

## MATTHEW

### CHAPTER ONE

1) [This is] a record of the family background of Jesus Christ, the descendant of David, who was the descendant of Abraham. [Note: The following is an incomplete lineage through Jesus-step-father Joseph].

2) Abraham had a son named Isaac; Isaac had a son named Jacob and Jacob's sons were Judah and his [eleven] brothers. 3) Judah had sons named Perez and Zarah, [whose mother was] Tamar. Perez had a son named Hezron; Hezron had a son named Aram; 4) Aram had a son named Amminadab; Amminadab had a son named Nahshon; Nahshon had a son named Salmon; 5) Salmon had a son named Boaz [whose mother was] Rahab; Boaz had a son named Obed [whose mother was] Ruth; Obed had a son named Jesse, 6) and Jesse had a son named David [who became] king [of Israel].

David had a son named Solomon [whose mother was Bathsheba, the wife] of Uriah; 7) Solomon had a son named Rehoboam; Rehoboam had a son named Abijah; Abijah had a son named Asa; 8) Asa had a son named Jehoshaphat; Jehoshaphat had a son named Joram; Joram had a son named Uzziah; 9) Uzziah had a descendant named Jotham; Jotham had a son named Ahaz; Ahaz had a son named Hezekiah; 10) Hezekiah had a son named Manasseh; Manasseh had a son named Amon; Amon had a son named Josiah; 11) Josiah had descendants named Jechoniah and his brothers, [near] the time when [the people of Judah] were taken away to Babylon.

12) After the people [of Judah] were taken away to Babylon, Jechoniah had a son named Shealtiel; Shealtiel had a son named Zerubbabel; 13) Zerubbabel had a son named Abiud; Abiud had a son named Eliakim; Eliakim had a son named Azor; 14) Azor had a son named Sadoc; Sadoc had a son named Achim; Achim had a son named Eliud; 15) Eliud had a son named Eleazar; Eleazar had a son named Matthan; Matthan had a son named Jacob; 16) Jacob had a son named Joseph, who was the husband of Mary. Mary [alone] was the mother of Jesus, who is called the Christ.

17) So, all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen; from [the time of] King David to the people [of Judah] being taken away to Babylon were [approximately] fourteen generations and from [Judah] being taken away to Babylon to [the time of] Christ were [approximately] fourteen generations.

18) Now the birth of Christ happened this way: When His mother Mary was engaged to marry Joseph, [but] before they had a sexual relationship, she was discovered to be pregnant by [the power of] the Holy Spirit. 19) Now Joseph, her husband [to be], being a man who did what was right, and not wanting to make a public spectacle out of her, decided to break off their engagement privately.

20) But while he was thinking about the matter, [suddenly] an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream [i.e., a supernatural revelation given during sleep], saying, AJoseph, you descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife, for the baby she is carrying is by [the power of] the Holy Spirit. 21) She is going to have a son and you should name Him Jesus, for He is the One who will save His people from their sins.®

22) Now all this happened in order to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet [Isaiah 7:14], saying, 23) ALook, the virgin will become pregnant and have a son, and they will name Him Immanuel,® which means AGod with us.®

24) Then Joseph woke up from his sleep and did what the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary to be his wife. 25) [But] he did not have sexual relations with her until [after] she had a son, whom he named Jesus.

## CHAPTER TWO

1) Now Jesus was born in Bethlehem [a small town] in Judea during the time when Herod [the Great] was king [of Judea]. About that time some astrologer/sages from the east [i.e., Persia] came to Jerusalem, saying, 2) AWhere is the one who was born to be king of the Jews? For we saw a star [signifying his birth while we were still] in the east, and have come here to worship him.®

3) And when King Herod heard this, he and the entire city of Jerusalem were [very] upset. 4) So, he gathered all the leading priests and experts in the Law of Moses from among the people and

asked them where the Christ [child] was to be born. 5) They replied to him, **AI**In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what was written by the prophet [Micah 5:2], 6) **>**And you, Bethlehem in the country of Judah, are not among the least [towns in furnishing] rulers for Judah, for you will produce a leader who will become shepherd of my [i.e., God's] people Israel.=@

7) Then Herod summoned the astrologer/sages and learned from them exactly when the star had appeared. 8) So, he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, **AGo** and find out the details about the young child, and when you have found him, come and tell me, so I can go and worship him myself.@

9) After hearing the king they left and the star, which they had seen [while still] in the east, moved on ahead of them until it stopped over [the house] where the young child was staying. [See verse 11]. 10) And when they saw the star, they were extremely happy. 11) Then they went into the house and saw the young child with His mother Mary. They fell to the ground and worshiped Him, and unpacking their treasures, they offered Him gifts of gold, incense and aromatic spices. 12) Then they were warned by God in a [supernatural] dream not to return to Herod, so they left and returned to their own country by a different route.

13) Now when they had gone an angel from the Lord appeared to Joseph in a [supernatural] dream, saying, **AGet up** and take the young child and His mother and hurry to Egypt. Stay there for as long as I tell you to, for Herod will be looking for the young child in order to kill Him.@

14) So he got up, took the young child and His mother at night and went to Egypt. 15) They stayed there until Herod died, so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled, saying [Hosea 11:1], **AI** [i.e., God] called my Son out of Egypt.@

16) When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the astrologer/sages, he was furious and sent out [his soldiers] to kill all the baby boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity. This was done to those from two years old and under, basing [their decision] on the exact time determined from the astrologer/sages. 17) This fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, 18) [Jer. 31:15], **AA** voice was heard in [the town of] Ramah [Note: This was a village near Jerusalem, where Rachel was buried], with crying and deep mourning. It was Rachel crying for her children [Note: Initially this

was a reference to the Israelites who were taken to Babylonian captivity. See Jer. 29-31]. **She refused to be comforted because they were dead.**@

**19) Then when Herod was dead, an angel from the Lord appeared in a [supernatural] dream to Joseph [while he was still] in Egypt, saying, 20) AGet up, take the young child and His mother, and go [back] to the country of Israel, for those who had tried to take the young child-s life are [now] dead.**@

**21) So he got up, took the young child and His mother and went [back] to the country of Israel. 22) But when he heard that Archelaus was then the king of Judea, in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go back. Then, being warned by God in a [supernatural] dream, he went on up to the region called Galilee, 23) and settled in a town called Nazareth, so that it could fulfill what was spoken by the prophets [Isa. 11:1 in the Hebrew text] that Jesus would be called a Nazarene.**

### **CHAPTER THREE (Thirty years later)**

**1) In those days, John the Immerser went into the desert of Judea preaching [to Jews], saying, 2) AYou must repent [i.e., change your hearts and lives], for the kingdom of heaven will soon be here.**@  
**3) For this is the man who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, who said, [Isa. 40:3], A[It is] the voice of a man who speaks out in the desert, [urging people to] make the road for the Lord ready [for Him to travel]; to make a straight pathway for Him [to walk on].**@

**4) Now John dressed in clothing made of camel-s hair and he wore a leather belt around his waist; he ate grasshoppers and wild honey [i.e., for his regular diet]. 5) [People from] Jerusalem and all over Judea and the region around the Jordan River all went out [to the desert] to [hear] him, 6) and people were immersed by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins.**

**7) But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to be immersed, John said to them, AYou children of snakes, who warned you to run away from the coming wrath [of God]? 8) Demonstrate by your lives that you have [really] repented, 9) and quit thinking to yourselves, we claim Abraham as our forefather, because I tell you, God is able to make Abraham-s children out of these stones. 10) And even now the axe is ready to chop down the**

trees [i.e., you Jewish people]. **Every tree [i.e., person] that does not produce wholesome fruit [i.e., godly, repentant lives] will be cut down and thrown into the fire [i.e., the final punishment of the wicked].**

**11) I certainly am immersing you in water following [your] repentance, but the One who follows me [i.e., in my ministry], whose sandals I do not deserve to remove [as His slave], will immerse you people with the Holy Spirit and with fire [i.e., the punishment in hell. See verses 10 and 12]. 12) His winnowing shovel [Note: This was a process whereby grain was tossed into the air so that the wind could blow the husks away, leaving only good grain on the ground] is in His hand and He will completely clear off His threshing floor [by removing all of the husks]. And He will gather His wheat into the barn, but will burn up the husks with a fire that will never go out.®**

**13) Jesus then came from [the province of] Galilee to be immersed by John in the Jordan River. 14) But John tried to discourage Him [from being immersed], when he said, I should be immersed by you, and you are coming to me [for immersion]?® 15) But Jesus answered him, Allow it [to be done], for it is proper for us to complete everything that is right [before God].® So, John agreed to it.**

**16) After Jesus was immersed [by John], He came up out of the water and heaven was opened up before Him and He saw the Holy Spirit from God descending, as a dove, and landing upon Him. 17) Then a voice came out of heaven, saying, This is my dearly loved Son. I am very pleased with Him.®**

## CHAPTER FOUR

**1) Then Jesus was led up to the desert by the Holy Spirit in order to be put to the test by the devil. 2) After He had fasted forty days and nights, He was [very] hungry. 3) The tempter [i.e., the devil] came and said to Him, If you are the Son of God, command these stones to turn into bread.® 4) But Jesus answered, It is written [Deut. 8:3], >A person is not to live by [eating] bread only, but [instead] by [believing and obeying] every statement spoken by God.-®**

**5) Then the devil took Him to the holy city [i.e., Jerusalem] and placed Him on an [elevated] wing of the Temple, 6) and said to**

**Him, AIf you are the Son of God jump off, for it is written [Psalm 91:11-12]: >He will put His angels in charge of you= and >They will lift you up with their hands so you do not trip over a stone.-@ 7) Jesus said to him, AIt is also written [Deut. 6:16], >You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.-@**

**8) The devil took Him again, [this time] to a very high mountain and showed Him all the world=s kingdoms, along with their splendor, 9) and said to Him, AI will give you all these things if you fall to the ground and worship me.@ 10) Then Jesus replied to him, AGet away from me Satan, for it is written [Deut. 6:13], >You are supposed to worship the Lord your God, and serve only Him.-@**

**11) Then the devil left Him and angels came and tended to His needs [i.e., food, water, etc.].**

**12) Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, He left [the province of Judea] and went to Galilee. 13) [After] leaving Nazareth [i.e., a major town in Galilee], He came to live in Capernaum, [a city] beside Lake Galilee, near the districts of Zebulun and Naphtali. 14) [This was] so that what Isaiah the prophet had spoken would be fulfilled, saying, 15) [Isa. 9:1-2] AThe districts of Zebulun and Naphtali, near the lake, beyond [i.e., where it enters] the Jordan in Galilee, [the territory] of the Gentiles; 16) the people who lived [there] in [spiritual] darkness saw a great light. Light shone upon these people, who lived in an area that was under the shadow of death.@**

**17) From that time onward Jesus began to preach, saying, AYou people [must] repent [i.e., change your hearts and lives], for the kingdom of heaven is near.@**

**18) While Jesus was walking beside Lake Galilee, He saw two brothers; Simon called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting their net into the lake, because they were fishermen. 19) And He said to them, ACome with me, and I will make you fishermen for people.@ 20) They immediately left their nets and went with Him.**

**21) [As] Jesus went from there He saw two [other] brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in the boat with their father Zebedee, repairing their nets. He called them, 22) and immediately they left their boat and their father and went with Him.**

**23) Jesus went all over Galilee teaching in the [Jewish] synagogues and preaching the good news of the [coming, see verse 17] kingdom, and healing all kinds of disease and sickness among the people. 24) The news [of what Jesus was doing] spread all over**

[the country of] Syria and they brought to Him all those who were sick, stricken with various diseases and pains, dominated by evil spirits, and afflicted with seizures and paralysis, and He healed them [all]. 25) Large crowds followed Him from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and from beyond [i.e., the east side of] the Jordan River.

## CHAPTER FIVE

1) Seeing the large crowds, Jesus went up in a mountain [i.e., probably a hill near Capernaum] and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him. 2) He opened His mouth and taught them, saying,

3) Those persons who feel a deep sense of their personal need are blessed because the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

4) Those persons who feel grief [over their sins] are blessed because they will receive comfort [from God when they repent].

5) Those persons who have a humble attitude [toward themselves] are blessed because they will inherit [the best of] the earth.

6) Those persons who have an appetite for whatever is right will be blessed because they will be satisfied.

7) Those persons who show mercy [toward others] will be blessed because they will be shown mercy [themselves].

8) Those persons whose hearts are pure [before God] will be blessed because they will see God.

9) Those persons who attempt to make peace [between people] will be blessed because they will be called God's children.

10) Those persons who have suffered for trying to do what is right will be blessed because the kingdom of heaven belongs to them. 11) You will be blessed when people speak against you and harm you and say bad things about you that are untrue, because of [your devotion to] me. 12) Be happy and very glad, for your reward in heaven will be great. For they persecuted the prophets [who lived] before you in the same way.

13) You people are [like] salt on the earth. But if salt loses its flavoring ability, how will it ever get it back again? From then on it would be good for nothing except to be thrown out onto the roadway and walked on by people. [Note: This was mined salt which,

when losing its saltiness due to exposure to the sun or rain, was simply disposed of by being dumped onto the roadway where people walked].

**14) You people are [like] light in the world. A city built on a hill will not go unnoticed. 15) Neither does a person light an [olive oil] lamp and place it under a bushel-sized container, but on a stand where it can illuminate everything in the house. 16) In that same way, you should allow your light [i.e., influence] to shine in front of people, so that they will see your good deeds and [be led to] honor your Father in heaven.**

**17) Do not think that I came to do away with the Law of Moses or the prophets. I did not come to do away with them, but to fulfill them [i.e., their requirements and predictions]. 18) For it is true when I say, not one little letter or even a portion of a letter will be removed from the Law of Moses until everything is accomplished [that is required by them]. [When that happens, then] heaven and earth will pass away [i.e., be destroyed. See II Peter 3:12]. 19) Therefore, whoever disregards one of these least [significant] requirements [of the Law of Moses] and teaches others to [disregard them], he will be considered the least [significant person] in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys them and teaches [others to obey] them, will be considered important in the kingdom of heaven. 20) For I say to you people, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven unless what you do that is right excels what the experts in the Law of Moses and the Pharisees [i.e., a strict sect of the Jewish religion] do that is right.**

**21) You have heard what was said to the people in time= past [Exodus 20:13], >You must not murder,= and whoever does will be subject to judgment. 22) But I say to you that every person who is angry toward his brother will be subject to judgment; and whoever calls his brother >stupid idiot= is subject to [being sentenced by] the [Jewish] Council, and whoever says, >go to hell= is subject to going to the fire of hell [himself]. 23) Therefore, if you are offering your [sacrificial] gift on the Altar and [just then] you remember that your brother has a grievance against you, 24) [stop right there]; leave your gift at the Altar and [immediately] go to that brother and settle the matter first, before returning to offer your gift. 25) [In another case], come to terms with the person suing you as soon as possible, [even] on your way [to court], so he does not take you before the judge, and then the judge turn you over to the officer and you be sent to prison. 26) It is true when I say to you; you will not be released from there until you have paid the last coin. [Note: The coin**

mentioned here amounted to about ten minutes= worth of a farm laborer= pay, or a little over one dollar in 1994].

