and the morning star rises** in your hearts<<<**,**}<  **knowing this first of all,** that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For>**no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as**>>>**they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**<<< <  **But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in** destructive **heresies,** **even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves** swift destruction. **And** **many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their** condemnation **from long ago is not idle, and their** destruction **is not asleep.**    **For**>>{**if God did not spare angels when they** sinned**, but cast them into** hell **and committed them** to chains of gloomy darkness **to be kept until** the judgment**; if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah,**>>>**a herald of righteousness**<<<**, with seven others, when**>>>**he brought a flood upon** the world of the ungodly<<<**; if** by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes **he** condemned themto extinction**, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of** the wicked (for **as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their** lawless deeds **that he saw and heard); then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from** trials**, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of** judgment**, and**>>>**especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion**<<<**and despise authority.**}<<  >{**Bold and willful, they**>>**do not tremble**<<**as they blaspheme the glorious ones, whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord. But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and** destroyed**, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant,**>>>**will also be** destroyed **in their** destruction<<<**,**}<  >**suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing.** **They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes,** >>>{**reveling in their deceptions**}<<<, **while they feast with you.**>>>{**They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for** sin**.**}<<<**They entice unsteady souls.**>>>{**They have hearts trained in greed.** Accursed **children**! **Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray.**}<<<**They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing,**< **but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.**  >{**These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. For, speaking loud boasts of folly,**>>**they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom,**<<**but**>>>**they themselves are slaves of corruption. For**  >>>>**whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved**<<<<**.**<<<  **For**>>>**if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior** Jesus Christ**, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.”**<<<}  This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles,  **knowing this first of all, that**{**scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing,**>>>**following their own** sinful **desires.**<<<**They will say, “Where is the promise of** his **coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.” For they deliberately overlook this fact, that**>**the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by**>>**the word of God**<<, **and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished**<**.**>>**But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for** fire**, being kept until** the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly**.**<<  **But do not overlook this one fact, beloved,**>>**that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but**>>>**is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should**>>>>**reach**<<<<**repentance**<<<**.**<<  **But**>**the day of the Lord will come like a thief**<**, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.**}  >>{**Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to**>>>**be**<<<>>>**in lives of holiness and godliness**<<<**, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God**<<**, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn**! **But according to his promise**>>**we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth**>>>**in which righteousness dwells**<<<.<<  >>>**Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these,**^^^^**be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.**<<<<**And count the patience of our Lord as salvation,**<<<}**just as**{**our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters.**>>**There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which**>>>**the ignorant and unstable twist to their own** destruction**,**<<<**as they** do **the other Scriptures.**}<<    You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand,{>>**take care that you are not carried away with** the error of lawless people **and**>>>**lose your own stability**<<<**.**<<**But**>>**grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior** Jesus Christ**.**<< >>>**To** him **be the glory both now and**>>>>**to the day of** **eternity.**<<<<**Amen.**<<<} **============** >{**That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning**>>**the word of life— the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us**}**— that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and**{>>>**indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son** Jesus Christ**.**<<<**And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.**}<< <  >>**This is the message we have heard from** him **and proclaim to you, that** {**God is light, and in him is no** darkness **at all.**>>>>**If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in** darkness**, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as** he **is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the** blood **of** Jesus **his** Son **cleanses us from all** sin**.**<<<<}<<  >**If we say we have no** sin**, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us****.**>>{**If we confess our** sins**, he is faithful and just to forgive us our** sins **and**>>>**to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**<<<}<<**.**<**If we say we have not** sinned**, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.**  >{**My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not** sin**.**>>**But if anyone does** sin**, we have an advocate with the Father,** Jesus Christ **the righteous.** He **is the propitiation for our** sins**,**<<**and not for ours only but also for the** sins **of the whole world.**}<  >>>{**And by this we know that we have come to know** him**, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is** not **in him, but whoever keeps** his **word,**>>>>**in him truly the love of God is perfected.**<<<<**By this we may know that we are in** him**: whoever says he abides in** him **ought to walk in the same way in which** he **walked.**}<<<  **Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the** darkness **is passing away and the true light is already shining.**  {>>**Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in** darkness**.**>>>**Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.**<<<**But whoever hates his brother is in** the darkness **and walks in** the darkness**, and does not know where he is going, because** the darkness **has blinded his eyes.**<<**I am writing to you, little children, because**>>**your** sins **are forgiven for** his **name's sake.**<<**I am writing to you, fathers, because**>>>you know him who is from the beginning**.**<<<**I am writing to you, young men, because**>>>you have overcome the evil one**.**<<<**I write to you, children, because**>>>you know the **Father.**<<<**I write to you, fathers, because**>>>you know **him who is from the beginning.**<<<**I write to you, young men, because**>>>**you are strong, and the word of God abides** in you**, and** you have overcome the evil one**.