**27) AYou have heard what was said [Exodus 20:14], >You must not be sexually unfaithful to your mate.= 28) But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with an improper sexual desire for her [body], has already been sexually unfaithful to his mate in his heart. 29) And if your right eye is what ensnares you into falling away [from God], gouge it out and throw it away from you. For it would be better for you to lose a part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. [Note: This is the word AGehenna,@ and because of its Old Testament connotation of burning bodies, II Chron. 33:6, it is used figuratively here, and elsewhere, to describe the place of future, final punishment of the wicked]. 30) And if your right hand is what ensnares you into falling away [from God], cut it off and throw it away from you. For it would be better for you to lose a part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell. 31) It was also said [Deut. 24:1-3], >Whoever divorces his wife, let it be done with a [legally binding] divorce decree, which he must give her.= 32) But I say to you, every person who divorces his wife makes her become sexually unfaithful to him [i.e., since she will probably marry someone else], unless the reason for the divorce is that she had [already] become sexually unfaithful to him. And whoever marries a woman who has been divorced commits sexual sin with her [i.e., because she is still rightfully married to her first husband].**

**33) AAgain, you have heard what was said to people in time=s past [Lev. 19:12], >You must not go back on your oaths, but [rather] fulfill the oaths you take to the Lord.= 34) But I say to you, do not take any oath, [saying] >by heaven,= for it is God=s throne; 35) nor >by earth,= for it is the footstool for His feet; nor >by Jerusalem,= for it is the city of the great King [i.e., God]. 36) You should not take an oath, [saying] >by my head,= for you cannot make a single hair white or black. 37) But you should just say >yes= [when you mean] yes, and >no= [when you mean] no. Whatever you say beyond these [i.e., enforcing them by oaths] is of the evil one [i.e., the devil].**

**38) AYou have heard what was said [Exodus 21:24], >Take an eye [from someone] if he takes yours, and take a tooth [from someone] if he takes yours.= 39) But I tell you, do not offer resistance to an evil person, but whoever hits you on the right side of the face, allow him [to hit you] on the other side also. 40) And if anyone takes you to court in order to take your shirt away from you,**

let him have your coat also [i.e., if he insists on it]. **41) Whoever requires you to go one mile, [be willing to] go with him two miles.** [Note: The Romans were permitted by law to require a Jew to carry their burden for one mile only]. **42) Give to the person who asks you [for something], and do not refuse to lend to the person who wants to borrow something from you.**

**43) AYou have heard what was said [Lev. 19:18], >You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy.= 44) But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45) in order to be [true] children of your Father in heaven, for He makes His sun to rise on evil [as well] as on good people. He [also] sends rain on those who live right [as well] as on those who do not live right. 46) For if you love [only] those who love you, what reward will you get for that? Do not even the publicans [Note: These were people with a bad reputation for their dishonest tax collecting activities] do that much? 47) And if you greet [cordially] your brothers only, what are you doing more than other people? Do not even the [unconverted] Gentiles do that much? 48) Therefore, you must [attempt to] be complete, just as your heavenly Father is [already] complete.**

## **CHAPTER SIX**

**1) ABe careful that you do not do your good deeds in front of people for the purpose of being seen by them, for [if you do] you will not have a reward from your Father in heaven.**

**2) ATherefore, when you give money to help poor people, do not blow a trumpet in front of you [i.e., to call attention to it] as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and streets. They do this in order to win praise from people. It is true when I say to you; they have [already] received their reward. 3) But when you give money to help poor people, do not allow your left hand to know what your right hand is doing [i.e., do it inconspicuously] 4) so that your giving to poor people may be done secretly. Then your Father, who sees what is done secretly, will pay you back.**

**5) AAnd when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners [i.e., in prominent view of everyone] in order to be seen [and praised] by people. 6) But when you pray, go to a private place and after closing the door, pray to your Father who is in a secret place, and [since] He sees in secret places, He will reward you. 7) And when you pray,**

do not use worthless repetitions like the [unconverted] Gentiles, for they think their lengthy, repetitious wording [in prayer] is more likely to be heard [by God]. 8) So, do not be like them, for your Father [already] knows what things you need, [even] before you ask Him. 9) Therefore, you should pray this way: >Our Father in heaven, may your name be highly honored. 10) May your kingdom come [to earth]; may your will be done on earth just as it is [already being done] in heaven. 11) Give us our [needed] food for the day. 12) And forgive us of the wrongs we have done to others, since we have also forgiven the wrongs done to us. 13) And do not allow us to fall under temptation, but deliver us from [being harmed by] the evil one.= 14) For if you forgive the wrongs people have done [to you], your heavenly Father will also forgive the wrongs you have done [to Him]. 15) But if you do not forgive the wrongs people have done [to you], neither will your Father forgive the wrongs you have done [to Him].

16) **A**In addition, when you fast [i.e., go without food and/or drink for religious reasons], do not be like the hypocrites with long faces; for they go around with gloomy expressions on their faces in order to advertise that they are fasting. It is true when I say to you; these people have [already] received their reward. 17) But when you fast, groom your hair and wash your face 18) so that people will not see that you are fasting, but [only] your Father who is in secret [will know about it]. For, [since] He sees [what is done] in secret, He will repay you.

19) **A**Do not store your valuables [here] on earth, where moths can eat them and where rust can corrode them, and where burglars can break in and steal [them]. 20) But [rather] store up your valuables in heaven [i.e., by investing your life in spiritual things], where neither moths can eat nor rust corrode, nor burglars break in and steal, 21) for wherever [you store] your valuables, that is where your heart [i.e., your real concern] will be also. 22) Your eye is [like] a lamp to your body [i.e., your life]. If your eye sees things correctly, [then] your whole body [i.e., your entire life] will be illuminated [i.e., be directed into proper conduct]. 23) But if your eye sees things wrongly, [then] your whole body [i.e., your entire life] will be full of darkness [i.e., will not be lived properly]. If therefore, the light you have is [really] darkness [i.e., if you are not seeing life properly], that darkness will be very great [i.e., you cannot possibly live properly]. 24) No person can serve two masters, for he will

either hate the one and love the other, or else he will cling to the one and look down on the other. You cannot serve God and material things [at the same time].

25) **ASo I tell you, do not worry about** [the material things of] your life, [such as] what you will eat or what you will drink, or about what you will wear on your body. There are more important things in life than food, and more important things about your body than the clothing you wear. 26) **Look at the birds in the sky; they do not plant seeds or harvest** [a crop] or store [things] in barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them [adequately]. Are you not a lot more valuable than they are? 27) **And which one of you can worry yourself into living a single day longer?** 28) **And why are you worrying about clothing? Consider how** [wild] lilies grow in a field; they do not work or weave, 29) yet I tell you that even Solomon, clothed in his very finest royal robes, was never dressed [as luxuriously] as one of these flowers. 30) **So, if God so** [beautifully] dresses the grass in a field, which is [green] today, and [then] tomorrow [dries up and] is thrown in the oven [i.e., as fuel], will He not do even more in providing your clothing, you people with such little faith? 31) **Therefore, do not worry by asking, >What are we going to eat?=- Or >What are we going to drink?=- Or >What are we going to wear?=-** 32) **For these are the things that the** [unconverted] Gentiles keep trying to get. But your heavenly Father [already] knows you need these things. 33) **So, you should put the kingdom of God and what He says is right first** [in your lives], then all these things [i.e., food, drink and clothing] will be provided for you. 34) **Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will have enough to be worried about in itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.**@

## CHAPTER SEVEN

1) **ADo not pass** [condemning] judgment [on other people] so that you do not receive such judgment [on yourselves]. 2) **For the way you judge** [other people] is the way you [yourselves] will be judged. And the standard you use [for dealing] with others is the standard that they [and God] will use on you. 3) **And why do you look for the speck of sawdust in your brother-s eye but ignore the board in your own eye?** 4) **Or, how can you say to your brother, >Let**

me take that speck of sawdust out of your eye,= while there is a board in your own eye? 5) You hypocrite, take the board out of your own eye first; and then you will be able to see clearly enough to take the speck of sawdust out of your brother's eye.

6) ADo not offer sacred things to dogs, and do not throw your pearls in front of [wild] pigs [i.e., to those who will not appreciate them], because they will probably trample on them with their feet and then turn around and attack you.

7) AAsk [God for something] and it will be given to you; look [to God for something] and you will find it; knock [on the door of opportunity] and it will be opened up to you. 8) For every person who asks will [certainly] receive; and the one who looks will [certainly] find; and to the person who knocks, the door will [certainly] be opened. 9) Or, what person among you would give his son a stone if he asked you for a piece of bread? 10) Or who would give him a snake if he asked you for a fish? 11) If then you know how to give good gifts to your children, even though you are sinful [human beings], how much more [likely] is it that your Father in heaven will give good things to those who ask Him? 12) Therefore, everything that you would like people to do to you, do [these things] to them also. For this is [what is required by] the Law of Moses and the prophets.

13) AYou should enter [God's kingdom] by means of the narrow door, for the wide door and the broad road are the ones that lead to [spiritual and physical] destruction. And many people will enter [that wide door]. 14) But the door that is narrow and the road that is restricted lead to [spiritual] life and [only] a few people will find them.

15) ALook out for deceiving prophets, who approach you wearing sheep's clothing, but who are [actually] starving wolves in their hearts. 16) You can recognize them by their fruit [i.e., by what their lives produce]. Do people harvest grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistle weeds? 17) In a similar way, every healthy tree produces wholesome fruit; but a diseased tree produces [only] bad fruit. 18) A healthy tree cannot produce bad fruit and neither can a diseased tree produce wholesome fruit. 19) Every tree that does not produce wholesome fruit should be chopped down and thrown into the fire. 20) Therefore, you will recognize them [i.e., prophets] by their fruit [i.e., by what their lives produce].

21) ANot every person who says to me, >Lord, Lord,= will

enter the kingdom of heaven; but [only] that person who does what my Father in heaven requires. 22) Many persons will say to me on the [judgment] day, >Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by [the authority of] your name, and drive out evil spirits and perform many powerful [supernatural] deeds by your name?- 23) And then I will declare to them, >I never acknowledged you [as my people]; go away from me, you people who have done sinful things.-

24) AEvery person therefore, who hears these words of mine and obeys them will be like the sensible person who built his house on a [foundation of] rock. 25) The [heavy] rains came down and the flood waters rose and the winds blew and beat down on that house, but it did not collapse, for it was [built] on a foundation of rock. 26) And every person who hears these words of mine but does not obey them will be like the foolish person who built his house on [a foundation of] sand. 27) And the [heavy] rains came down and the flood waters rose and the winds blew and struck against that house [until] it collapsed with a terrible crash.®

28) And so it happened when Jesus had finished [speaking] these words, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, 29) for he taught like a person who had authority, instead of like their experts in the Law of Moses.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

1) And when He had come down from the mountain [See 5:1], large crowds followed Him. 2) Just then a person with an infectious skin disease came and worshiped Him, saying, ALord, if you want to, you can heal me.® 3) Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man, saying, AI do want to; you are healed.® And immediately his infectious skin disease was healed. 4) Jesus said to him, ABe sure you do not tell anyone [about your healing yet]; but [first] go and show yourself to the priest and then offer the [sacrificial] gift required by the Law of Moses [See Lev. 13:49; 14:2ff], as evidence to them [that you have been healed].®

5) And when He had arrived at Capernaum, a military officer approached Him, begging, 6) ASir, my slave-boy is at home sick in bed with a paralyzing disease and in serious pain.® 7) Jesus said, AI will go and heal him.® 8) But the military officer answered, ASir, I do not deserve for you to come into my house; just say the

**word and [I know] my slave-boy will be healed. 9) For I also am a man [who serves] under the authority [of others], and I have soldiers [who serve] under me. I can say to this one >Go,= and he goes, and to another one, >Come,= and he comes, and to my slave >Do this,= and he does it.@ 10) And when Jesus heard this, He was amazed and said to those who were following [along], AIt is true when I tell to you, I have never found [anyone with] such great faith, not [even] among the Israelites. 11) And I [also] say to you, that many people will come from the east and the west and will sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12) But the children who [are supposed to] belong to the kingdom will be thrown out into the outer darkness where there will be crying and excruciating pain.@ 13) And Jesus said to the military officer, AGo on your way; since you have believed [in my power to heal], what you desired will be done for you.@ And the slave-boy was healed that [very] hour.**

**14) When Jesus had come into Peter-s house, He saw Peter-s mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. 15) He touched her hand and [immediately] her fever subsided and she got up [out of bed] and waited on Him.**

**16) When evening came they brought many persons who were dominated by evil spirits to Jesus and He drove out the spirits with [just] a word and healed all those who were sick. 17) This was in order to fulfill what was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, [Isa. 53:4], A[He] Himself took [care of] our [physical] weaknesses and carried [away] our diseases.@**

**18) Now when Jesus saw large crowds around Him, He gave orders [i.e., to His followers] to leave for the other side [i.e., to go from the west to the east side of Lake Galilee]. 19) [While there] an expert in the Law of Moses said to Him, ATeacher, I will follow you wherever you go.@ 20) Jesus replied to him, AThe foxes have dens [in which to live] and the birds of the sky have nests [in which to roost]; but the Son of man does not have anywhere to lay His head.@ 21) Then another one of His disciples said to Him, AAllow me to go and bury my father first.@ 22) But Jesus answered him, ABecome my follower, and let the [spiritually] dead bury them@ [i.e., let a person-s relatives care for their own family members until they die].**

**23) And when He entered a boat, His disciples followed Him. 24) Suddenly a violent storm came up over the lake, so that [huge] waves began to overwhelm the boat. But Jesus was sleeping**

[through it all]. 25) His disciples came and awoke Him, shouting, **ALord, save us, we are sinking!** 26) And He called to them, **AWhy are you [so] afraid? You have such little faith!** Then He stood up and sternly commanded the wind and the waves, and they became very calm. 27) The men [on board the boat] marveled, saying, **AWhat kind of a man is this, that even the wind and waves obey Him?**

28) And when He got to the other side [i.e., the east side of the lake], He was in the district of the Gadarenes. There He was met by two men dominated by evil spirits. They came from the graveyard [where they lived] and were so fierce that no one could [safely] travel that road. 29) Suddenly they shouted out, **AWhat do you want with us, you Son of God? Have you come here to torture us before it is time to?** [i.e., before our punishment is due. See II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6]. 30) Now a large herd of [wild] hogs [i.e., about 2000 of them. See Mark 5:13] was grazing some distance away from them. 31) So, the evil spirits [in one of the men. See Mark 5:1ff] begged Jesus, saying, **AIf you are going to drive us out [of this man], send us away into that herd of [wild] hogs.** 32) Jesus replied to them, **AGo [ahead].** And they came out [of the man] and entered the [wild] hogs, and suddenly the entire herd rushed down the cliff into the lake and drowned in the water [below]. 33) [Upon seeing this happen] the men who were tending the herd ran away and went into the town [i.e., of Gadara, one of ten towns making up the province of Decapolis], and told the people everything, [including] what had happened to the men dominated by evil spirits. 34) Quickly, all the people of the town came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw Him, they urged Him to leave the district [i.e., probably because of the loss of livestock].

## CHAPTER NINE

1) Then Jesus entered a boat and crossed [back] over [Lake Galilee] and came to His own city [i.e., Capernaum]. 2) [Upon His arrival] they brought to Him a man afflicted with a paralytic disease, [being carried on his cot. See Mark 2:3]. When Jesus saw [the evidence of] their faith [i.e., the man's four friends breaking open the roof and lowering him through it. See Mark 2:4-5], He said to the paralytic, **ASon, cheer up, your sins are forgiven.** 3) Seeing this, certain experts in the Law of Moses said to themselves, **AThis man**

is speaking against God.® 4) Knowing what they were thinking, Jesus said, AWhy are you having such evil thoughts in your minds? 5) For which is easier, to say >Your sins are forgiven,= or [to say] >Get up and walk?=- 6) But in order that you may know that the Son of man has authority to forgive people=s sins on earth, (then He said to the man afflicted with paralysis), >Get up, pick up your cot and go home.=® 7) So, the man got up and went home. 8) But when the large crowds saw [what had happened], they were filled with deep reverence and gave honor to God for giving such authority to men.

9) As Jesus moved on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the toll booth [i.e., collecting taxes]. He said to him, ABecome my follower.® And he got up and followed Him.

10) And so it happened, as Jesus was having a meal at Matthew=s house, a number of [other] tax collectors and worldly people came to sit down with Him and His disciples. 11) And when the Pharisees saw this they said to His disciples, AWhy does your teacher eat with tax collectors and worldly people?® 12) When Jesus heard this, He said, APeople who are healthy do not need a doctor; but [only] sick people do. 13) Go and learn what this means: >I desire mercy and not [only] sacrifice.= For I did not come to call righteous people [to be my followers] but sinners.®

14) Some of John=s disciples came to Jesus saying, AWhy is it that we and the Pharisees fast frequently [i.e., going without food and/or drink for religious reasons], but your disciples do not fast [at all]?® 15) Jesus said to them, ACan the groomsmen act sadly while the groom is still with them? But the time will come when the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. 16) No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth onto an old garment; for what was intended to cover up [the hole] actually tears away [part of] the garment [i.e., when it shrinks], causing a bigger hole. 17) Also, people do not put freshly squeezed grape juice into bottles made of previously used animal skins. If they did, the [old dried-out] animal skins would break open and the grape juice would [all] leak out, and the animal skins would become useless. But people put freshly squeezed grape juice into newly prepared animal skin bottles. That way both of them will survive.®

18) While Jesus spoke these things, a leader of the [Jewish] synagogue [named Jairus. See Mark 5:22-43] came and worshiped Him, saying, AMy daughter has just died, but if you come and place your hand on her, she will live [again].® 19) So, Jesus got up and,

along with His disciples, followed the man.

20) But just then a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years came up behind Him and touched the edge of His robe. 21) For she had said to herself, **AIf I can just touch His robe, I will be healed.** 22) When Jesus turned and saw her, He said, **ATake courage, daughter, your faith has made you well.** 23) And the woman was healed that [very] moment.

24) When Jesus went into the leader [of the synagogue's] house, He saw musicians [playing a funeral dirge] and the crowd carrying on [in mournful wails]. 25) He said, **AStand back, for the young lady is not [permanently] dead, but [rather] is sleeping.** 26) And the people laughed at Him scornfully. 27) But after the crowd was sent outside, Jesus entered [her room, along with her parents and three of His disciples. See Mark 5:37-40] and took her by the hand, and the young lady rose up [from the dead]. 28) And the report of this incident spread all over the district.

29) Now as Jesus moved on from there, two blind men followed Him [i.e., probably being led by sighted persons]. They were shouting, **AHave pity on us, son of David!** 30) And when He had entered the house [i.e., probably a friend's house there in Capernaum. See 8:20], the blind men came in [after Him]. Jesus said to them, **ADo you believe that I am able to do what you are asking?** 31) They replied, **AYes, Lord.** 32) Then He touched their eyes and said, **ALet what you expect be done for you.** 33) And [immediately] they were able to see. Jesus then strongly urged them, saying, **AMake sure that no one knows [what I have done for you].** 34) But [instead], they went all over the district telling people about Him.

35) As they went on their way a deaf-mute, dominated by an evil spirit, was brought to Jesus. 36) When the evil spirit was driven out [by Jesus] the [former] deaf-mute began to speak, and the crowds marveled, saying, **ANo one in Israel has ever seen this done before.** 37) But the Pharisees said, **AHe is driving out evil spirits by [the power of] the chief of evil spirits.**

38) Jesus traveled throughout all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the [coming] kingdom and healing all kinds of diseases and illnesses. 39) But when He saw the large crowds He felt compassion for them because they were distressed and disoriented like sheep without a shepherd. 40) Then He said to His disciples, **ACertainly there is plenty to harvest but there are [too] few people to do the work. You**

should pray to the Lord of the harvest to send [more] workers out into the field to gather His crop.®

## CHAPTER TEN

1) Jesus then called His twelve apostles [see next verse] to Him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal all kinds of diseases and illnesses.

2) Now the names of the twelve apostles were: First, Simon, also called Peter, Andrew, his brother, James and John, sons of Zebedee, 3) Philip, Bartholomew [i.e., the same as Nathaniel. See John 1:45], Thomas [i.e., the same as Didymus. See John 11:16], Matthew, the tax collector [i.e., the same as Levi. See Mark 2:14], James, the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus [i.e., the same as Judas, son of James. See Luke 6:16], 4) Simon, the Cananean [i.e., the same as the Zealot. See Luke 6:15], and Judas Iscariot, who also [besides being an apostle] was His betrayer.

5) Jesus sent these twelve apostles out and ordered them saying, ADo not go on any road leading to Gentile territory or enter any town of the Samaritans. 6) But [rather] go to the lost sheep of the people of Israel. 7) And preach as you go, saying, >The kingdom of heaven is near.- 8) Heal sick people, raise people from the dead, restore health to those with infectious skin diseases, and drive out evil spirits. You have received [blessings] freely, [now] give them out freely. 9) Do not take [any] gold, silver or copper [coinage] in your money belts, 10) or a traveling bag [for personal belongings], or a change of jackets or shoes, or [even] a walking stick [Note: By comparing this and the restriction in Matt. 10:10 with the permission given in Mark 6:8, the harmony seems to be Aif you do not already have a walking stick, do not get one®]. For the worker deserves having his food provided. 11) Then inquire around for a trustworthy family in every town or village you enter, and stay there [with them] until it is time to move on. 12) When you enter a [particular] house, greet the people warmly [Note: The usual Jewish greeting was to say APeace to you.® See Luke 10:4]. 13) And if the people seem trustworthy, express your wish for blessings to rest upon them. But if they prove to be untrustworthy, may those blessings remain on you [instead]. 14) And whoever does not welcome you or listen to what you have to say, shake the dust off of your shoes as you leave that house or

**town.** [Note: This was a Jewish custom showing disdain and intended to suggest unworthiness] **15) It is true when I say to you, the districts around Sodom and Gomorrah** [i.e., despite their gross sins] **will be shown more leniency than that town on the Day of Judgment.**

**16) Here is how it will be: I am sending you out like sheep among wolves; therefore you should be as crafty** [Note: The Greek word here is *Asensible*] **as snakes, yet as harmless** [Note: The Greek word is *Asincere*] **as doves. 17) But, watch out for people, for they will turn you over to the** [Jewish] **councils** [for judgment] **and will have you flogged in their synagogues. 18) Yes, you will** [even] **be brought in front of governors and kings for being loyal to me.** [This will give you an opportunity] **for witnessing to them** [as well] **as to the** [unconverted] **Gentiles. 19) But when they turn you over** [to them], **do not worry about how to speak or what you should say. For you will be told** [i.e., by God] **what to say at the right time. 20) For it will not be you who speaks, but** [rather] **the Holy Spirit of your Father will be speaking in you. 21) [At that time] a person will turn his brother over to be killed, and the father** [will do the same to] **his child. And children will rebel against their parents and turn them over to be killed. 22) And you will be hated by everyone for being loyal to me. But the person who endures** [this persecution by remaining faithful] **to the end** [of his life] **is the one who will be saved** [i.e., from spiritual and physical destruction]. **23) When they persecute you in one town, run to the next one, for it is true when I tell you, you will not have traveled through** [all] **the towns of the Israelites until the Son of man comes** [i.e., in His kingdom].

**24) A disciple is not more important than his teacher, nor a slave more important than his master. 25) A disciple is doing well if he can be** [as good] **as his teacher, and the slave** [as good] **as his master. If they have called the master of the house** [i.e., Jesus] **Beelzebub** [i.e., the chief of evil spirits. See Mark 3:22], **how much more** [likely] **will they call members of his household** [i.e., the disciples] **the same thing! 26) Therefore, do not be afraid** [of these persecutors], **for there is nothing** [they do that will remain] **covered up; it will** [all] **be exposed. And there is nothing they will do secretly that will not be made known** [openly]. **27) What I am telling you in the darkness** [i.e., in obscurity], **you tell it in the light** [i.e., openly]. **And what you hear** [whispered] **in your ear** [you should] **declare it from the housetops. 28) And do not be afraid of those who can kill your body but not your soul. Instead, fear Him** [i.e., God] **who is**

able to destroy both your soul and body in hell. [See note on 5:29].  
**29) Are not two sparrows sold** [in the market for food] **for a small coin** [Note: The coin mentioned here was worth about a half hour's worth of a farm laborer's pay, or about \$3 in 1994]? **And not a [single] one of them can fall to the ground without your Father** [knowing about it]. **30) God even knows the number of hairs on your head** [Note: The average full head of hair has approximately 25,000 hairs]. **31) So, do not be afraid, for you are [much] more valuable than many sparrows.**

**32) Therefore, every person who acknowledges me in front of people** [i.e., to be their Lord and Christ], **I will acknowledge him** [i.e., to be my disciple] **in front of my Father in heaven.** **33) But whoever disowns me in front of people** [i.e., denies that I am the Christ, or that he is a disciple. See John 18:15-17, 25-27], **I will disown him in front of my Father in heaven.**

**34) Do not think that I came to bring [only] peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace [only] but [also] a sword** [of division. See Luke 12:51]. **35) For I came to set a person at odds against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.** **36) [In fact] a person's enemies will be members of his own family** [i.e., in some cases]. **37) The person who loves his father and mother more than me does not deserve me** [i.e., to be my disciple]. **And the person who loves his son or daughter more than me does not deserve me** [i.e., to be my disciple]. **38) And the person who does not accept his cross** [i.e., his responsibilities with all their difficulties] **and become my follower does not deserve me.** **39) The person who finds** [everything to satisfy him in] **this life** [here on earth] **will lose** [never ending life]. **But the person who [is willing to] lose** [the comforts and security of] **this life** [here on earth] **for my sake** [i.e., in loyal service to me] **will find it** [i.e., never ending life]. [See Mark 10:29-30]

**40) The person who welcomes you** [into his home] **welcomes me. And the person who welcomes me** [into his life] **welcomes God, who sent me.** **41) The person who welcomes a prophet because he is a prophet receives the [same] reward the prophet gets. And the person who welcomes a good man because he is good receives the [same] reward the good man gets.** **42) Truly I tell you, whoever gives a mere drink of cold water to one of these least significant [disciples of mine] because he is a disciple, will certainly not lose his [temporal or eternal] reward.®**

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

1) And so it happened, when Jesus had finished instructing His twelve apostles, He left there [and went] to teach and preach in the [other] Israelite towns. [See 10:23]

2) Now while still in prison, John [the Immerser] heard about the things Christ was doing, [so] he sent [word] through his disciples 3) and said to Jesus, AAre you the One who was to come, or should we look for someone else?@ 4) Jesus answered them, AGo and tell John the things you are hearing and seeing; 5) [how] blind people are receiving back their sight, and crippled people are walking [again], and people with infectious skin diseases are being healed, and deaf-mutes are hearing [and speaking (?) again], and people are being raised [from the dead], and poor people are having the good news preached to them. 6) The person who does not find an occasion for having doubts about my identity is fortunate indeed.@

7) As the messengers [sent by John. See Luke 7:24] went on their way, Jesus began to talk to the crowds about John. [He said], AWhat did you expect to see when you went out into the desert? A tall stem swaying in the wind? 8) What did you expect to see? A man dressed in fancy clothes? Look, people who wear fancy clothes live in kings= palaces. 9) Why did you go out [to the desert]? To see a prophet? Yes, I should say [he was], and much more than a prophet. 10) He is the one about whom it was written [Mal. 3:1], >Look, I [will] send my messenger on ahead of you. He will prepare the pathway in front of you.= 11) It is true when I tell you, among [all] those born of women, no one greater than John the Immerser has come along. Yet the least significant person in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12) And from the days of John the Immerser the kingdom of heaven is experiencing turmoil, for violent men are [trying to] take control of it [by bringing it into existence] forcibly [i.e., before its appointed time. See Acts 1:6-7]. 13) For all of the prophets and the Law of Moses prophesied [of this kingdom] up until the time of John. 14) And if you are willing to accept [this truth], this person [i.e., John] fulfills [the prophecy of] the coming of Elijah [See Mal. 4:5-6]. 15) The person who has ears to hear with ought to listen [to this] carefully.

16) **But what should I compare the people of this generation with? They are like children sitting in the open shopping market, who call out to their playmates,** 17) **>We [pretended like we] were making music [at a wedding] but you did not dance; we [pretended like we] were wailing [at a funeral] but you did not beat your chest [in mourning].=** 18) **For when John came, he did not eat or drink [on festive occasions] and people said, >He is dominated by an evil spirit.=** 19) [Then] **the Son of man came eating and drinking [at festive occasions] and they said, >Look, He is a glutton and a drunkard and a friend of tax collectors and worldly people.=** It proves that [God's] wise counsel is right by the way things turn out.®

20) **Then Jesus began to rebuke the people of the towns where most of His powerful miracles were performed because they did not repent [when they saw Him perform them].** 21) [He said] **AI will be too bad for you, Chorazin! It will be too bad for you, Bethsaida! For if the powerful miracles had been performed in [the cities of] Tyre and Sidon which were performed in your presence, they would have repented long ago, [demonstrating it] by wearing sackcloth [i.e., a coarse cloth made of goat hair] and throwing ashes [into the air].** 22) **But I tell you, Tyre and Sidon will be shown more leniency on the judgment day than you people will.** 23) **And Capernaum, do you think you will be lifted up toward heaven [as a proud city]? [No indeed], you will [surely] go down to the place of the unseen [i.e., become obscure or obliterated as a city]. For if the powerful miracles had been performed in Sodom which were performed in your presence, it would have remained [even] until today.** 24) **But I say to you, Sodom will be shown more leniency on the judgment day than you will.®**

25) **About that time Jesus said [in prayer], AI thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things [i.e., the significance of Jesus= words and works] from those who [thought they] were wise and intelligent and have [instead] revealed them to people who are child-like.** 26) **Yes Father, you did this because it was very pleasing to you.**

27) **All things have been entrusted to me by my Father and no one [truly] knows the Son except the Father. And neither does anyone [truly] know the Father except the Son and that person to whom the Son wants to reveal Him.** 28) **Come to me, all of you who are overworked and overburdened and I will give you rest [i.e.,**

spiritual refreshment]. **29) Accept my reins** [on your life], **and learn about me, because I am gentle and humble, and** [in my service] **you will experience rest in your spirits.** **30) For my reins** [on your life] **are easy** [to respond to] **and the burden I place** [on you] **is light.**@

## CHAPTER TWELVE

**1) About that time Jesus was walking through a grain field on the Sabbath day. His disciples were hungry so began picking off some heads of grain to eat** [the kernels]. [Note: It was an accepted practice for people in that day to be permitted to do this as they walked along paths bordering a grain field]. **2) But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him,** **“Look, your disciples are doing what is against the Law of Moses to do on a Sabbath day.”** **3) Jesus replied,** **“Have you not read what King David did when he and his men were hungry?”** [I Sam. 21:6] **4) He entered the house of God** [i.e., the Temple] **and ate the “Bread of Presence”, which was not permissible, according to the Law of Moses, for him or those with him to do, since it was reserved only for the priests.** **5) Or, have you not read in the Law of Moses that the priests in the Temple defiled the Sabbath day** [i.e., by doing the “work” of offering sacrifices] **and were not held guilty** [of wrongdoing]? [See Num. 28:9-10] **6) But I tell you, someone greater than the Temple is here** [with you]. **7) If you had [fully] understood what this means: “I desire mercy and not [only] sacrifice,” you would not have condemned someone who was not guilty** [of wrongdoing]. **8) For the Son of man is lord** [i.e., has authority] **over the Sabbath day.**@

**9) Jesus left there and went into their** [i.e., the Pharisees=] **synagogues,** **10) and there He saw a man with a deformed hand. They asked Him,** **“Is it permissible by the Law of Moses to heal someone on a Sabbath day?”** **11) He answered them,** **“Which one of you who has [only] one sheep, and it fell in a ditch, would not reach down and lift it out [even] if it were on a Sabbath day?”** **12) Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore, it is permissible by the Law of Moses to do what is good on a Sabbath day.**@ **13) Then Jesus said to the man** **“Reach out your hand.”**@ **And when he stretched it out, it became normal, just like the other one.** **14) But the Pharisees left and began discussing together how they could arrange to kill Him.**

15) When Jesus perceived what they were doing He withdrew from that place. Many people followed Him and He healed all of them. 16) Then He urged them not to reveal His [true] identity, 17) so what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah would be fulfilled when he said, 18) [Isa. 13:1ff] **Look, see my [i.e., God's] servant whom I have chosen; my dear One [i.e., Jesus] with whom my soul is very pleased: I will put my Holy Spirit on Him, and He will proclaim judgment to the [unconverted] Gentiles. 19) He will not be contentious nor shout out [loudly]. Neither will anyone hear His voice [raised] in the streets. 20) He will not [even] break a wilted stalk or put out a smoldering [lamp] wick until He exercises judgment [upon mankind through the Gospel] in order to bring about victory [i.e., in people's lives]. 21) So, in His name the [unconverted] Gentiles will have hope.**@

22) Then a person dominated by an evil spirit, who was [also] blind and mute, was brought to Jesus. He healed the man so that he was able [both] to speak and see [again]. 23) All the crowds of people were amazed and said, **Can this [Jesus] be the son of David?**@ 24) But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, **This man does not drive out evil spirits except by [the power of] Beelzebub, the chief of evil spirits.**@ 25) Knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, **Every kingdom [plagued] with internal division will end in ruin. And every city or household divided from within will not survive. 26) If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself, [so] how then can his kingdom stand? 27) And if I drive out evil spirits by [the power of] Beelzebub, by whom do they [i.e., your people] drive them out? So, they become your judges. 28) But if I drive out evil spirits by [the power of] the Holy Spirit, then [that is evidence that] the kingdom of God has come into your midst [i.e., by my presence and ministry]. 29) Or, how can someone enter a strong man's house and steal his belongings unless he first ties up the strong man? Only then will he be able to steal [his belongings] from his house. 30) The person who is not on my side is [actually] against me. And the person who does not gather [people to me] is [actually] driving them away [from me]. 31) Therefore I tell you, people will be forgiven of every sin and abusive word spoken [against God]. But abusive words spoken against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. 32) And whoever speaks an [abusive] word against the Son of man will be forgiven [of it], but whoever speaks [an abusive word] against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven [of it], not**

**in this world nor the one to come. 33) Either be a healthy tree and produce wholesome fruit, or be a diseased tree and produce rotten fruit, for [the quality of] a tree will be recognized by [the quality of] its fruit. 34) You children of snakes! Since you are evil, how do you expect to speak good things? For the mouth speaks what the heart is filled with. 35) The good person produces good things from his storehouse of goodness. But the evil person produces bad things from his storehouse of evil. 36) And I say to you, a person will [have to] give an account [to God] on the Day of Judgment for every careless word he had spoken [while on earth]. 37) For you will be considered righteous by the words [you speak] and you will be condemned by the words [you speak].<sup>@</sup>**

**38) Then certain experts in the Law of Moses and some Pharisees answered Jesus, saying, ATeacher, we would like to see you perform a [supernatural] sign.<sup>@</sup> 39) But He said to them, AIt is [only] an evil and unfaithful [i.e., to God] generation of people that looks for a [supernatural] sign. And there will not be any sign given to it except the [supernatural] sign [demonstrated in the life] of Jonah, the prophet. 40) For just like Jonah was in the stomach of the huge fish for three days and nights, so the Son of man will be in the heart of the earth [i.e., the cave-tomb] for three days and nights. 41) The people of Nineveh will stand up on the judgment day along with the people of this generation and will condemn them because they repented [i.e., changed their hearts and lives] when hearing the preaching of Jonah [See Jonah 3:5-10], and [now] Someone greater than Jonah is here [i.e., Jesus]. 42) The queen of the South [Note: This queen was from Sheba, I Kings 10:1, which was probably in Arabia] will stand up on the judgment day along with the people of this generation and will condemn them because she came from a great distance to hear [and see] Solomon-s wisdom [I Kings 10:1ff] and [now] Someone greater than Solomon is here [i.e., Jesus]. 43) But when an evil spirit has been driven out of a person, it roams through desert regions trying to find rest but cannot find it. 44) Then it says [to itself], I will return to my house which I came out of [i.e., the body of the person it dominated]. But when it returns [to that body] it finds it empty, cleaned out and [newly] decorated. 45) Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits, more evil than itself, and they reenter [the body] and [begin to] live there, so that the latter state of that person becomes worse than the former [state]. It will be the same way with the people of this evil**

generation.®

46) While Jesus was still speaking to the large crowds, His mother and [half-] brothers were standing outside [of the large house. See 13:1] wanting to speak to Him. 47) Someone [from the crowd] said to Him, ALook, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.® 48) He answered the person who told Him, A[Just] who is my mother? And who are my brothers?® 49) Then He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, ALook, [here is] my mother and my brothers! For whoever will do what my Father in heaven desires, is my brother and sister and mother.®

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1) On that [same] day, Jesus went out of the house and sat down on the shore of the lake [i.e., Lake Galilee]. 2) Great crowds gathered around Him so that He went and sat down in a boat [just off shore], while the crowd stood on the beach. 3) And He spoke many things to them in parables [i.e., brief stories to illustrate His teaching], saying, AOnce a farmer went out [to his field] to plant grain. 4) And some of the seed he sowed [i.e., scattering it by hand] landed along the side of the road and birds came and ate it. 5) And other seed fell on rocky ground where there was not much soil and immediately it sprouted up because the soil was so shallow. 6) But when the sun came up these tender sprouts were scorched and, since they had such tiny roots, they [quickly] withered away. 7) And other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and [eventually] choked out the tender sprouts. 8) And [still] other seed fell onto fertile soil, where some of it produced a crop of one hundred, some sixty and some thirty times [as much as was planted]. 9) The person who has ears to hear with ought to listen [to this] carefully.®

10) Jesus= disciples came and said to Him, AWhy are you speaking to them [i.e., the large crowds] by using parables?® 11) He replied, AYou disciples are being given an understanding of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but the crowds of people are not. 12) For to the person who [already] has something, [more] will be given, so he will have a larger amount [i.e., of understanding], but from the person who has [almost] nothing, even [the little] he has will be taken away from him. 13) Therefore, I am speaking to them

with parables because [although] they can see, they [really] do not perceive, and [although] they can hear, they [really] do not comprehend, and so they [utterly] fail to understand [what I am trying to get across]. 14) So, the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled by them, which says, [Isa. 6:9f] >You will hear all right, but you will not understand [what you hear]. You will see all right but you will not perceive [what you see]. 15) For these people-s minds are dull, and their ears have difficulty hearing, and they have shut their eyes. For if this were not the case, they would perceive what they see with their eyes, and comprehend what they hear with their ears, and understand with their minds and would turn [back to God] again so I would heal them [from their sins].- 16) But your eyes are fortunate for they [really] see, and so are your ears, for they [really] hear. 17) For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people have desired to see the things you are seeing, but did not get to. They desired to hear the things you are hearing, but did not get to.