**<<<}  {>>>>**Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is** not **in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is** not **from the Father but is from the world.**<<<<  **And**>>>>**the world** is passing away **along with its desires,**<<<<**but** >>>>>>>**whoever does the will of God abides forever.**<<<<<<<}  Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.  >{**But**>>>**you have been anointed by the Holy One,**<<<**and**>>**you all have knowledge.**<<}**I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it,**<**and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but he who denies that** Jesus **is the** Christ**? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the** Son**. No one who denies the** Son **has the** Father**. Whoever confesses the** Son **has the Father also.**  >>>**Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the** Son **and in the Father. And**{**this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.**}<<<  **I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you.** >>>{**But** the anointing that you received from him abides in you**, and you have no need that anyone should teach you.**}**But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in** him**.**<<<    >>>**And now, little children,**{**abide in** him**, so that when** he **appears we may have confidence and not shrink from** him **in shame at** his **coming.**<<<  >>>>**If you know that** he **is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness** has been **born of** him**.**<<<<}  >>>{**See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and** so we are**.**}<<<**The reason why the world does not know us is that it did** not **know** him**. Beloved,**>>>{we are **God's** children **now, and** what we will be **has not yet appeared; but**>>>>**we know that when** he **appears** we shall be like him**, because we shall see** him **as** he **is.**<<<<**And**>>>>**everyone who thus hopes in** him **purifies himself**<<<<**as** he **is pure.**}<<<  {>>>**Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness;** sin **is lawlessness.**<<< >>>**You know that** he **appeared in order to take away** sins**, and in** him **there is no** sin<<<**.**>>>>>**No one who abides in** him **keeps on** sinning**; no one who keeps on** sinning **has either seen** him **or known** him**.**<<<<<}  >>**Little children,**{>>>>**let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as** he **is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of** sinning **is** of the devil,<<<<**for** the devil **has been** sinning **from the beginning. The reason the** Son **of God appeared was to** destroythe works of the devil**.**>>>>>**No one** born of **God makes a practice of** sinning**, for God's seed abides in** him**; and** he **cannot keep on** sinning**, because** he **has been** born of **God.**<<<<<**By this**>>>>>**it is evident** who **are the** children **of God, and who are the** children **of the** devil**: whoever does** not **practice righteousness is** not **of God,**<<<<<**nor is the one who does** not **love his brother.**}<<  >>>{**For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.**}<<<**We should not be like Cain, who was of the** evil **one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were** evil **and his brother's righteous. Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.**{>>>**We know that we have passed**>>>>**out of** death **into life**<<<<**, because we love the brothers.**<<<>>**Whoever does** not **love abides in** death**. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.**<<}  >>>{**By this we know love, that** he laid down his life for us**, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children,**  >>>>>**let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. By this we shall know that we are of the truth**<<<<<**and reassure our heart before him;**<<<**for**>>>**whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.**}<<<  **Beloved,**{>>>**if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from him**<<<**,**>>>>>**because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.**<<<<<**And**>>**this is his commandment, that**>>>**we believe in the name of his** Son Jesus Christ **and love one another**<<<**,**<<**just as he has commanded us.**>>>>**Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.**<<<<}  Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.  **Little children,**>>{you **are from God and** have overcome **them, for**>>>**he who is in** you **is greater**<<<**than he who is in the world.**}<<**They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them.** We **are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of** error**.**  **Beloved,**{>>>>>>>**let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.**<<<<<<< >>>**In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only** Son **into the world, so that we might live** through him**. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his** Son **to** be the **propitiation for our** sins**. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another**<<<**.**>>>>**No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in** us **and his love is perfected in** us**.**<<<<}    {>>>>**By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given** us **of his Spirit.**<<<<**And we have seen and testify that**>>>**the Father has sent his** Son **to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that** Jesus **is the** Son **of God, God abides in** him**, and** he **in God. So**>>>>we have come to know and **to believe the love that God has for us**<<<<**.**<<<}>>>>>>>{**God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in** him**.** By this is **love perfected with** us**, so that** we **may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as** he **is so also are** we **in this world.**}<<<<<<< >>>{**There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.**}<<<  >>{**We love because** he first loved us**. If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.**}<<  {>>**Everyone who believes that** Jesus **is the** Christ **has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. By this we know that we love the** children of G**od, when we love God and obey his commandments.**<<**For**>>>>**this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. For everyone** who>>>>>has been **born of God**<<<<<**overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—**our **faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except** the one **who believes that** Jesus **is the** Son **of God?**<<<<}  **This is** he **who came by water and** blood**—**Jesus Christ**; not by the water only but by the water and the** blood**. And**>>>{**the Spirit is the one who testifies,**<<<**because**>>>**the Spirit is the truth.**}<<< **For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the** blood**; and these three agree. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is**>>>{**the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his** Son**. Whoever believes in the** Son **of God** has the testimony in **himself.**}<<<**Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his** Son**. And**>>>{**this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his** Son**. Whoever has the** Son **has life; whoever does** not **have the** Son **of God does** not **have life.**}<<<  >>{**I write these things to you who believe in the name of the** Son **of God, that**>>>**you may know that you have eternal life.**<<<**And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.**}<<  >{**If anyone sees his brother committing a** sin **not leading to** death**,**>>**he shall ask, and**>>>**God will give him life**<<< <<}<**—**to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.  {>>>>>>>**We know that** everyone who has been born of God does not kee**p on** sinning**, but** he **who was born of God protects** him**, and the** evil one **does not touch** him**.