18) AListen then to this parable of the farmer [who sowed seed]. 19) When anyone hears the message of the kingdom but does not understand it, the evil one [i.e., the devil] comes to him and grabs away what had been sown in his heart. This is the person who was scattered to the side of the road. 20) And the person who was sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the message and immediately welcomes it joyfully, 21) but since he has such a shallow root, he lasts for [only] a short while. Then when trouble or persecution comes because of the message, immediately he falls away [from God]. 22) And the person who was sown among the thorns is the one who hears the message, but the anxieties of the world [i.e., of life] and the deceptiveness of [material] riches choke the message and he becomes unproductive. 23) But the person who was sown on the fertile soil is the one who hears the message and understands it. Truly, he produces a crop that yields one hundred, sixty or thirty times [as much as was planted].@

24) [Then] Jesus told them another parable, saying, AThe kingdom of heaven is similar to a person who sowed seed in his field, 25) but while his workers were asleep his enemy came and scattered weed seeds throughout his wheat field and then left. 26) But when the [green] shoots sprouted up and produced grain, weeds appeared also. 27) The farmer-s hired hands came and asked him, >Did you not plant [only] good seed in your field? Where did the weeds come from [then]?- 28) And he said to them, >An enemy [of

mine] has done this [to me].- The hired hands replied, >Do you want us then to go and gather up the weeds?=- 29) But the farmer said, >No, for while you are gathering up the weeds, you might root up [some of] the wheat with them. 30) Let both of them grow together until it is time for the harvest; then at that time, I will tell the harvesters, A Gather up the weeds first, and bind them up into bundles to burn. But gather the wheat into my barn.@

31) Jesus told them another parable, saying, A The kingdom of heaven is similar to a seed from the mustard tree which a man took and planted in his field. 32) This seed is indeed [one of] the smallest of all seeds, but when it is [fully] grown, it is larger than [other] plants, and [even] becomes a tree, so that the birds of the sky come and roost on its branches.@

33) Then He told them another parable: A The kingdom of heaven is similar to yeast, which a woman worked into a batch of dough [i.e., the amount was over half a bushel], until [the dough] was completely leavened [by it].@

34) Jesus spoke all these things to the crowds with parables. He did not say anything to them without using a parable. 35) [This was] so that what was spoken by the prophet would be fulfilled, when he said [Psa. 78:2], AI will open my mouth [to speak] with parables. I will say things that have been hidden from the beginning of time.@

36) He then left the crowds and went into the house. [While there] His disciples came to Him, and said, A Explain to us [the meaning of] the parable of the weeds in the field.@ 37) And He answered them, A The person who planted the good seed is the Son of man, 38) and the field [represents] the world. The good seed [represents] the children who belong to the kingdom, and the weeds [represent] the children who belong to the evil one [i.e., the devil]. 39) The enemy who scattered the weed seeds is the devil; the harvest time is the end of the world; and the harvesters are angels. 40) Just like the weeds were gathered up and burned with fire, so it will be at the end of the world. 41) The Son of man will send out His angels and they will gather out of His kingdom all those people who cause others to fall away [from God] and those who [continue to] sin. 42) He will throw these people into the fiery furnace where there will be crying and excruciating pain. 43) Then the people who did what was right will shine out like the sun in their Father's kingdom. The person who has ears [to hear with] ought to listen [to

this] carefully.

44) **A**The kingdom of heaven is similar to a person finding a treasure hidden in a field. After finding it, he was so happy he hid it [again], then went out and sold everything he owned so he could buy that field.

45) **A**Again, the kingdom of heaven is similar to a [retail] merchant searching to buy some fine pearls. 46) When he found an extremely valuable one he went and sold all that he owned and bought it.

47) **A**Again, the kingdom of heaven is similar to a drag-net [for fishing] that was cast into the lake and gathered all kinds [of fish]. 48) When it became full, the fishermen dragged it up onto the shore. Then they sat down and, [sorting their catch], placed the good [i.e., edible fish] into containers, but threw out the bad [i.e., inedible ones]. 49) At the end of the world it will be that same way. The angels will come and divide the sinful people from the ones who did what was right, 50) and throw the sinful ones into the fiery furnace where there will be crying and excruciating pain.®

51) **A**Have you understood all these things?® [Jesus asked]. **A**Yes,® they said to Him. 52) Then He said to them, **A**Therefore every expert in the Law of Moses who has been made a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is similar to a [wealthy] homeowner who brought [both] new and old things out of his supply of goods.®

53) And it happened, when Jesus had finished [giving] these parables, He went away from that place.

54) And when He came to His home town [i.e., Nazareth], Jesus taught people in their synagogues to their amazement. They said, **A**Where did this man get [such] wisdom and [the ability to perform] these supernatural deeds? 55) Is not he the carpenter-s [i.e., Joseph-s] son? [And] is not his mother named Mary, and are not his brothers [named] James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? 56) And are not his sisters all [here] with us? Where then did he get all these things [i.e., wisdom, knowledge, miracles, etc]?® 57) And they were led to doubt His true identity. But Jesus said to them, **A**A prophet does not go without being honored, except in His own home town and among His own family members.®

58) So, He did not perform very many supernatural deeds in that place because of the people-s lack of faith.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

**1) About that time Herod the tetrarch** [Note: This man was the son of Herod the Great (See 2:1) and governor of that district] **heard the report about what Jesus had been saying and doing. 2) He told his servants, <sup>A</sup>This must be John, the Immerser; he has risen from the dead and** [that explains how] **these powers can work through him** [i.e., Jesus].<sup>@</sup> **3) For Herod had arrested John and had him chained and put in prison in order to please Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. 4) For John had said to him, <sup>A</sup>It is not lawful for you to be married to her.<sup>@</sup> 5) Now Herod wanted to have him put to death,** [but hesitated], **fearing the crowd, because they considered John to be a prophet.**

**6) But when Herod's birthday came, Herodias' daughter** [Note: According to Josephus her name was Salome], **pleased him by** [her sensual] **dancing in front of the party guests. 7) [Herod was so pleased with her performance that] he promised, with an oath, to give her whatever she asked for** [i.e., with limitations. See Mark 6:23]. **8) Her mother persuaded her to say, <sup>A</sup>Give me the head of John, the Immerser, here on this** [large] **platter.<sup>@</sup> 9) Now King Herod became very distressed** [over such a gruesome request]; **but because he had** [promised with] **oaths and** [to look good in front of] **his party guests, he ordered John's head to be given** [to her]. **10) So, he sent** [word to his officers] **and had John decapitated in the prison. 11) His head was brought on a** [large] **platter and given to the young woman** [i.e., Salome], **and she took it to her mother** [i.e., Herodias]. **12) Jesus' disciples came and took the body and buried it; then they went and told Jesus** [all about the incident].

**13) Now when Jesus heard about it He left there in a boat and went** [across to the east side of the lake] **to a deserted place. When the crowds found out [He was leaving] they followed Him** [i.e., by traveling around] **on the shore from the** [surrounding] **towns. 14) When Jesus came out** [of His place of seclusion] **and saw a large crowd, He felt a deep compassion for them and healed their sick people. 15) When it became evening, the disciples came to Him and said, <sup>A</sup>This place is deserted and it is getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go into the towns and buy food** [for their supper].<sup>@</sup> **16) But Jesus said to them, <sup>A</sup>They do not need to go away; you men give them** [something] **to eat.<sup>@</sup> 17) And they replied, <sup>A</sup>But we have**

here [only] five loaves of [barley] bread [See John 6:9] and two [probably smoked] fish.@ 18) And He said, ABring the bread and fish here to me.@ 19) He ordered the crowds to recline on the grass. Then He took the five loaves of bread and two fish and, looking up to heaven, asked God-s blessing on the food, broke it [in pieces], then gave it to the disciples to distribute to the crowds. 20) They all ate until they were full, then gathered up twelve baskets full of the remaining broken pieces. 21) Those eating numbered about five thousand men, in addition to the women and children.

22) Then immediately Jesus ordered the disciples to enter the boat and row on ahead of Him to the other side [i.e., to the west side of Lake Galilee] until He could send the crowds away. 23) After He had dispersed them, He went up into the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening had come He was there alone. 24) [Meanwhile] the boat, still some distance from shore, was being severely battered by the waves because of the opposing winds.

25) Then between three and six o'clock in the morning Jesus came walking to them on the [surface of the] lake. 26) When the disciples saw Him walking on the water they became frightened, saying, AIt is a spirit!@ and cried out with fear. 27) Just then Jesus called out to them, ATake courage and do not be afraid; it is I.@ 28) Peter answered Him, ALord, if it is [really] you, ask me to come to you [walking] on the water.@ 29) And Jesus replied, ACome [ahead].@ So, Peter climbed over the side of the boat and went to Jesus, walking on the water. 30) But when he saw the [furious] wind he became fearful and began to sink, shouting out, ALord, save me!@ 31) And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him and said, AYou have such little faith; why did you doubt?@ 32) And when they [i.e., both Jesus and Peter] got up into the boat, the wind [immediately] stopped. 33) Then the disciples in the boat worshiped Jesus, saying, ATruly you are the Son of God.@

34) And when they had [finally] crossed over [i.e., to the west side of the lake], they landed at the region of Gennesaret. 35) When the people there recognized Jesus, they sent to all the surrounding regions and had all who were sick brought to Him. 36) They begged Him that they might only touch the edge of His robe. And all those who got to touch it were made well.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1) Then some Pharisees and experts in the Law of Moses came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, 2) **Why do your disciples violate the tradition of the [Jewish] elders? For they do not [ceremonially] wash their hands before eating [their meals].** 3) **And He answered them, Why do you also violate the commandments of God by [following] your traditions?** 4) **For God said, [Ex. 20:12], >Give honor to your father and mother,= and [Ex. 21:17], >Whoever says bad things about his father or mother should surely be put to death.=** 5) **But you say, >Whoever says to his father or mother, I have given to God the money I could have helped you with;=** 6) **this person does not honor his father [or mother]. You have made God=s message useless by [thus enforcing] your traditions.** 7) **You hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied accurately about you, saying [Isa. 29:13],** 8) **>These people [claim to] honor me with their lips [i.e., by what they say], but their heart is far from [honoring] me.** 9) **They are worshiping me for nothing [because they are] teaching principles that are [merely] the requirements of men.=** 10) **Then Jesus called the crowds to come to Him, and He said to them, Listen and understand.** 11) **It is not what enters the mouth of a person that [spiritually] corrupts him, but what proceeds out of his mouth that [spiritually] corrupts him.**

12) **Then His disciples came and said to Him, Do you know that the Pharisees were upset [with you] when they heard [you say] that?** 13) **But He answered and said, Every plant that my heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted.** 14) **[So], let these Pharisees alone; they are blind leaders. And if a blind person leads a blind person, both of them will fall into a ditch.** 15) **And Peter said to Him, Explain the parable to us.** 16) **And He replied, Are you still unable to understand?** 17) **Do you not realize that whatever enters a person=s mouth goes into his stomach and [eventually] passes out into the toilet?** 18) **But the things that come out of a person=s mouth come from his heart. These are what [spiritually] corrupt a person.** 19) **For evil thoughts, murder, extramarital affairs, sexual immorality, stealing, perjury, slander --- [all these] come from a person=s heart,** 20) **and are what corrupt him [spiritually]. But eating [a meal] with [ceremonially] unwashed hands does not [spiritually] corrupt him.**

21) **And Jesus left there and went into the regions of Tyre and Sidon [i.e., cities on the northwest coast of Palestine].** 22) **Just**

then a Canaanite woman came out of that area [Note: Mark 7:26 calls her a Syrophoenician Gentile], crying, **AO Lord, son of David, have pity on me. My daughter is seriously troubled by an evil spirit.**@ 23) But He did not say a word to her. His disciples came and begged Him; **ASend her away, for she is [continually] shouting at us [as we go along].**@ 24) He answered them, **AI was sent only to the straying sheep of the Israelites.**@ 25) But she came and worshiped Him, saying, **ALord, help me.**@ 26) And He answered [her], **AIt is not proper to take bread away from the children and throw it to the dogs.**@ 27) But she replied, **AYes, Lord, but even dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their owners table.**@ 28) Then Jesus answered her, **AO, woman, how great your faith is. May what you want be done for you.**@ And her daughter was healed that very moment.

29) Jesus left there and went [over] near Lake Galilee. He went up into a mountain and sat down there. 30) Large crowds came to Him, bringing crippled, blind, deaf-mute, disabled and many other [sick] people and laid them down at His feet. And He healed [all of] them, 31) so that the crowd marveled when they saw deaf-mutes talking, injured people healed, crippled people walking and blind people seeing. And they honored the God of the Israelites [for such great miracles].

32) Jesus called His disciples to Him and said, **AI feel deeply moved over this crowd, because they have continued listening to me for three days now, and have nothing [left] to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry because they will become weak along the way.**@ 33) And the disciples said to Him, **AWhere will we get enough loaves of bread to feed a large crowd in [such] a deserted place [as this]?**@ 34) Jesus replied, **AHow many loaves of bread do you have?**@ They said, **A[We have] seven [loaves] and a few small fish.**@ 35) Then He ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground, 36) and He took the seven loaves of bread and the fish and gave thanks to God for them. He divided the food and gave it to the disciples who, [in turn], distributed it to the crowds. 37) They all ate until they were full; then gathered up seven baskets full of broken pieces which were left over. 38) The number who ate was four thousand men, besides women and children. 39) Jesus then sent the crowds away while He boarded a boat and crossed the lake to the region of Magadan [i.e., the west side of Lake Galilee].

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1) **The Pharisees and Sadducees came** [and attempted] **to test Jesus** [by] **asking Him to perform a** [supernatural] **sign from heaven.** 2) **But He answered them,** { {These words are omitted in most ancient manuscripts: **AWhen the sky is reddish in the evening, you predict fair weather** [for the next day]. 3) **And when the sky is reddish and overcast in the morning, you predict** [that it will be] **bad weather that day. You know how to interpret** [weather] **conditions from the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times** [i.e., what will happen in the spiritual realm]@}. 4) **It is an evil and spiritually unfaithful generation of people** [that keeps on] **looking for a** [supernatural] **sign; but there will be no** [such] **sign given to it except the sign of Jonah** [i.e., being in the huge fish for three days].@ **Then He left them and went away.**

5) **Now the disciples came to the other side** [i.e., to the east side of the lake], **but had forgotten to bring food** [with them]. 6) **Jesus said to them,** **Pay attention and watch out for the leavening** [effect] **of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**@ 7) **And they began reasoning among themselves, saying,** **A[Why be concerned about yeast since] we did not bring** [any] **bread?**@ 8) **Jesus, being aware of their thoughts, said,** **O, you people with** [such] **little faith! Why are you reasoning among yourselves about not having bread?** 9) **Do you not understand yet or remember that five thousand people** [were fed] **with five loaves of bread and how many baskets** [of pieces] **were picked up** [afterward]? 10) **Or that four thousand people** [were fed] **with seven loaves of bread and how many baskets** [of pieces] **were picked up** [afterward]? 11) **How is it that you do not understand that I was not speaking to you about** [physical] **bread? But** [rather I meant] **watch out for the yeast** [i.e., the influence] **of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**@ 12) **Then they understood that He was not telling them to watch out for the yeast in** [physical] **bread, but for the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**

13) **Now when Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples,** **Who are people saying that the Son of man is?**@ 14) **They replied,** **Some say you are John the Immerser; some** [the prophet] **Elijah; and others** [the prophet] **Jeremiah, or one of the** [other] **prophets** [come back to life].@ 15) **He** [then] **said to them,** **But who do you say that I am?**@ 16) **And Simon**

Peter answered, **“You are the Christ [i.e., God’s specially chosen one], the Son of the living God.”** 17) Jesus replied, **“Simon, son of Jonah, you are fortunate [indeed], for this [truth] was not revealed to you by human beings but [rather] by my Father who is in heaven. 18) And I also tell you, [although] you are Peter [i.e., a stone], it is on this rock [i.e., the truth you have just confessed] that I will build my church and [not even] the gates of the unseen place of departed spirits will win out over it [i.e., all efforts to stamp out the church by killing Christians will fail]. 19) [And] I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven [i.e., for opening up the way into it]. And whatever [truth] you [and the other apostles. See 18:18] require [people to believe and practice] here on earth will have already been required of them [by God] in heaven. And whatever [truth] you do not require [of people] on earth, will not be required [by God] in heaven.”** 20) Then He ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Christ.

21) From that time onward Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He would have to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the [Jewish] elders, leading priests, and experts in the Law of Moses; [that He would then] be killed and [yet] raised up on the third day. 22) Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, **“I should say not, Lord; that will never happen to you.”** 23) But Jesus turned to Peter and said, **“Get away from me, Satan; you are causing a hindrance to me because you are not thinking about God’s things but about men’s.”**

24) Then Jesus said to His disciples, **“If anyone wants to be my follower, he should deny self [i.e., of always having its own way] and lift up his cross [of responsibility] and [then he can] become my follower. 25) For whoever would [try to] save his life [i.e., by neglecting spiritual things] will lose it [i.e., miss out on the blessings of God]. But whoever [is willing to] lose his life [i.e., in commitment to God’s service] for my sake will find it [i.e., obtain both temporal and spiritual blessings]. 26) For what benefit is it to a person if he gains the whole world [of material things] but [has to] give up his life [i.e., all the spiritual blessings]? Or what should a person give in exchange for his life? 27) For the Son of man will return in the splendor of His Father, accompanied by His angels. Then He will reward or punish every person in proportion to what he has done [with his life]. 28) It is true when I tell you; some of those standing here will not die before they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom.”**

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

1) **And after six days** [had passed], **Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother John aside and went up into a high mountain** [i.e., an unidentified mountain nearby]. 2) **There His whole appearance was** [miraculously] **changed in front of them. His face shone** [as brilliantly] **as the sun and His clothing became as bright as light.** 3) **Then suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Jesus.** 4) **Peter said to Jesus,** **ALord, it is so good for us to be here. If you wish, I will build three** [small] **shelters here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.**@ [Note: Perhaps Peter wanted to provide quarters for the three to stay temporarily, thus prolonging the wonderful experience. In any event, he should not have done what suggested that Moses and Elijah were equal to Jesus]. 5) **While he was still talking, suddenly a bright cloud engulfed them. Just then, a voice spoke out of the cloud, saying,** **AThis is my dearly loved Son, who is very pleasing to me; listen to Him.**@ 6) **And when the disciples heard** [the voice], **they fell** [to the ground] **on their faces and became very afraid.** 7) **But Jesus came and touched them, saying,** **AGet up, and do not be afraid.**@ 8) **When they looked up, the only one they saw was Jesus.**

9) **And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus ordered them, saying,** **ADo not tell anyone about the vision** [you have just seen] **until the Son of man has been raised from the dead.**@ 10) **His disciples asked Him,** **AWhy then** [since you are obviously the Messiah] **do the experts in the Law of Moses say that Elijah must come first,** [i.e., before the Messiah]?@ 11) **Jesus answered them,** **AElijah truly was to come, and restore all things** [i.e., to their proper perspective concerning the Messiah]. 12) **But I tell you that Elijah has already come, but they** [i.e., the Jewish leaders] **did not understand who he was, but** [instead] **did to him what they wanted to. In the same way, the Son of man will also suffer from what the Jews will do.**@ 13) **Then the disciples understood that He was talking to them about John the Immerser.**

14) **When Jesus and His disciples met the crowd** [that was gathered], **a man came kneeling down to Jesus and saying to Him,** 15) **ALord, take pity on my son, for he has violent seizures and suffers intense pain. He often falls into a fire or into water.** [Note:

This man was also dominated by an evil spirit. See verse 18]. **16) I brought him to [some of] your disciples [for help] but they were not able to heal him.**@ **17) Jesus replied [to the crowd], AYou perverse generation of faithless people! How long must I be with you [i.e., before you understand]? How long do I have to be patient with you? Bring the sick boy to me.**@ **18) Then Jesus spoke sternly to [the evil spirit in] the boy, and it left him, and he was immediately healed.**

**19) Then Jesus= disciples came to Him privately and said, AWhy could we not drive out that evil spirit?@ 20) He answered them, A[It was] because you had such little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith as [small as] a mustard tree seed, you could say to this mountain, >Move from here to that place over there= and it would move. And nothing will be impossible for you [to do].@** { {Some manuscripts contain the following verse: **21) But this kind [of spirit] can not be driven out except by praying and fasting.**} }

**22) And while the disciples were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, AThe Son of man will be handed over to [evil] men 23) and they will kill Him, but on the third day He will be raised up [from the dead].@ And they were very grieved [when they heard this].**

**24) When Jesus and His disciples came to Capernaum, the collectors of the tax [Note: This was the annual tax used for meeting the expenses of the Temple service and consisted of two days= worth of a farm laborer= pay, or about \$140 in 1994] came to Peter and said, ADoes not your teacher [also] pay the [Temple] tax?@ 25) He replied, AYes, [He does].@ And when Peter entered the house, Jesus spoke to him first, [i.e., without waiting for Peter to tell Him what he had said to the tax collectors], saying, AWhat do you think, Simon? From whom do earthly kings collect custom duty and taxes? From their children or from strangers?@ 26) And when Peter said, AFrom strangers,@ Jesus added, ATherefore, children are free [from such taxation]. 27) But, so that we do not become a hindrance to these [tax collectors], go to the lake and cast in your hook [and line]. Then take the first fish [you catch], open its mouth and you will find a coin [i.e., worth twice the amount of an individual= Temple tax assessment]. Take it and give it [to the tax collectors] for you and me.**@

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1) At that very time His disciples came to Jesus, asking,

**A**Who then is the most important person in the kingdom of heaven?<sup>@</sup> 2) So, He called to Him a little child and placed him in front of them, 3) and said, **A**Truly I tell you, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven unless you turn [your life around] and become like little children [i.e., having child-like humility]. 4) Therefore, the person who will humble himself, as this little child, is the most important person in the kingdom of heaven. 5) And the person who welcomes one little child like this, in my name [i.e., because he belongs to me], welcomes me [also]. 6) **B**ut that person who causes one of these little ones [i.e., humble followers of the Lord] who believes in me to be led astray [from God], he would have been better off to have had a huge millstone tied around his neck and dumped into a deep ocean [Note: This <sup>A</sup>millstone<sup>@</sup> was a heavy circular stone rolled over grain to crush it and was moved by an animal walking in a circle].

7) **A**It will be too bad for the world because of occasions that cause people to fall away [from God]! For it is inevitable that such occasions come, but it is too bad for that person who is responsible for causing it to happen. 8) If your hand or your foot becomes the occasion for you falling away [from God], cut them off and throw them away. It would be better for you to enter [never ending] life disabled or crippled, rather than keeping both hands and both feet and being thrown into the never ending fire [i.e., because they caused you to fall away from God]. 9) **A**nd if your eye becomes the occasion for you falling away [from God], gouge it out and throw it away, for it would be better for you to enter [never ending] life with [only] one eye, rather than keeping both eyes and being thrown into a fiery hell [i.e., because one of them caused you to fall away from God]. 10) **M**ake sure you do not look down on any one of these little ones [i.e., humble followers of Christ]. For I tell you, their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven. {{Some ancient manuscripts include verse; 11) **F**or the Son of man came to save those who were lost. }} 12) What do you think? If anyone had a hundred sheep, and one of them wandered away, would he not leave the ninety-nine [safe ones] and go to the mountains looking for the one that wandered away? 13) Truly I tell you, if he happens to find it, he is happier over it than over the ninety-nine that had not wandered away. 14) **I**n the same way, it is not the will of your Father in heaven that [a single] one of these little ones [i.e., humble followers of Christ] should be lost.

15) **And if your brother sins against you, go and show him where he wronged you, [but] keep it between just the two of you. If he listens to you [i.e., accepts your reasoning and repents], you have won your brother [back].** 16) **But if he does not listen [to your reasoning], take one or two other people with you, so that two or three witnesses can verify every word [that was said].** 17) **And if he refuses to listen to them [i.e., the witnesses], explain the [whole] matter to the church [i.e., probably a specially called meeting of mature Christians to resolve the matter]. And if he refuses to listen to the church also, [i.e., to acknowledge his sin and repent of it], consider him like an [unconverted] Gentile or tax collector [i.e., do not have fellowship with him].** 18) **Truly I tell you, whatever [truth] you disciples require [of people to believe and obey] on earth will have [already] been required [by God] in heaven. And whatever [truth] you do not require [of people to believe and obey] on earth, will not have [already] been required [by God] in heaven.** 19) **I tell you again, if two of you agree [here] on earth concerning anything you ask for [i.e., in prayer], God in heaven will grant it to you.** 20) **For I am in the presence of two or three [disciples] wherever they are gathered in my name.®**

21) **Then Peter came and said to Jesus, ALord, how often must I forgive my brother when he sins against me? As many as seven times?®** 22) **Jesus replied, AI tell you, not [just] up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven [i.e., a large indefinite number of times].**

23) **Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is similar to a certain king who decided to settle his account with his servants.** 24) **When he began figuring, one of his servants, who owed him a huge sum of money [Note: The amount is variously estimated to be as much as \$50,000,000 in 1994], was brought to him.** 25) **But since he did not have enough [money] to pay [what he owed], his master ordered that he, his wife, his children and all his possessions be sold [in order] to pay [his debt].** 26) **The servant then fell to the ground [before his master] and humbly implored him, saying, >Master, [please] be patient with me and I will repay you everything [I owe].=** 27) **And the master of that servant felt deep pity [for him], so released him [from custody] and canceled his debt.** 28) **But that [same] servant went out and found one of his fellow-servants who owed him a small sum of money [Note: The amount was about 100 days of a farm laborer's pay or about \$7,000 in 1994]. He grabbed him**

by the throat, saying, >Pay [me] what you owe.= 29) His fellow-servant fell [on the ground before him] and begged him, saying, >[Please] be patient with me and I will repay you [all I owe you].=- 30) But he would not do it. Instead, he took him and had him thrown into prison until he paid [him] all he owed. 31) When his fellow-servants saw what he had done, they were very upset and went and told their master everything that had happened. 32) Then his master called for him and said to him, >You wicked servant! I canceled all of your debt because you begged me to. 33) Should you not also have had pity on your fellow-servant just as I pitied you?=- 34) His master then became furious and turned him over [to the authorities] to be punished until he paid all that he owed. 35) In the same way my heavenly Father will also deal with you [i.e., punish you] unless every one of you forgives his brother from the heart.®

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

1) And so when Jesus had finished speaking He left Galilee and came to the region of Judea, on the east side of the Jordan River. 2) Large crowds followed Him there and were healed by Him.

3) Some Pharisees came to Him, [attempting] to put Him to a test. They said, AIs it permissible by the Law of Moses for a man to divorce his wife for any reason [he chooses]?® 4) And He answered them, AHave you not read [Gen. 1:27; 5:2] that when God created [mankind as] male and female, 5) He said [Gen. 2:24], >For this reason [i.e., since He made one woman for one man], a man will leave [the home of] his father and mother and will cling to his wife, [so that] the two of them will [then] become one flesh [i.e., united in such a close relationship as to constitute one body]?=- 6) So, [upon becoming husband and wife] they no longer function [entirely] as two persons, but [as] one body. Therefore, those whom God [so] joins together [in the marriage bond], no person must [ever] separate.® 7) They replied, AWhy then did Moses order [a man] to provide a legal divorce decree [Deut. 24:1], and then divorce his wife?® 8) Jesus said to them, AMoses permitted you to divorce your wives [only] because of the rebellious spirits you [Jews] had. But this was not how it was [intended to be] from the beginning [i.e., when God created one woman for one man]. 9) And I tell you, whoever divorces

**his wife and marries another woman commits sexual unfaithfulness [toward her], unless the reason for the divorce was sexual unfaithfulness [on his wife's part]. And the person who marries a woman who has been divorced commits sexual sin with her [i.e., because she is still rightfully married to her first husband].@ 10) His disciples [then] said to Jesus, AIf this is the way it has to be between a man and his wife, it is not worth getting married.@ 11) But He replied, ANot all men can accept such an arrangement [i.e., not marrying], but it is [only] for those who have the capacity for accepting it. 12) For there are eunuchs [i.e., men who do not have normal sexual activity] who are born that way; then there are eunuchs who were made that way by undergoing a surgical operation; then there are [also] eunuchs who purposely chose to avoid normal sexual activity for the sake of [ministering in] the kingdom of heaven. Whoever can accept such an arrangement [i.e., of not marrying], should do so.@**

**13) Then some little children were brought to Jesus so he could pray and place His hands on them [i.e., to bestow a blessing on them]. But His disciples spoke harshly to the people [for doing this]. 14) But Jesus said, AAllow these little children to come to me and stop trying to prevent them. For the kingdom of heaven belongs to such [humble ones] as these.@ [See 18:4]. 15) So, He placed His hands on them [i.e., to bestow a blessing] and [then] left that place.**

**16) Then a rich, young man [See verse 22] came to Him and said, ATeacher, what good deed should I do in order to have never ending life?@ 17) Jesus answered him, AWhy do you ask me about what is good? There is [only] One who is good [i.e., God]. But if you want to enter [never ending] life, [then] obey His commandments.@ 18) The young man asked Him, AWhich [ones]?@ Jesus answered, AYou must not murder. You must not be sexually unfaithful to your mate. You must not steal. You must not give false testimony. 19) Show honor to your father and mother. And you must love your neighbor the same as you love yourself.@ 20) The young man said to Him, AI have [already] been observing all of these commandments. What do I [still] lack?@ 21) Jesus replied, AIf you want to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give [the money] to poor people; then become my follower and you will have treasure in heaven.@ 22) But when the young man heard these words, he went away saddened, for he had many possessions.**

**23) Jesus said to His disciples, ATruly I tell you, it is**

difficult for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24) And again I tell you, it is [actually] easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.® 25) When the disciples heard this, they were utterly amazed, saying, AWho then can [possibly] be saved?® 26) Jesus looked at them and said, AThis would be impossible with men, but everything is possible with God.® 27) Peter then answered Him, ALook, we have left everything [i.e., homes, jobs, family, etc.], to follow you. What will we get for it?® 28) Jesus said to them, ATruly I tell you, [since] you have become my followers, in the time of new beginnings [i.e., the church age], when the Son of man sits on His glorious throne, you apostles will also sit on twelve thrones, judging [i.e., through their writings] the twelve tribes of Israel [i.e., God's people]. 29) And every person who has left his house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children or property, for my name's sake [i.e., to become a servant of the Lord], will receive [back] a hundred times as much [in this life] and will [also] inherit never ending life. 30) But many will be last [i.e., in importance and blessings] who [seem to] be first, and those [who seem to be] first will [end up] being last.®

## CHAPTER TWENTY

1) AFor the kingdom of heaven is similar to a farmer who went out early one morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2) When he had agreed with the workers [on wages] for the usual farm laborer's pay for a day's work, he [then] sent them to work in his vineyard. [Note: The coin mentioned here would amount to \$60-\$84 in 1994, based on \$5-\$7 an hour for a twelve hour day. This coin also forms the basis for calculating all other monetary references in the New Testament]. 3) He went out about nine o'clock in the morning and saw other unemployed laborers standing [around] in the open shopping market. 4) He said to them, >You men also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.= So, they went to work. 5) [Then] he went out again about noon and again at three o'clock in the afternoon and made the same offer. 6) [Finally] he went out [once more] at about five o'clock in the afternoon and found [still] other men standing around. He said, >Why have you been standing around all day and not working?=- 7) They replied, >Because no one has hired us.= He said to them, >You men also may

go to work in my vineyard.= 8) And when evening came the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, >Call the workers [in] and pay them their wages, beginning with the last [one hired, then] to the first.= 9) So, when those hired about five o'clock in the afternoon came in, each one received the usual pay for one full day=s work. [See note on verse 2]. 10) Then when those who were hired first came [to get paid], they expected to receive more money [than those hired later], but each one received the usual pay for one full day=s work also. 11) And when they received it, they complained to the farmer, 12) saying, >These men [you hired] last have worked only one hour and you gave them wages equal to ours when we carried the heaviest load of the day=s work and [put up with] the scorching heat [all day long].= 13) But he answered one of them, saying, >Friend, I have not done anything wrong to you. Did you not agree with me to accept the usual pay for one full day=s work? 14) Take what belongs to you and go on your way. I want to give this last person [hired] the same wages I gave you. 15) Is it against the law for me to do what I want with my own money? Or, is it that your eye is envious because I choose to be so generous?=- 16) So, the [person who seems to be] last will be first [i.e., in importance and blessings], but the [person who seems to be] first will [end up] being last.®