**<<<<<<<>>>We know that we are from G**od, and the whole world lies in the power of** the evil one**. And** we **know that the** Son **of God has come and has given** us **understanding,**>>>>**so that** we **may know him who is true; and** we **are in** him **who is true, in his** Son Jesus Christ**.**<<<<He **is the true God and eternal life.**<<<}  ^^**Little children,**{**keep yourselves from** idols**.**}<< **============** The elder  **to the elect lady and her children, whom**>**I love in truth**<**,** and not only I, but also all who **know the truth**,>>>**because of**{**the truth that abides in** us **and will be with** us **forever**<<<**:**  >>>**Grace, mercy, and peace**>>>>**will be with** us<<<<**, from God the Father and from** Jesus Christ **the Father's** Son**,**>>>>**in truth and love**<<<<**.**<<<}  >{**I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father.**}<And now I ask you, dear lady—{>>**not as though I were writing you a** **new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning—**>>>**that** **we love one another**<<<**. And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments**<<; **this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it.**}  For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.{>>**Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of** Christ**,**>>>**does** not **have God.**<<<**Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the** Son**.**<<>**If anyone comes to you and does** not **bring this teaching, do** not **receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his** wicked works**.**<}  Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.  The children of your elect sister greet you. **============** The elder  **to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.**  **Beloved,**{**I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health,** **as it goes well with your soul**. For I rejoiced greatly when>**the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth.** **I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.**<}  Beloved,^{**it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers,**}<strangers as they are, who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to{**send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God.** **For they have gone out for the sake of the name,**} accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.  I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. So if I come,^**I will bring up what he is doing,** **talking wicked nonsense**<against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church.  >>>>{**Beloved, do not imitate** evil **but imitate good. Whoever does good** is **from God; whoever does** evil **has not seen God.**}<<<<**Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself.** We also add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true.  I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink. I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.  **Peace be to you.** The friends greet you. Greet the friends, each by name.  **============ Jude,**>**a servant of** Jesus Christ<**and brother of James,**  >>{**To those who are called,**>>>**beloved in God the Father**<<<**and**>>>**kept for** Jesus Christ<<<**:**  **May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.**}<<  Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to>{**contend for** **the faith that was once for all**>>**delivered**<<**to the** saints}**.** **For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this** condemnation**, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord,** Jesus Christ**.**<    **Now I want to remind you,**>>{**although you once fully knew it, that**>>>Jesus**,** who **saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward** destroyed **those who did not believe.**<<<**And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling,** he has kept in **eternal** chains under gloomy darkness **until the** judgment **of the great day— just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of** eternal fire**.**}<<  **Yet**>{**in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams,**>>**defile the flesh,**<<**reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones.**< >**But when the archangel Michael, contending with the** devil**, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.”**}**But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are des**troyed **by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively.**<    {>Woe to them! **For they walked in the way of Cain and**>>>**abandoned themselves for the sake of gain**<<<**to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion.**<}  >**These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted;** {**wild waves of the sea,**>>**casting up the foam of their own shame**<<**; wandering stars, for whom** the gloom of utter darkness **has been reserved forever.**}<  {**It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying,**>>**“Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute** judgment **on all and**>>>**to convict all the** ungodly **of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way,**<<<**and of all the harsh things that ungodly** sinners **have spoken against him.” These are grumblers, malcontents,**>>>**following their own sinful desires;**<<<**they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.**<<}  **But you must remember,** **beloved,** **the predictions** **of the apostles of our** Lord Jesus Christ**.** **They said to you,**>{“**In the last time there will be scoffers,**>>>**following their own ungodly passions.”**<<<**It is these who cause divisions,**>>>**worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.**<<<}<  {**But you, beloved,**>>>**building yourselves up in your most holy faith**<<< **and**>>**praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God,**<< >>**waiting for the mercy of our** Lord Jesus Christ **that leads to eternal life.**<<}  **And**^^{**have mercy on those who doubt;**>>>**save others by snatching them out of the fire;**<<<**to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.**}<<  {**Now to**>>>>>>**him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy,**<<<<<<  >>**to the only God, our Savior, through** Jesus Christ **our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever.**<<}**Amen. ============** >**The revelation of** Jesus Christ**, which God gave** him **to show to his** servants **the things that must soon take place.**<**He made it known by sending his angel to his** servant^{**John,**^^**who bore witness to the word of God and to** the testimony of Jesus Christ**,**<<}**even to all that he saw. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.**<  John  to the seven churches that are in Asia:  >>{**Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne**}**, and from** {Jesus Christ the faithful witness}**,** the firstborn of the dead**, and** the ruler of kings on earth**.**<<  {>>**To** him who loves us and>>>has freed us from our sins<<<by his blood and made us a kingdom**,** priests tohis **God and Father,**<<**to** him **be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold,** he **is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see** him**, even those who pierced** him**, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of** him**. Even so. Amen.**}  >>{**“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”**}<<  ^^{**I, John, your brother and partner in** the **tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are** in Jesus**,** **was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of** Jesus**. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day,**}<<and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”  Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning **I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands** one **like a** son of man**, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around** his **chest. The hairs of** his **head were white, like white wool, like snow.