17) As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem He took the twelve apostles aside. As they traveled along He said to them, 18) ANow look, we are going up to Jerusalem and [while there] the Son of man will be turned over to the leading priests and experts in the Law of Moses. They will condemn Him to death, 19) and turn Him over to the [unconverted] Gentiles, who will mock, whip and crucify Him; then on the third day He will be raised up.®

20) Then the mother of Zebedee=s sons [i.e., James and John] came to Jesus with her sons and, bowing down in reverence before Him, made a request of Him. 21) He responded to her, AWhat would you like me to do for you?® She answered; AAppoint my two sons to sit at your right side and at your left in your [coming] kingdom.® 22) But Jesus replied to her, AYou [really] do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup [i.e., of suffering] that I am about to drink?® They [i.e., James, John and their mother. See Mark 10:35ff] answered, A[Yes] we are able to.® 23) He said to them, AIndeed you will drink my cup [of suffering]. But it is not my prerogative to appoint who sits at my right side and at my

left, but rather these places are for those to whom it has been assigned by my Father.® 24) When the other ten apostles heard this, they became very upset with the two brothers. 25) Then Jesus called all the apostles to Him and said, AYou are aware that rulers among the [unconverted] Gentiles lord it over their own people and their important men domineer over them [as well]. 26) But it will not be this way among you, for whoever would like to become important among you will become your servant. 27) And whoever would like to be first [in prominence] among you will be your slave. 28) Even so, the Son of man did not come to be served [by others] but to be the servant [of others], and to sacrifice His life as a ransom price to purchase many people [i.e., back from Satan].®

29) As they [i.e., the twelve apostles and Jesus] were leaving Jericho [Note: This was a town about eighteen miles northeast of Jerusalem], a huge crowd followed them. 30) Just then, two blind men sitting along side of the road heard that Jesus was passing by that way. [So], they shouted out, ALord, take pity on us, son of David.® 31) The crowd spoke harshly to them, telling them to be quiet, but they shouted all the more, ALord, have pity on us, son of David.® 32) Then Jesus stopped, and calling to them, said, AWhat do you want me to do for you?® 33) They answered, ALord, we want to have our sight back.® 34) Jesus felt deep pity for them, so He touched their eyes and immediately their sight was restored, and they became [His] followers.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

1) And when they [i.e., Jesus and the twelve apostles] approached Jerusalem and came close to Bethphage, near the Mount of Olives [Note: This was about three-fourths of a mile east of Jerusalem], Jesus sent two disciples on ahead, 2) saying to them, AGo into the village there and immediately you will find a donkey tied up with her colt. Untie them and bring them to me. 3) If anyone says something to you, tell them, >The Lord needs these animals,= and he will immediately send them. 4) Now this will happen in order to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, 5) [Zech. 9:9], >You should tell the daughter of Zion [i.e., the people of Jerusalem], look, your King is coming to you. He is gentle and [will be] riding on a donkey, [even] on a colt, the offspring of the

donkey.-@

6) And the disciples went and did exactly what Jesus had ordered them to do. 7) They brought the donkey and its colt and spread their clothing on them, and Jesus mounted the colt. 8) A large part of the crowd spread their clothing on the roadway; others cut branches from trees and spread them [also] on the roadway. 9) And the crowds that walked ahead and followed behind Him shouted, *AHosanna to the son of David*. [Note: The Syriac word *Hosanna* originally meant *save now* but came to be used as an expression of welcome, praise, blessing or acclamation]. **May He, who comes in the name [i.e., by the authority] of the Lord, be blessed. Hosanna in the highest** [i.e., may this blessing reach to the highest heaven].@ 10) And when He had come to Jerusalem, the entire city was stirred up; they were asking, *AWho is this man?*@ 11) The crowds answered, *AHe is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.*@

12) Then Jesus entered the Temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold things there. He upset the tables of the cashiers [i.e., those who exchanged foreign coins] and the benches of those who sold pigeons [for sacrifices]. 13) And He said to them, *AI*t is written [Isa. 56:7], *>My house [i.e., the Temple] will be called a house for prayer,* but [Jer. 7:11 says], *>You have made it a hideout for thieves.-@*

14) [Then] blind and crippled people came to Him in the Temple and He healed them. 15) But when the leading priests and the experts in the Law of Moses saw the wonderful things [i.e., miracles] He was performing and [heard] the children shouting in the Temple, *AHosanna to the son of David,*@ [See note at verse 9], they were filled with anger [i.e., over the acclaim being given to Jesus]. 16) They said to Jesus, *A*Do you hear what these [children] are saying [about you]?@ Jesus answered them, *A*Yes, [I do]. Have you not read [in Psa. 8:2] *>You have ordained that praise would come from the mouths of infants and small children?=-@*

17) He then left them and went out of the city [of Jerusalem] to Bethany [Note: This was a small village near Bethphage] and stayed there [i.e., probably at the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. See John 11:1].

18) Now in the morning, as Jesus returned to the city [of Jerusalem], He became hungry. 19) Upon seeing a fig tree along side of the road, He approached it [i.e., expecting to find fruit on it],

but found nothing but leaves. He said to the tree, **A**There will not be fruit on you ever again.**@** Immediately the fig tree withered up. 20) When His disciples saw this, they marveled, saying, **A**How could the fig tree wither up so suddenly?**@** 21) Jesus answered, **A**Truly I tell you, if you have faith, without doubting, you will not only [be able to] do what was done to this fig tree, but even if you tell this mountain, **>**Be lifted up and thrown into the ocean,**=** it will happen. 22) And everything you ask for in prayer you will receive, if you have [enough] faith.**@**

23) When He had come into the Temple, the leading priests and elders of the [Jewish] people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, **A**By what authority are you doing these things [i.e., miracles and teaching]? And who gave you this authority?**@** 24) Jesus answered them; **A**Let me also ask you a question. If you answer it, then I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 25) Where did the immersion of John come from? From heaven or from men?**@** And they discussed this among themselves, saying, **A**If we say, **>**from heaven,**=** He will say to us, **>**Why then did you not believe his message?**=** 26) But if we say, **>**from men,**=** we are afraid the crowd will oppose us because they all consider John to be a prophet.**@** 27) So, they answered Jesus, **A**We do not know [where John got the authority for his immersion].**@** Jesus then replied to them, **A**[Then] neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things [i.e., miracles and teaching]. 28) But what do you think [about this]? A man had two sons; He went to the first one and said, **>**Son, go to work in my vineyard today.**=** 29) The son answered, **>**No, I will not,**=** but later changed his mind and went. 30) He went to the second son and said the same thing. That son replied, **>**[Yes], sir, I will,**=** [but] then did not go. 31) Which of these two sons did what his father wanted?**@** They answered, **A**The first one.**@** Jesus said to them, **A**Truly I tell you, tax collectors and prostitutes [will] enter the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32) For John came to show you the way to be right with God, but you would not believe his message. Yet the tax collectors and prostitutes believed it, and when you saw this, even then you did not change your minds so as to believe his message.

33) **A**Listen to another parable [i.e., a brief story used to illustrate His teaching]: There was the owner of a farm who planted a vineyard and built a fence around it. He constructed a grape squeezing device, built a [lookout] tower [near it], leased it to tenant

farmers and then went to another country. 34) And when the season for harvesting the grapes approached, the owner of the farm sent his slaves to the tenant farmers to arrange for delivery of his crop. 35) But the tenant farmers took the farm owner's slaves and beat one, killed another and stoned another. 36) The owner of the farm then sent additional slaves and they were treated the same way. 37) Then later on he sent his own son to the tenant farmers, saying, '[Surely] they will treat my son with respect.= 38) But when the tenant farmers saw the son, they said to one another, >This is the heir [to the vineyard]. Come on; let us kill him so we can take over his inheritance.= 39) So, they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. 40) When the owner of the vineyard returns, what [do you think] he will do to those tenant farmers? 41) They answered him; AHe will bring terrible destruction on those evil men and will lease the vineyard to other tenant farmers who will deliver the crops to him each harvest time.@

42) Jesus [then] said to the leading priests and elders of the Jewish people, ADid you not ever read in the Scriptures [Psa. 118:22-23], >The building block rejected by the builders is the same one that was made the principal stone by which the entire building was aligned. This was planned by the Lord and is a marvelous thing to us=? 43) Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you [Jews] and will be given to a nation [i.e., the Gentiles] that will produce the fruit of the kingdom. 44) And the person who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but whoever it falls on will be scattered like dust.@

45) And when the leading priests and Pharisees heard Jesus= parables, they realized He was speaking about them. 46) When they attempted to arrest Him, [they hesitated because] they feared [what] the crowds [might do], since they considered Jesus a prophet.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

1) Jesus again spoke in parables to them [i.e., the Jewish leaders], saying, 2) AThe kingdom of heaven is similar to a certain king who held a wedding reception for his son. 3) He sent his servants out to call those who had been invited to the wedding reception, but they refused to come. 4) Again he sent out other

servants saying, >Tell those who were invited, look, I have already prepared the dinner; my cattle and [other] well-fattened animals have been butchered and everything is ready. [Now] come to the wedding reception dinner.- 5) But they made fun of it, and went on about their business, one to his farm, another to his store. 6) But the rest of them grabbed his servants, physically abused them and [finally] killed them. 7) The king became furious and sent his army to destroy these murderers and burn their city. 8) Then he told his servants, >The wedding is ready, but those who were invited to it [proved they] were not worthy [to attend]. 9) Now go to the main crossroads of the highways and invite everyone you find there to the wedding reception.- 10) So, his servants went out to the highways and gathered in all those who could be found, both bad and good, so that the wedding [reception] was full of guests. 11) But when the king came in [to the dining hall] to meet the guests, he noticed a man who was not wearing a [proper] wedding outfit. 12) He said to the man, >Friend, how did you get in here without wearing the proper wedding outfit?=- And he could not say a word. 13) Then the king said to his servants, >Tie him up, hand and foot, and throw him into [a place of] outer darkness where there will be crying and excruciating pain.- 14) For many people are called [by God] but [only those] few [who respond] are chosen [by Him].@

15) Then the Pharisees conspired as to how they could trap Jesus by what He said. 16) So, they sent their disciples, [along] with the Herodians to Him [Note: These were members of a political party favoring King Herod], saying, ATeacher, we know that you are sincere, and that you teach the truth about God-s way. You do not care for [i.e., do not fear or give in to] anyone or allow the position of any person to influence you. 17) So, tell us what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?@ 18) But Jesus perceived their wicked intention and said, AWhy are you putting me to a test, you hypocrites? 19) Show me the coin used for paying taxes.@ And they brought to Him a coin [Note: This coin was equivalent to one day of a farm laborer's pay, or about \$60-\$84 in 1994]. 20) He said to them, AWhose image and inscription are on this coin?@ 21) They answered Him, ACaesar-s.@ Then He replied, APay to Caesar whatever belongs to Caesar and pay to God whatever belongs to God.@

22) And when they heard this, they marveled; then left Him and went away.

23) Some Sadducees [Note: These were the Jewish party that

denied there was a resurrection] **came to Jesus that day and asked Him, 24) ATeacher, Moses said [in Deut. 25:5] that when a man dies without having had any children, his brother must marry his widow and father children by her, who would [then] be considered his [dead] brother-s. 25) Now among our people there were [these] seven brothers; the first one married and [later] died without having any children, leaving his widow to [marry] his brother. 26) The same thing happened to the second and the third and [on through to] the seventh [brother]. 27) And after they all died, the woman [also] passed away. 28) Now whose wife will she be in the resurrected state, since all seven of them were married to her?@ 29) But Jesus answered them, AYou are mistaken [in your reasoning], not knowing [what] the Scriptures [teach] or [how much] power God has. 30) For in the resurrected state men do not get married, nor are women given away in marriage, but [all] are like angels in heaven. 31) But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what God spoke to you, saying, [Ex. 3:6] 32) >I am Abraham-s God, and Isaac-s God and Jacob-s God.= [So], He is not God to those who are [physically] dead, but [He is] God to those who are [still] alive.@ 33) And when the crowds heard this they were astounded at His teaching.**

**34) But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced [the objections of] the Sadducees, they gathered together [i.e., to continue plotting against Jesus. See verse 15]. 35) One of them, a teacher of the Law of Moses, asked Him a question [in an attempt] to test Him. 36) ATeacher, which one is the greatest commandment in the Law of Moses?@ he asked. 37) Jesus replied, [Deut. 6:5] A>You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.= 38) This is the foremost and greatest commandment. 39) A second one, similar to it is [Lev. 19:18], >You must love your neighbor the same way that you love yourself.= 40) The entire Law of Moses and the prophets hinge on these two commandments.@**

**41) Now while the Pharisees were assembled together, Jesus asked them this question, 42) AWhat do you think about the Christ [i.e., God-s specially chosen one]? Whose son do you think He is?@ They replied, A[He is] the son of David.@ 43) He said to them, AHow is it [then] that David, by [inspiration of] the Holy Spirit, calls Him Lord, saying, 44) [Psa. 110:1] >The Lord [i.e., God] said to my [i.e., David-s] Lord [i.e., Jesus], sit at my right side until I put your**

enemies [in full subjection] beneath your feet.= 45) If David then could call Him [i.e., Jesus] Lord, how could He be his son?@ 46) No one was able to answer [Jesus=reasoning] with [so much as] a word, and no one dared to ask Him any more questions from that day onward.

### CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

1) Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, 2) saying, <sup>A</sup>The experts in the Law of Moses and the Pharisees teach by the authority of Moses. 3) Therefore, observe and practice everything they urge upon you, but do not follow their example [of living] because they say [the right things] but do not do them. 4) Yes, they require people to bear heavy and difficult responsibilities, and place them on people-s shoulders [to carry out], but they themselves will not lift a finger to do them. 5) But they do all their deeds just to be seen by people. They wear elaborate Scripture texts displayed on their clothing and enlarge [conspicuously] the fringes of their robes. 6) They love to recline at the head place at dinner tables [Note: This referred to the practice of lying down on their left side on a couch next to the dinner table, and leaning on their left elbow, while eating with their right hand], and to occupy the principal seats in the synagogues. 7) They love the [special] greetings they receive at the open shopping markets and to be addressed as >Rabbi- [Note: This word signified >great-or >master-]. 8) But you should not assume the title >Rabbi,- for [only] one is your teacher [i.e., Jesus Himself] and all of you are [simply] brothers. 9) And do not call any man on earth >father,- [i.e., in a religious sense], for the [only] one who is your Father is in heaven. 10) Neither assume the title >Master- [i.e., teacher], for [only] one is your Master, the Christ [i.e., God-s specially chosen one]. 11) But the greatest person among you will be your servant. 12) And whoever exalts himself [as important] will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted [as important].