** His **eyes were like a flame of fire,** his **feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and** his **voice was like the roar of many waters. In** his **right hand** he **held seven stars, from** his **mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and** his **face was like the sun shining in full strength.**    **When I saw** him**, I fell at** his **feet as though dead. But** he **laid** his **right hand on me, saying,**{>>**“Fear not,** I **am the first and the last, and the living one.** I died**, and behold** I **am alive forevermore,**<<**and** I **have the keys of** Death and Hades**.**}  Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.  {“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:  **‘The words of** him who **holds the seven stars in** his **right hand,** who **walks among the seven golden lampstands.**>>>**“‘**I **know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.** I **know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for** my **name's sake, and you have not grown weary.**  **But** I **have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not,** I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place**, unless you repent. Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which** I **also hate.**  **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers** I **will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’**<<<  “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write:  **‘**The words of the first and the last**,** who died and came to l**ife.**>>>**“‘**I **know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of** Satan**. Do not fear what you are about to** suffer**. Behold,** the devil **is about to throw some of you into** prison**, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto** death**, and** I **will give you the crown of life.**  **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by** the second death**.’**<<<  “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write:  **‘The words** of him who has **the sharp two-edged sword.**>>>**“‘**I **know where you dwell, where** Satan's throne is**. Yet you hold fast** my **name, and you did not deny** my **faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was** killed **among you, where** Satan dwells**.**  **But** I **have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent. If not,** I **will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.**  **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers** I **will give some of the hidden manna, and** I **will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.’**<<<  “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write:  **‘The words of the** Son **of God**, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze**.**>>>**“‘**I **know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first.**  **But** I **have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.** I **gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. Behold,** I **will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her** I **will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, and** I **will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that** I **am** he **who searches mind and heart, and** I **will give to each of you according to your works. But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the** deep **things of** Satan**, to you** I **say,** I **do not lay on you any other burden. Only hold fast what you have until** I **come.**  **The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him** I **will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as** I myself **have received authority from** my **Father. And** I **will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’**<<<  “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write:  **‘The words** of him who has **the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.**>>>**“‘**I **know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are** dead**. Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to** die**, for** I **have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up,** I **will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour** I will come against you**.**  **Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with** me **in white, for they are worthy. The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and** I **will never blot his name out of the book of life.** I **will confess his name before** my **Father and before his angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’**<<<  “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:  **‘The words of the holy** one**, the true** one**,** who **has the key of David,** who **opens and no one will shut,** who **shuts and no one opens.**>>>**“‘**I **know your works. Behold,** I **have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut.** I **know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept** my **word and have not denied** my **name. Behold,** I **will make those of the synagogue of** Satan **who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold,** I **will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that** I have l**oved you. Because you have kept** my **word about patient endurance,** I **will keep you from the hour of** trial **that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.**  I am coming soon**. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. The one who conquers,** I **will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and** I **will write on** him **the name of** my **God, and the name of the city of** my **God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from** my **God out of heaven, and** my own new name**. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’**<<<  “And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write:  **‘The words of** the Amen, the faithful and true witness**,** the beginning of God's creation**.**>>>**“‘**I **know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold,** I **will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.** I **counsel you to buy from** me **gold refined by** fire**, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.**  **Those whom** I **love,** I **reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold,** I **stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door,** I **will come in to him and eat with him, and he with** me**.**  **The one who conquers,** I will grant him to sit with me on my throne**, as** I also conquered and sat down with my **Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”**<<<}  After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” **At once I was in the Spirit, and**>{**behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.**}<  **And**>{**around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!” And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”**}<  **Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. And** **I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice,** **“**>>>**Who is worthy**<<<  **to open the scroll and break its seals?”** **And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.** And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; **behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”**  >**And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a** Lamb **standing, as though it had been** slain**, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are**>>>**the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth**<<<**. And** he **went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. And when** he **had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the** Lamb**, each holding a harp, and** golden bowls full of incense**, which are the** prayers of the saints**. And they sang a new song, saying,**>>>{**“Worthy are** you **to take the scroll and to open its seals, for** you **were** slain**, and by** your blood you **ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and** you **have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth**}<<<**.”**<  >>>{**Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the** Lamb **who was** slain**, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”**  **And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the** Lamb **be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.**}<<<  >**Now I watched when** the Lamb **opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider** had a bow**, and a crown was given to him, and** he came out conquering, and to conquer**.**  **When** he **opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!” And out came another horse, bright** red**. Its rider was permitted to** take peace from the earth**, so that** people should slay one another**, and he was given a great sword.**  **When** he **opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!”**  **When** he **opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And** its rider's name was Death**, and** Hades followed him**. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth,** to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence **and by wild beasts of the earth.**<  >{**When he opened the fifth seal,**>>>**I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been** slain **for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.**<<<**They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will** judge **and avenge our** blood **on those who dwell on the earth?”** **Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete,**>>>**who were to be** killed **as they themselves had been.**<<<}<  **When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.**  **Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the** Lamb**, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”**  **After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree. Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, saying, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: 12,000 from the tribe of Judah were sealed, 12,000 from the tribe of Reuben, 12,000 from the tribe of Gad, 12,000 from the tribe of Asher, 12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali, 12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh, 12,000 from the tribe of Simeon, 12,000 from the tribe of Levi, 12,000 from the tribe of Issachar, 12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun, 12,000 from the tribe of Joseph, 12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin were sealed.**  **After this I looked, and behold,**{>>**a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the** Lamb**,**>>>**clothed in white robes,**<<<**with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice,**>>>**“Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the** Lamb!**”**<<<**And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”**<<  **Then one of the elders addressed me, saying,**>>>**“Who are these, clothed in white robes,**<<<**and from where have they come?”**  I said to him, **“Sir, you know.”**  And he said to me,>>**“These are the ones coming out of the** great tribulation**.**>>>>**They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the** Lamb**.**<<<<**“Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For** the Lamb **in the midst of the throne** will be their shepherd**, and**>>>he **will guide them to springs of living water,**<<<**and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”**<<}  **When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.**  **Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.   And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.**  **Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.**  **The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire**, **mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth.** **And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.**  **The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood.**  **A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The name of the star is** Wormwood. **A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.**  **The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night.**  **Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, “Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!”**  **And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit. He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft. Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone. And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them.**  **In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle: on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth; they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. They have tails and stings like scorpions, and their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails. They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon.**  **The first woe has passed; behold, two woes are still to come.**  **Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number.**  **And this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode them: they wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur, and the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths. By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents with heads, and by means of them they wound.**  >{**The rest of mankind, who were not** killed **by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping** demons **and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.**}<  Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded. And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down.”  **And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven and swore by**{**him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it,**}**that there would be no more delay, but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.**  Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, “Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.”  So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, “Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey.” And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter. And I was told, “You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings.”  Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, **“Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there,** but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and **they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.**{**And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.” These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.**}**And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed.** **They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.**  **And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their** Lord **was** crucified**. For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.**  **But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here!” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them.**  **And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.**  The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.  {**Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his** Christ**, and he shall reign forever and ever.” And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.**>>**The nations raged, but your** wrath **came, and** **the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your** servants**, the prophets and saints, and**>>>**those who fear your name,**<<<**both small and great, and for** destroying **the destroyers of the earth.”**<<    **Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.