13) <sup>A</sup>But it is too bad for you hypocritical experts in the Law of Moses and [you] Pharisees! [It is] because you withhold the kingdom of heaven from people, for you do not enter it yourselves, nor [do you] allow those who are trying to enter it to get in. { {Verse 14) is absent from the oldest manuscripts} }

15) <sup>A</sup>It is too bad for you hypocritical experts in the Law of

**Moses and [you] Pharisees! For you travel over land and sea [in hope of] making one person a proselyte [i.e., a convert to the Jewish religion]. And when you do convert one, you make him twice as deserving of hell as yourselves.**

**16) AIt is too bad for you blind leaders who say that whoever takes an oath >by the Temple,= it does not [really] mean anything, but whoever takes an oath >by the gold of the Temple,= he is obligated to [fulfill] the oath. 17) You foolish, blind people! Which is greater, the gold or the Temple that makes its gold sacred? 18) And [you say], whoever takes an oath >by the Altar,= it does not [really] mean anything, but whoever takes an oath >by the gift on the Altar,= he is obligated to [fulfill] the oath. 19) You blind people! Which is more important, the gift or the Altar that makes the gift sacred? 20) The person, therefore, who takes an oath >by the Altar,= [not only] swears by it, but [also] by everything on it. 21) And the person who takes an oath >by the Temple,= [not only] swears by it, but [also] by Him [i.e., God] who lives there. 22) And the person who takes an oath >by heaven,= swears >by the throne of God,= and [also] by Him [i.e., God] who sits on it.**

**23) AIt is too bad for you hypocritical experts in the Law of Moses and [you] Pharisees! For you give a tenth of your mint, dill and cumin [i.e., small garden herbs used for seasoning or fragrance], and [yet] neglect the heavier responsibilities required by the law, [such as] justice, mercy and faith. You should have done these [lighter] things and not neglected to do the other [heavier] things [as well]. 24) You blind leaders, who strain out a [tiny] gnat [i.e., from your drinking water] and [yet] swallow a [whole] camel.**

**25) AIt is too bad for you hypocritical experts in the Law of Moses and [you] Pharisees! For you [carefully] wash the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they [i.e., such evil people] are full of greed and uncontrolled desire. 26) You blind Pharisees! First wash the inside of the cup and dish, so [then] the outside will be clean also.**

**27) AIt is too bad for you hypocritical experts in the Law of Moses and [you] Pharisees! For you are like white-washed tombs, used for burial [sites], which appear beautiful on the outside, but on the inside are full of the bones and decaying flesh of dead people. 28) Even so, you also appear on the outside to be doing right in front of people, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and sin.**

**29) AIt is too bad for you hypocritical experts in the Law of**

**Moses and [you] Pharisees! For you construct burial sites for the prophets and decorate the tombs of people who were righteous. 30) And you say, >If [only] we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we [certainly] would not have participated with them in [shedding] the blood of the prophets.= 31) [But by saying this] you are witnesses [against] yourselves, that you are the sons of those who murdered the prophets [i.e., indicating your approval of their actions]. 32) So [then], fulfill the pattern of behavior begun by your forefathers. 33) You snakes! You children of snakes! How do you expect to escape being judged [and condemned] in hell? 34) Therefore look, I am sending to you prophets, wise men and scholarly teachers. You will murder and crucify some of them; you will whip some of them in your synagogues and pursue them from town to town. 35) [This will be done] so that on you may fall the guilt for shedding on the ground the blood of all those innocent people, from the blood of righteous Abel to that of Barachiah-s son Zachariah, whom you murdered between the Sanctuary and the Altar [i.e., in the Temple area]. 36) Truly I tell you, this generation will bear [the guilt for] all these things.**

**37) AO, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, [you people] who murdered the prophets and stoned those who were sent to you! How often I have wanted to gather you people together, even as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! 38) Look, your house [i.e., the Jewish Temple] is being abandoned [by me?]. 39) For I tell you, you will not see me from now on until [the time when] you will be saying, >Praise the one who is coming in the name of the Lord!=@**

## **CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR**

**1) As Jesus left the Temple, His disciples approached Him as He was walking along the road and pointed out the Temple buildings. 2) He responded to them by saying, ADo you see all these structures? Truly I tell you, there will not be one stone left on another here that will not be thrown down.@**

**3) And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, His disciples came to Him privately, saying, ATell us, when will these things [you just spoke of] happen? And what will be the sign that indicates your presence and the end of the [present] age?@ 4) And**

Jesus answered them, **Pay attention so that no one leads you astray** [from the truth]. **5) For many** [false teachers] **will come, claiming to be me, and saying, I am the Christ** [i.e., God's specially chosen one] **and they will lead many people away** [from the truth]. **6) And you will hear of wars** [going on] **and rumors of** [other] **wars** [pending]. **Do not worry, for such things must necessarily happen. But the end has not yet come.** [Note: By **the end** here Jesus probably alludes to the downfall of Jerusalem, in AD 70, with its attending destruction of the Temple buildings]. **7) For nations will wage war against one another, and kingdoms will attack one another. And famines and earthquakes will occur at various places** [in the world]. **8) But all these things are** [only] **the beginning of terrible times.** **9) At that time people will turn you over** [to the authorities] **for persecution and will** [even] **kill you. And people from all countries will hate you for being loyal to me.** **10) And then many people will fall away** [from God] **and they will turn one another over** [i.e., to the authorities for punishment], **and they will hate one another.** **11) And many false prophets will appear and will lead many people away** [from the truth]. **12) And because sin will abound, many people will grow cold in their love** [for one another]. **13) But the person who holds out** [i.e., remains faithful to God] **until the end** [i.e., of this time of severe persecution] **will be saved** [from destruction]. **14) And this good news concerning the kingdom** [of heaven] **will be preached to people throughout the world as a testimony** [of God's message] **to all nations. Then,** [after that] **the end** [i.e., of Jerusalem, the Temple, etc.] **will come.**

**15) Therefore, when you see that disgusting thing which causes total destruction** [i.e., the Roman armies. See Luke 21:20], **which Daniel the prophet spoke about** [Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11], **standing in the sacred place** [i.e., Jerusalem and especially the Temple area], **(let the reader understand** [what is meant by this]), **16) then those** [of you] **in Judea are to run away into the** [nearby] **mountains.** **17) [Also, the person who is on a housetop** [Note: This was a flat area where people retired for rest, prayer, etc., with its stairway on the outside], **is not to take any of the belongings from his house as he comes down** [to flee]. **18) The person who is in a field** [i.e., doing farm work] **is not** [even] **to return** [to his house] **to get his coat.** **19) It will be too bad for those who are pregnant and who are nursing babies in those days.** **20) And pray that it will not be in the winter or on a Sabbath day when you will have to flee** [from the city].

[Note: Jewish Sabbath day restrictions on travel (only three-fifths of a mile) and city gate closures would make leaving the city nearly impossible]. **21) There will be great trouble** [during these times], **such as had never been from the beginning of time up to the present, or ever will be** [in the days to come]. **22) And if those days had not been as short as they were no one would have been saved** [i.e., from the devastating destruction]. **But for the sake of the elect** [i.e., God's people], **those days will be short.** **23) Then if anyone says to you, >Look, here is Christ,= or >There [he is],= do not believe him.** **24) For false Christs and false prophets will appear and they will perform great** [miraculous] **signs and** [supernatural] **wonders in order to lead astray even the elect** [i.e., God's people], **if possible.** **25) You see, I have told you** [all this] **ahead of time.** **26) Therefore, if people say to you, >Look, he [i.e., Christ. See verse 23] is in the desert,= do not go out there.** [Or if they say], **>Look, he is in an inside room,= do not believe him.** **27) For just like lightning that appears in the east can be seen even in the west, so it will be with the presence** [i.e., coming] **of the Son of man.** **28) Wherever there is a dead body,** [you can expect to see] **vultures gathered there.** [Note: This may mean that such a significant event as the coming of Christ would surely not go unnoticed].

**29) ABut immediately after the terrible trouble of those days,** [i.e., the next major event on God's calendar], **the sun will become dark, and** [therefore] **the moon will not** [be able to] **shed its** [reflected] **light. The stars will fall from the sky and the forces of the heavens will be shaken** [Note: From the description of these same events in Luke 21:25-26, it is possible that this is figurative language for great calamities happening on the earth]. **30) Then the sign** [i.e., signifying the coming] **of the Son of man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will be stricken with grief as they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of the sky** [See Acts 1:9-11] **with power and great splendor.** **31) And He will send out His angels** [i.e., as messengers] **with the sound of a great trumpet** [See I Thess. 4:16] **to gather His elect** [i.e., God's people] **from all directions,** [even] **from throughout the whole world.** [Note: See Mark 13:27, which suggests this thought by its use of >earth= and >sky=]

**32) ANow learn this parable** [i.e., a brief analogy to illustrate a lesson] **from the fig tree: When its tender sprouts appear and its leaves begin to develop, you know that summer is near.** **33) In the same way also, when you see all these things happening, you**

[should] **know that He** [i.e., Jesus] **is as near as your** [front] **door.** 34) **Truly I tell you, the people of this generation will not** [all] **die off before all these things** [i.e., mentioned above] **happen.** 35) [Although] **the sky and the earth will pass away** [See II Pet. 3:10], **my words will not pass away** [i.e., they will certainly come true].

36) **But no one knows when that day or hour will come. Not even the angels in heaven or the Son** [of God] **know** [when it will happen], **but only the Father** [does]. 37) **As it was during the days of Noah, so it will be when the presence of the Son of man** [arrives]. 38) **For in those days before the Flood, people were eating and drinking** [i.e., partaking of ordinary meals], **men were getting married and women were being given away in marriage** [right up] **until the day Noah entered the ship.** 39) **And the people** [i.e., of Noah's day] **did not know** [when it would happen] **until the Flood came and swept them all away. It will be the same way when the presence of the Son of man** [arrives]. 40) **At that time there will be two men** [working] **in a field; one will be taken** [i.e., to be with the Lord. See I Thess. 4:17], **while the other one will be left** [i.e., to be punished by the Lord. See II Thess. 1:7-9]. 41) **Two women will be grinding grain at a millstone** [Note: This was a hand-operated device where two persons sat across from each other and rotated a circular stone over kernels of grain]; **one will be taken, while the other one will be left.** 42) **Therefore be alert, for you do not know on what day the Lord will come.** 43) **But you should know this: if the owner of a house had known when a thief was coming, he would have been watching so as not to allow his house to be broken into.** 44) **Therefore, you also should be ready, for the Son of man will come at a time when you least expect Him.**

45) **Who then, is the trustworthy and sensible slave, to whom his master has assigned the management of his household to provide timely meals for its members?** 46) **That slave will be happy when his master returns to find him doing his job** [well]. 47) **Truly I tell you, he will put that slave in charge of his entire estate.** 48) **But if that slave, with evil intent, should think to himself, >My master will not be back very soon,= 49) and then becomes physically abusive to his fellow-slaves, and eats and drinks** [at parties] **with drunkards,** 50) **that slave's master will return on a day that he least expects, and at an unknown hour.** 51) **And** [that master] **will whip him to shreds and will turn him over to suffer the same fate as hypocrites do. That fate will involve crying and excruciating pain.**@

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

1) **A**Then the kingdom of heaven will be similar to ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went out to meet the [bride and] groom. [Note: The picture here is that of a newly married couple returning from a festive reception to the groom's home where they continued celebrating and were welcomed by a late evening wedding party] 2) **F**ive of the bridesmaids were foolish and five were sensible. 3) **T**he foolish ones did not take enough olive oil for their lamps with them, 4) **b**ut the sensible ones took [extra] oil in containers, along with their lamps. 5) **N**ow when the [bride and] groom were late [in arriving], the bridesmaids all got drowsy and fell asleep. 6) **T**hen at midnight someone shouted, **>Look, the [bride and] groom are here. Come on, let us go out and meet them.-** 7) **T**hen all the bridesmaids woke up and trimmed their lamps [i.e., removed the burnt wicks and replenished their lamps with oil]. 8) **T**he foolish ones said to the sensible ones, **>Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.-** 9) **B**ut the sensible ones answered, **>There might not be enough for us and you, [so] instead, you should go to the store and buy some for yourselves.-** 10) **A**nd while they were away [trying] to buy olive oil, the [bride and] groom arrived, and those who were ready [to welcome them] entered the [house where the] wedding reception [was being held] and the door was shut. 11) **A**fter that, the other bridesmaids also came asking, **>Sir, Sir, [please] open the door for us!-** 12) **B**ut he answered them, **>Truly I tell you, I do not know you.-** 13) **T**herefore, you should be watchful, for you do not know the day or hour [i.e., when the Son of man will return].

14) **A**For the kingdom of heaven is similar to a man who planned to go on a trip to a distant country, so called his servants and entrusted to each of them a large sum of money [Note: The narrative that follows suggests that the man was turning over some of his assets to financial managers to invest for him]. 15) **H**e gave one servant five talents [Note: This talent= was a large sum of money in the form of a certain weight of silver. It was the equivalent of sixty years of a farm laborer's wages, or about \$750,000 in 1994 income]. **H**e gave two talents to another servant and one talent to another. **H**e gave to each one an amount in keeping with his ability [to invest it

wisely], and then left on his trip. 16) The one with the five talents soon invested the money in business transactions which netted him five more. 17) In the same way the one who was given two talents made two more. 18) But the one who was given one talent went and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master-s money. 19) Now after a long time the master of these servants returned [from his trip] and proceeded to go over his accounts with each of them. 20) The one who had been given five talents came bringing another five and reported, >Master, you entrusted me with five talents. Look, I have earned five more with them.= 21) His master replied, >Well done, you are a good and trustworthy servant. You have been trustworthy over a [relatively] few things, so I will place you over many things. Come and share in your master-s joy.= 22) And the one who was given two talents came and reported, >Master, you entrusted me with two talents. Look, I have earned two more with them.= 23) His master said to him, >Well done, you are a good and trustworthy servant. You have been trustworthy over a [relatively] few things, [so] I will place you over many things. Come and share in your master-s joy.= 24) Then the one who was given [only] one talent came and reported, >Master, I knew you were a difficult man who reaped where you had not sown, and gathered a harvest where you had not scattered seed, 25) and I was afraid, so I went away and hid your talent in the ground. Look, you [can] have your own talent [back].= 26) But his master said to him, >You wicked, lazy servant. [Since] you knew that I reaped where I had not sown and gathered where I had not scattered seed, 27) you should have therefore deposited my money in the bank [so] when I returned, [at least] I would have received my own money back, with interest. 28) Take the one talent away from him, therefore, and give it to the servant who had the ten talents. 29) For to every person who has [something], more will be given, so he will have plenty. But from the person who has [virtually] nothing, even that [little bit] he has will be taken away [from him]. 30) Throw out that worthless servant into the [place of] outer darkness, where there will be crying and excruciating pain.

31) ABut when the Son of man comes [back] in [all] His splendor, accompanied by all the angels, then He will sit on His throne of splendor. 32) And people from all the nations will be assembled in front of Him and He will separate them from one another, like a shepherd separating his sheep from the goats. 33) He

will place the sheep at His right side, but the goats at His left. 34) Then the King will say to those at His right side, >You who are blessed by my Father, come and receive the kingdom which has been prepared for you since the creation of the world, 35) for [when] I was hungry, you fed me; [when] I was thirsty, you gave me [something] to drink; [when] I came [to you as] a stranger, you gave me a place to stay; 36) when I was without adequate clothing, you gave me something to wear; [when] I was sick, you came to visit me; [when] I was in prison, you came to see me.= 37) Then those who had done what was right [i.e., the ones at His right side] replied, >Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you? Or thirsty, and give you [something] to drink? 38) And when [did you come as] a stranger, and we gave you a place to stay? Or [when were you] without adequate clothing, and we gave you something to wear? 39) And when did we see you sick or in prison and come to visit you?=- 40) And the King will answer them and say, >Truly I tell you, since you did all this for one of my least [significant] brothers, you did it for me.= 41) Then He [i.e., the King] will say to those at His left side, >Go away from me, you who are cursed [by God], into the never ending fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. 42) For [when] I was hungry, you did not feed me; [when] I was thirsty, you did not give me anything to drink; 43) [when] I came [to you as] a stranger, you did not give me a place to stay; [when I] did not have adequate clothing, you did not give me anything to wear; when I was sick, or in prison, you did not visit me.= 44) They will reply, >Lord, when did we [ever] see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or inadequately dressed, or sick, or in prison, and not provide for your needs?=- 45) Then the Lord will answer them, >Truly I tell you, since you did not do it for one of these least [significant brothers of mine], you did not do it for me.= 46) And these [i.e., the ones at His left side] will go away to never ending punishment, but those who did what was right will go to never ending life.®

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

1) And it happened when Jesus had finished all this teaching, He said to His disciples, 2) AYou know that the Passover Festival will be celebrated in two more days [Note: This was the annual Jewish festival commemorating Israel's deliverance from

Egyptian bondage under Moses= leadership], and the Son of man will be turned over to be crucified.® 3) Then the leading priests and elders of the [Jewish] people were gathered in the courtroom of the head priest, named Caiaphas. 4) They were taking counsel together as to how they might take Jesus by trickery and kill Him. 5) But they reasoned, AWe will not do it during the Festival because it might start a riot among the people.®

6) Now when Jesus was at Bethany [Note: This was a small village less than two miles east of Jerusalem], in the house of Simon, the man [who probably had been healed] of an infectious skin disease, 7) a woman with an alabaster [i.e., stone] jar of very expensive perfume came to Him and poured it on His head as He reclined at the dinner table. [Note: See Matt. 23:6] 8) But when His disciples saw this they were very upset and said, AWhat is the reason for such waste? 9) For this perfume could have been sold for a large sum of money and given to poor people.® 10) But Jesus was aware [of what they were up to], so said, AWhy are you bothering this woman? For she has done a kind deed to me. 11) You will always have poor people with you, but you will not always have me. 12) For in the act of pouring this perfume on my body she was preparing it for my burial. 13) Truly I tell you, wherever this Gospel [message] is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done [for me] will [also] be told about, as a memorial of her [kindness to me].®

14) Then one of the twelve apostles, named Judas Iscariot, went to the leading priests 15) and said, AWhat would you give me if I turned Jesus over to you?® And they weighed out thirty silver coins [Note: This amount was equivalent to about five months of a farm laborer=s wages, or approximately \$7,000 in 1994], and promised [See Mark 14:11] to give him that much money. 16) So, from then on Judas looked for a [good] opportunity to turn Jesus over [to the Jewish leaders].

17) Now on the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread [i.e., the first day of Passover week], Jesus disciples came to Him, saying, AWhere do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover meal?® 18) He answered, AGo into the city [i.e., Jerusalem] to a certain man and say to him, >The Teacher says, My time is near [i.e., to be turned over to the Jewish leaders]; I plan to observe the Passover Festival at your house with my disciples.-® 19) And the disciples did [just] as Jesus had asked them, and they made preparations for the Passover meal.