**}    **And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a** great reddragon**, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And** the dragon **stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her** child **he might devour it. She gave birth to a** male child, **one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her** child **was caught up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.**    {**Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against** the dragon**. And** the dragon **and** his angels **fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And** the great dragon **was thrown down, that** ancient serpent**, who is called** the devil **and** Satan**, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and** his angels were thrown down with him**.**  **And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying,**>>**“Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and** the authority of **his** Christ **have come, for** the accuser **of our brothers has been thrown down, who** accuses **them day and night before our God.**>>>**And they have conquered** him **by the** blood **of the** Lamb<<<**and**>>>**by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.**<<<**Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But** woe to you**, O earth and sea, for** thedevil has come down to you in **great wrath, because** he knows that his time is short!**”**<<}  **And** when the dragon **saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to** the male child**.** But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. Then>>{**the** dragon **became furious with the woman and** went off to make war **on the rest of her offspring, on**>>>**those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of** Jesus**.**<<<**And** he **stood on the sand of the sea.**}<<  And{**I saw a** beast **rising out of the sea,** with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. **And to it the** dragon **gave his power and his throne and great authority. One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the** beast**. And they worshiped the** dragon**, for he had given his authority to the** beast**, and they worshiped the** beast**, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?”**  **And**>**the** beast **was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months.**< **It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven.**>>**Also** it was allowed to make war **on the saints and to conquer them.**<<**And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, and** >>**all who dwell on earth will worship it,**>>>**everyone whose name has** not **been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life**<<<**of the** Lamb **who was** slain**.**<<  >>**If anyone has an ear, let him hear: If anyone is to be taken** captive**, to** captivity **he goes; if anyone is to be** slain **with the sword, with the sword must he be** slain**. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.**<<}  **Then I saw another** beast **rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. It exercises all the authority of the first** beast **in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first** beast**, whose mortal wound was healed. It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the** beast **it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the** beast **that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the** beast**, so that**>{**the image of the** beast **might even speak and might**  >>>**cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.**<<<**Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the** beast **or the number of its name.**<  **This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the** beast**, for it is the number of a man, and his number is** 666**.**}  **Then I looked, and behold,**>**on Mount Zion stood the** Lamb**, and with** him **144,000 who had** his **name and** his **Father's name written on their foreheads.** And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four **living** creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. **It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the** Lamb **wherever** he **goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the** Lamb**, and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.**<  {>**Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with**>>>**an eternal gospel**<<<**to proclaim to those who dwell on earth**<**, to every nation and tribe and language and people. And he said with a loud voice,**> >>**“Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come,**<<  **and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.”**<  **Another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great,**>>>**she who** made all nations drink the wine **of the passion of her sexual immorality.”**<<<  **And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice,** >>>**“If anyone worships the** beast **and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's** wrath**,** poured full strength into the cup of his anger**, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the** Lamb**. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever**, **and** they have no rest, day or night, **these worshipers of the** beast **and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.” Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in** Jesus**.**<<<  >>>**And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the** dead **who** die **in the Lord from now on.”**  **“Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”**<<<}  {**Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud** one **like a** son of man**, with a golden crown on** his **head, and a sharp sickle in** his **hand. And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to** him **who sat on the cloud, “Put in** your **sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for** the harvest of the earth is fully ripe**.” So** he **who sat on the cloud swung** his **sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.**  **Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, “Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe.” So**>>**the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into** the great winepress of the wrath of God**. And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and** blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia**.**<<}  {**Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them** the wrath of G**od is finished.**>>>**And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the** beast **and its image and the number of its name,**<<<**standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.**>>**And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the** Lamb**, saying, “Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For**  >>>>**you alone are holy**<<<<**. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”**<<}  {**After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent of witness in heaven was opened, and out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests.** **And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever, and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power,** **and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.**  **Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.”**}  So>{**the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and** painful sores **came upon the people who bore the mark of the** beast **and worshiped its image.**}<  **The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea.**  **The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became** blood**. And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, “Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments. For**>>**they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and** you have given them blood to drink**.**<<**It is what they deserve!” And I heard the altar saying, “Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!”**  >**The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and** it was allowed to scorch people with fire**. They were** scorched by the fierce heat**, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory.**  **The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the** beast**, and its kingdom was plunged into** darkness**.** People gnawed their tongues in anguish **and cursed the God of heaven for their** pain and sores**. They did not repent of their deeds.**<  The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.    >>>{**(“Behold,**I am coming like a thief! **Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”)**}<<<  **And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.**  **The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake. The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and**{**God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain** the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath**. And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found.**>**And** great hailstones**, about** one hundred pounds each**,** fell **from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because** the plague was so severe**.**<}  **Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come,**>>{**I will show you** the judgment **of** the great prostitute **who is seated on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth** have committed **sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk.”**}<<  **And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a** woman **sitting on a scarlet** beast **that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.**>{**The** woman **was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with** gold **and jewels and pearls,**>>**holding in her hand** a golden cup **full of** abominations **and the impurities of her sexual immorality.**<<**And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: “Babylon the great,**>>mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations**.”**<<>>>**And I saw the** woman**,** drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus**.**<<<}<  **When I saw her, I marveled greatly. But the angel said to me, “Why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the** woman**, and of the** beast **with seven heads and ten horns that carries her.**>{**The** beast **that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to** destruction**.**>>**And the dwellers on earth**>>>**whose names have** not **been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world**<<<  **will marvel to see the** beast**,**<<}<**because it was and is not and is to come.**  This calls for **a mind with wisdom**: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while. As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction.  **And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings** who have not yet received royal power, but **they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the** beast**. These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the** beast**.**{>**They will make war on the** Lamb**, and the** Lamb **will conquer them, for** he **is Lord of lords and King of kings,**<**and**>>**those with** him **are called and chosen and faithful.”**<<}  **And the angel said to me,**>**“The waters that you saw, where the** prostitute **is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages.**<**And the ten horns that you saw, they and the** beast **will hate the** prostitute**. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with** fire**, for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the** beast**, until the words of God are fulfilled. And the** woman **that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth.”**  **After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. And he called out with a mighty voice,**>{**“**Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! **She has become a dwelling place for** demons**, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. For**>>**all nations have drunk** the wine of **the passion of her sexual immorality**, **and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her,**<<**and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living.”**}<  >>>**Then I heard another voice from heaven saying,**{**“Come out of** her**, my people, lest you take part in** her sins**, lest you share in** her plagues; **for** her sins **are** heaped high **as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.**}<<<>**Pay** her **back as** she herself **has paid back others, and repay** her **double for** her deeds**; mix a double portion for** her in the cup she mixed**. As** she glorified herself and lived in luxury**, so give** her **a like measure of** torment and mourning**, since** in her heart she says, ‘I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.’ **For this reason**{her plagues **will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has** judged her}**.”**  {>>**And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality**<<**and lived in luxury with** her**, will weep and wail over** her **when they see** the smoke of her burning**. They will stand far off, in fear of** her torment**, and say, “Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon!** For in a single hour your judgment has come.**”**<}  And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls.  “The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you, never to be found again!” The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, “Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! **For**>{**in a single hour all this wealth** has been laid waste}<**.”** And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, **stood far off and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, “What city was like the great city?”** And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, “Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For>{**in a single hour she has been** laid waste}**. Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given** judgment **for you against** her**!”**<    {>**Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “So will** Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence**, and will be found no more;**<**and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more, and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and**>>**all nations were deceived by your sorcery.**>>>**And in** her **was found** the blood **of prophets and of** saints, **and of** all who have been slain **on earth.”**<<< <<}  **After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out,**>>**“Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the** great prostitute **who corrupted the earth with** her **immorality, and has** avenged on her>>>the blood of his **servants**<<<**.”**  **Once more they cried out, “Hallelujah!**{The smoke **from her goes up forever and ever**}.”<<  **And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!”**  >{**And from the throne came a voice saying, “Praise our God,**>>>**all you his servants, you who fear him,**<<<**small and great.”**}<  {**Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for**>**the marriage of the** Lamb **has come, and**>>>>his **Bride has made herself ready;**>>>>>**it was granted her**<<<<<**to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the** saints**.**<<<<  **And the angel said to me, “**>>>**Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to** the marriage supper of the Lamb**.**<<<**” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”**<}  **Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that!**>>{**I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of** Jesus**. Worship God.”**>>>>**For the testimony of** Jesus **is the spirit of prophecy.**<<<<}<<  {>>>>**Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The** one **sitting on it** is called Faithful and True**, and in righteousness** he judges and makes war**.