20) Now when evening came, Jesus was reclining at the dinner table with His twelve apostles. 21) As they were eating, He said, **Truly I tell you, one of you will turn me over** [to the Jewish leaders].<sup>@</sup> 22) And they were extremely grieved, and each one of them began saying to Him, **Am I the one, Lord?**<sup>@</sup> 23) He answered, **The one who dipped his hand with me into the [sauce] bowl is the one who will turn me over** [to the Jewish leaders]. 24) **The Son of man is going** [to die], **but it is too bad for that person through whom the Son of man is turned over** [to the Jewish leaders]! **It would be better for that man if he had not been born.**<sup>@</sup> 25) Then Judas, the one who betrayed Him asked, **Am I the one, Rabbi?**<sup>@</sup> Jesus answered Him, **You have said so.**<sup>@</sup>

26) And as they were eating, Jesus took a [small] loaf of bread, asked God's blessing on it, then broke it and gave pieces to His disciples and said, **Take some and eat it; this is** [i.e., represents] **my [physical] body.**<sup>@</sup> 27) And He took a cup [i.e., probably wine made from fresh or possibly preserved grape juice], **gave thanks to God, then passed it to them, saying, All of you, drink from it;** 28) **for this is** [i.e., represents] **my blood of the Agreement** [i.e., between God and mankind], **which is** [to be] **poured out for many people in order for** [their] **sins to be forgiven.** 29) **But I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine** [i.e., grape juice] **from now on until that day when I will drink it again with you** [i.e., figuratively] **in my Father's kingdom.**<sup>@</sup>

30) And after they had sung a hymn, they went up to the Mount of Olives. [Note: This was a small hill just east of Jerusalem]

31) Then Jesus said [to His disciples], **All of you will have doubts about me tonight, for it is written** [Zech. 13:7], **>I will strike down the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered everywhere.=** 32) **But after I am raised up, I will go on ahead of you to Galilee.**<sup>@</sup> 33) Peter answered Him, **[Even] if everyone [else] has doubts about you, I never will.**<sup>@</sup> 34) Jesus said to him, **Truly I tell you, this [very] night, before the rooster crows, you will deny** [knowing] **me three times.**<sup>@</sup> 35) Peter replied to Him, **Even if I have to die with you, still I will not deny** [knowing] **you.**<sup>@</sup> And all [the rest of] the disciples said the same thing.

36) Then Jesus came with His disciples to a place called Gethsemene. [Note: This was an olive orchard on a hillside just east of Jerusalem]. He said to them, **You sit here while I go over there and pray.**<sup>@</sup> 37) He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee [i.e., James

and John] **with Him, and [soon] began to be grieved and very distressed. 38) Then He said to them, AMy soul is extremely grieved, even to [the point where I could] die. Stay here and be alert with me [i.e., in prayer].@ 39) And He went on ahead a short distance and fell face-down and prayed, AMy Father, allow this cup [i.e., of suffering] to pass away from me if it is [at all] possible; nevertheless, let it not be what I want, but what You want [for me].@**

**40) And [when] He came [back] to where His disciples were and found them asleep, He said to Peter, AWhat [is this], could you not remain alert with me [in prayer] for one hour? 41) Be alert and pray, so that you do not give in to temptation; the spirit [of a person] is truly willing [i.e., to do a certain thing], but his physical nature is [often too] weak [to carry it out].@**

**42) He [then] went away a second time and prayed, AMy Father, if this [cup of suffering] cannot pass away unless I drink it [i.e., experience the suffering], [then] let what You want be done.@ 43) And He came [back] again and found them asleep, because they had not been able to keep their eyes open. 44) He left and went away from them again and prayed a third time, saying the same words again.**

**45) Then He came to His disciples and said to them, AGo ahead and sleep now, and get your rest. See, the time is near and the Son of man is [about to be] turned over into the hands of sinners. 46) Get up, let us be going. Look, the one who will turn me over [to the Jewish leaders] is nearby.@**

**47) And while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve apostles, came with a large crowd who were carrying swords and clubs. They had come from the leading priests and elders of the [Jewish] people. 48) Now the one who betrayed Him had given them a signal, saying, AWhoever I give a kiss [of greeting to], he is the one, take hold of him.@ 49) So, immediately he went to Jesus and said, AGreetings, Rabbi,@ and [then] kissed Him [enthusiastically]. 50) And Jesus said to him, A[My] friend, [go ahead], do what you came to do.@**

**Then the Jewish officers came and arrested Jesus and began taking Him away. 51) Just then, one of those who were with Jesus [i.e., Peter. See John 18:10], reached out with his sword and struck the head priest-s servant [with it], shearing off his ear. 52) Then Jesus said to him, APut your sword back in your belt again, for all those who use the sword will die by the sword. 53) Or, do you**

**think that I cannot appeal to my Father and He will immediately send me more than twelve legions of angels** [i.e., Jesus could have called about 72,000 angels to minister to Him. See Matt. 4:11]? **54) How [else] then should the Scriptures be fulfilled that this must happen** [than what is taking place]?@

**55) [Then] Jesus said to the crowds at that very time, AHave you come out to arrest me with swords and clubs as [you would apprehend] a thief? I sat everyday teaching in the Temple, and you did not [come to] take me. 56) But all this has happened so that the Scriptures of the prophets would be fulfilled.@ Then all of His disciples left Him and ran away.**

**57) And those who had arrested Jesus led Him away to the house of Caiaphas, the head priest, where the experts in the Law of Moses and the [Jewish] elders were gathered. 58) But Peter followed Him from a distance [as they were going] to the courtyard of the head priest. He went inside [i.e., eventually. See John 18:15-16] and sat down with the [Jewish] officers to see how things would turn out [i.e., with Jesus=trial].**

**59) Now the leading priests and the entire Council [called Athe Sanhedrin@] looked for false witnesses [to testify] against Jesus, in order to put Him to death. 60) But they did not find any [i.e., whose stories harmonized. See Mark 14:56], even though many false witnesses came [forward to testify]. Finally, two [false witnesses] came forward 61) and said, AThis man [i.e., Jesus] said, >I can destroy the Temple of God, and [then] rebuild it within three days.-@**

**62) The head priest stood up and said to Him, AHave you nothing to answer? What about this charge being made against you by these people?@ 63) But Jesus did not say anything. So, the head priest said to Him, AI command you [to swear] by the living God, [and] to tell us if you are the Christ [i.e., God's specially chosen one], the Son of God!@ 64) Jesus replied to him, AYou have said so; nevertheless I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of man sitting at the right side of Power [i.e., God Himself], and coming on the clouds of the sky.@**

**65) Then the head priest tore at his clothing [i.e., as an expression of frustration], saying, AHe has spoken against God [i.e., by claiming Deity for Himself]. What additional need do we have for witnesses? Look, you [yourselves] have now heard him speaking against God. 66) What do you people think [i.e., about such statements]?@ They answered, AHe deserves to die.@**

**67) Then they spit in His face and hit Him** [with their fists], **while others slapped Him** [in the face], **68) saying, AProphecy to us, you >Christ.= Tell us who hit you?@** [Note: By this time Jesus had been blindfolded. See Mark 14:65].

**69) Now Peter was sitting outside in a courtyard and a servant-girl approached him and said, AYou also were with Jesus, the Galilean.@ 70) But he denied [it] in front of all of them, saying, AI do not know what you are talking about.@**

**71) And when he had gone out by the gate, another servant-girl saw him and said to those nearby, AThis man also was with Jesus of Nazareth.@ 72) And he denied [it] again, [this time] with an oath, saying, AI do not [even] know the man.@**

**73) And a little later, those standing nearby came to Peter and said, A[We know] for sure, you also are one of them [i.e., Jesus=disciples], because your accent gives you away.@ 74) Then Peter began to curse and swear, A[I tell you], I do not know the man.@ And immediately a rooster crowed. 75) Then Peter remembered the words Jesus had said, ABefore the rooster crows, you will deny [knowing] me three times.@ And he went out and cried bitterly.**

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

**1) Now when morning came, all the leading priests and the elders of the [Jewish] people conferred together against Jesus as to how they might put Him to death. 2) So, they chained Him, led Him away and turned Him over to Pilate, the [Roman] governor.**

**3) Then Judas, who had betrayed Him [to the Jewish leaders], when he saw that Jesus had been condemned to die, changed his mind [i.e., about betraying Him] and brought back the thirty silver coins [Note: See Matt. 26:15 for the amount of money involved] to the leading priests and [Jewish] elders, 4) saying, AI have sinned by delivering up an innocent man to die.@ But they replied, AWhat is that to us? It is your affair!@ 5) And he threw down the thirty silver coins in the Sanctuary [i.e., probably the outer area of the Temple], then left and went out and hanged himself. 6) The leading priests took the silver coins and said, AIt is not permissible by the Law of Moses to put this money in the Temple treasury, since it is the price [paid] for [taking] a life. 7) So, they conferred together [and decided] to buy AThe Potter=s Field@ with**

**the money** [Note: This was probably an abandoned field where clay had been obtained for making pottery], **for use in burying people who were not from the local area.** 8) **So, that field is called, AThe Field of Blood@ to this day.** 9) [Thus the prophecy] **spoken by Jeremiah, the prophet** [Note: The passage actually appears to be Zech. 11:12-13], **was fulfilled which said, AAnd they took the thirty silver coins, the amount charged for Him on whom certain Israelites had set a price,** 10) **and gave the money for >The Potter-s Field,= as the Lord directed me.@**

11) **Now Jesus stood in front of the governor** [i.e., Pilate], **who asked Him, AAre you the king of the Jews?@** Jesus answered him, **AYou have said so.@** 12) **When He was accused by the leading priests and the [Jewish] elders, He made no reply.** 13) **Pilate then said to Him, ADo you not hear how many charges the witnesses are bringing against you?@** 14) **But He [again] made no reply, not even to a single charge, which caused the governor to be greatly amazed.**

15) **Now at the [Passover] Festival, the governor was accustomed to releasing whatever prisoner the crowd wanted.** 16) **There was at that time in custody a notorious prisoner named Barabbas.** 17) **Therefore, when the people had gathered together, Pilate asked them, AWhom do you want me to release, Barabbas or Jesus, who is called >Christ?@** 18) **For he knew that the reason they had turned Jesus over to him was out of envy.** 19) **Then while Pilate was seated in his courtroom of justice, his wife sent [word] to him, saying, AYou should have nothing to do with that innocent man. For I was very troubled in a dream over him today.@** [Note: That is, she was troubled over a dream she had before waking up that morning]. 20) **Now the leading priests and [Jewish] elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas [to be released] and for Jesus to be killed.** 21) **But the governor asked them, AWhich one of these two men do you want me to release to you?@** And they answered, **ABarabbas.@** 22) **Pilate replied, AThen what should I do to Jesus, who is called >Christ?@** They all shouted, **ALet him be crucified!@** 23) **And he said, AWhy [should he be]? What wrong has he done?@** But they shouted out even louder, **ALet him be crucified!@**

24) **So, when Pilate saw that he was not convincing anyone, but that a riot was brewing instead, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd saying, AI am not responsible for this man-s blood.** [Note: Some ancient manuscripts say Arighteous man-s blood@]. **You tend to the matter.@** 25) **And all the people answered,**

**Let his blood be on our hands, and on our children's [as well].** 26) **Then he released Barabbas to them, but he had Jesus flogged and then turned over to be crucified.**

27) **Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus to Pilate's headquarters and assembled the entire company [i.e., about 500 men] in front of Him.** 28) **They stripped off His clothing and placed a scarlet robe on Him** [Note: Mark 15:17 calls this a purple robe because in that day, any color with a mixture of red in it was often called purple, so the use of scarlet was appropriate]. 29) **Then they made a wreath out of thorns and placed it on His head and put a stick in His right hand. They knelt down in front of Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hey, king of the Jews!"** 30) **And they spat on Him and took the stick and beat Him on the head with it.** 31) **And after mocking Him [some more], they removed the [scarlet] robe and put His own clothes back on Him. Then they led Him away to crucify Him.**

32) **As they were leaving [i.e., probably the city of Jerusalem], they met a man from Cyrene** [Note: This was a city in the northern African country of Libya]. **His name was Simon and they forced him to go with them so he could carry Jesus' cross** [i.e., probably only the cross-beam portion].

33) **And when they had come to the place called Golgotha, which means "the place of a skull" [i.e., probably because it was a skull-shaped knoll in appearance],** 34) **they offered Jesus wine mixed with a bitter drug** [i.e., for the purpose of dulling the pain of crucifixion. Mark 15:23 calls it myrror], **but when He tasted it He refused to drink it.** 35) **And after they had crucified Him, the soldiers divided His clothing among themselves by gambling for them.** 36) **Then they just sat there and watched Him [die].** 37) **They attached over His head [i.e., to the upright portion of the cross] the charge made against Him, which read, "This is Jesus, the king of the Jews."** 38) **They [also] crucified two thieves with Him, one at His right side and one at His left.** 39) **And those who passed by [the cross] shouted abuse at Him and shook their heads [in derision],** 40) **saying, "You who [said you] would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself [from dying]; if you [really] are the Son of God, come down from the cross."** 41) **In the same way the leading priests, experts in the Law of Moses and [Jewish] elders also mocked Him, saying,** 42) **"He saved other people, [but] he cannot [even] save himself [i.e., from dying]. He is >the king of Israel;= let**

him now come down from the cross and then we will believe in him. 43) He trusted in God; now let God deliver him, if He wants [to save him from dying], for he said, >I am the Son of God.-@ 44) And the thieves who were crucified with Him also heaped the same abuse on Him.

45) Now from noon until three o'clock in the afternoon there was darkness over all the land. 46) Then about three in the afternoon Jesus called out in a loud voice, saying, *Eli, Eli, lama, sabachthani?* [Note: These words were spoken in the commonly used Aramaic language], which mean, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? 47) And when some of those standing there heard this, they said, ^This man is calling for Elijah.@ 48) And immediately one of them ran and got a sponge, soaked it in sour wine and, attaching it to a stick, [lifted it up] and offered Jesus a drink. 49) But the rest of them said, ^Let him alone; let us see if Elijah [really] comes to save him.@

50) Then Jesus called out again with a loud voice and [finally] gave up His spirit [to God. See Luke 23:46]. 51) Just then the Temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom, the ground shook, and rocks were split open. 52) Graves opened up and the bodies of many dead saints [i.e., God's holy people] were raised up [from the dead]. 53) They came out of their graves after Jesus-resurrection and entered the holy city [i.e., Jerusalem] where they appeared to many people.

54) Now when the military man in charge, and those with him who were watching Jesus, saw [and felt] the earthquake and the [other] things that happened, they became extremely fearful, saying, ^Truly this was the Son of God.@

55) And many women, who had followed Jesus from Galilee and had ministered to His needs, were watching [all this] from a distance. 56) Among them were Mary from Magdala; Mary, the mother of James and Joseph [i.e., probably the wife of Clopas. See John 19:25]; and the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee [i.e., Salome. Mark 15:40].

57) And when evening had come, a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who was also one of Jesus= disciples, 58) went to [governor] Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. So, Pilate ordered that it be given to him. 59) Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth 60) and placed it in his own newly prepared grave, which he had cut out of [a ledge of] rock. Then he

[had] a huge stone rolled across the entrance of the grave and went away. 61) Mary from Magdala and the other Mary [i.e., probably Jesus=mother. See verse 56], stood near the grave site.

62) Now on the following day, which was the day after the Preparation [for the Passover Festival], the leading priests and Pharisees assembled in front of Pilate 63) and said, ASir, we remember what that deceiver said while he was still alive: >I will rise [from the dead] after three days.= 64) Therefore, give the order to secure the grave site until the third day, so his disciples will not steal his body and then tell the people >He has risen from the dead.= This last deception would be worse than the first one [i.e., the claim that Jesus rose from the dead would be worse than the claim that he was the Messiah].@ 65) Pilate said to them, ATake [a group of] guards [with you]; go and make the grave site as secure as you can.@ 66) So, they went and secured the grave site, placing a [wax] seal on the stone, while the guards watched.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

1) Now as the Sabbath day ended and the first day of the week [i.e., Sunday] approached [Note: See Mark 16:1-2 for the exact timing], Mary from Magdala and the other Mary [i.e., Jesus=mother. See Matt. 27:56] went to look at the grave site.

2) Now there had been a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord had descended from heaven and, [having] come to roll away the stone, was [now] sitting on it. 3) He appeared as [brilliant] lightning and his clothing was white as snow. 4) And the guards shook with fear at seeing him, and became as dead men. 5) The angel said to the women; ADo not be afraid, for I know you are looking for Jesus, who has been crucified. 6) He is not here, for He has risen just as He said [He would]. Come and see the place where the Lord had been lying, 7) then go quickly and tell His disciples, >He has risen from the dead and is [now] going on ahead of you into Galilee. You will see Him there.= Now [that is all] I have to tell you.@ 8) So, they left the grave site quickly, with fear and great joy, and ran to give the message to His disciples. 9) Suddenly Jesus met them and gave them greetings. They approached Him and took hold of His feet [and knelt] to worship Him. 10) Then Jesus said to them,

**ADo not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers** [i.e., the disciples, that you have seen me], **so they can head for Galilee where they will see me.**@

**11) Now while these women were on their way, some of the guards entered the city and began telling the leading priests everything that had happened. 12) And when they had assembled with the [Jewish] elders and conferred with them, they offered large sums of money to the soldiers, 13) saying, AWe want you to say, >Jesus= disciples came at night and stole his body while we were asleep.= 14) And if the governor hears about this [plot], we will persuade him** [i.e., not to punish you for negligence], **so you will not have to worry about that.**@ **15) So, they took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story** [i.e., that Jesus=body had been stolen by His disciples] **was told widely among the Jews, and continues to be told to this day.**

**16) But the eleven disciples** [i.e., apostles] **went to the mountain in Galilee where Jesus had ordered them to go. 17) And when they met Him** [there], **they [knelt down] to worship Him; but some [still] had doubts** [i.e., about His resurrection. See John 20:25]. **18) Then Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, AI have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19) So, as you go, make disciples out of people from all the nations, then immerse believers** [See Mark 16:15-16] **into the name of** [i.e., to enter a relationship with] **the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20) [Then] go on teaching them** [i.e., these new converts] **to obey everything I have commanded you and my presence will be with you always, even to the end of the age.**