** His **eyes are like a flame of fire, and on** his **head are many diadems, and** he **has a name written that no one knows but** himself**.** Heis clothed in a robe dipped in blood**, and**>>>>>>>**the name by which** he **is called is The Word of God**<<<<<<<**.**<<<<**And**>>**the armies of heaven,**>>>>**arrayed in fine linen, white and pure**<<<<, **were following** him **on white horses.**<<**From**>>hismouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations**, and** he will rule them with a rod of iron**.** He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath **of God the Almighty.** On his robe and on his thigh he has a na**me written, King of kings and Lord of lords.**<<}  **Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, “Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.”**  >{**And I saw the** beast **and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against** him **who was sitting on the horse and against** his **army. And the** beast **was captured, and with it the** false prophet **who in its presence had done**>>**the signs by which** he **deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image.**<<**These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. And the rest were slain by** the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse**, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.**<}  **Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the** dragon**,** that ancient serpent**, who** is the devil **and** Satan**, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that**>**he must be released for a little while.**<  **Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed.**>>>{**Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of** Jesus **and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with** Christ **for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection!** **Over such** the second death **has no power, but they will be priests of God and of** Christ**, and they will reign with** him **for a thousand years.**}<<<  >{**And when the thousand years are ended,** Satan **will be released from his** prison **and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but** fire **came down from heaven and** consumed them**, and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.**}<  >{**Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.**>>**And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life**<<**.** >>>**And the dead were judged by what was written in the books,**>>>>>>>**according to what they had done**<<<<<<<**.**<<<**And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and**>>>>>>>**they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.**<<<<<<<**Then**>>Death and Hades **were thrown into** the lake of fire**. This is** the second death**,** the lake of fire**. And**>>>**if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire**<<<**.**<<}<  **Then**>>>{**I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned** for her husband**. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold,**>>>>**the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and** death **shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”**<<<<  **And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.”**}<<<**Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”**  >>>{**And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.**>>>>**To the thirsty**<<<<**I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.**>>>>**The one who conquers**<<<<**will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.**>>>>**But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death**.**”**<<<<}<<<  **Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the** Lamb**.”**>>{**And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God,** its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal**.** It had a great, high wall**, with twelve gates,**}<<**and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the** Lamb.  **And the one who spoke with me had** a measuring rod of gold **to measure the city and its gates and walls.**>>{**The city lies foursquare,** its length the same as its width**. And he measured the city with his rod,** 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal**. He also measured** its wall, 144 cubits **by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement.** The wall was built of jasper**, while the city was** pure gold**, like clear glass.**}<<**The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and**>>{the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass**.**}<<  >>**And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and** the Lamb**. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is** theLamb**. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.**>>>>>{**But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the** Lamb's **book of life.**}<<<<<<<  >>{**Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of** the Lamb **through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of** the Lamb **will be in it, and his servants will worship him.** >>>**They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.**<<<  **And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.**}<<    **And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his** servants **what must soon take place.”   “And**>>behold, I am coming soon. **Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”**<<  **I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, but he said to me,**>>**“You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with** you and your brothers the prophets**, and with those who keep the words of this book.**{**Worship God.**}**”**<<  **And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for**>>>{**the time is near. Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.”**}<<<  >>{**“Behold,** I am coming soon, **bringing** my **recompense with** me**,**  >>>>**to repay each one for what he has done.**<<<<I **am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”**}<<    >>{**Blessed are**>>>>**those who wash their robes,**<<<<**so that**>>>>**they may have the right**<<<<**to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.**}<<  {>**“**I**,** Jesus**, have sent** my **angel to testify to you about these things for the churches.** I **am the root and the descendant of David, the** >>>**bright morning star**<<<**.”**  **The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.”**< >>>**And let**>>>>**the one who is thirsty**<<<<**come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.**<<<}  **I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and**>>**if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city,**<<**which are described in this book.**    He who testifies to these things **says,**>**“Surel**y I am coming soon**.”**  **Amen.**{**Come,** Lord Jesus!}<  >{**The grace of the** Lord Jesus **be with all. Amen.**}<  **Legend:**  **Green what God does**  **Yellow what people do**  **aqua shows ESV text that’s different than NIV (mostly of significance)**  >< God’s doings->faith->Holy Spirit->sanctification-love-sufferings for Christ->judgment  >> << tends to be what we must put effort into  >>> <<< tends to be what God does for us  >>>> <<<< heavy  >>>>> <<<<< heavier  etc., but this color shows that what we do, how we act/behave, think, and talk shows whether we really believe or not. Also shows what God does to make us into His image. Also various astonishing/impactful things.  ^ <  ^^ <<  ^^^ <<<  support to faith->Holy Spirit->sanctification-walking in love  God’s elect  when it’s abundantly made clear that it’s BOTH God and man working/contributing together; if either were not then the thing said would not be happening (this was only worked out in a lit bit of the text)  red for persecution, suffering, darkness, sin, death, condemnation, hell  {} you’ll figure this out |