

Key Point Bible

Christian New Testament Made Easy

Read the *Key Point Bible* to increase your comprehension of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in far less time than it takes to read the full Bible. The enclosed summaries simplify and clarify the most important points emphasized by the authors of the 27 New Testament books.

Contact us at info@economicprayers.com with questions & comments

Table of Contents

<u>Matthew</u>	Gospel written for a Jewish audience.	1 - 16
<u>Mark</u>	Gospel written by a disciple of Peter.	17 - 27
<u>Luke</u>	Gospel written by Greek doctor Luke for the most excellent Theophilus.	28 - 46
<u>John</u>	Gospel testifying that Jesus came in the flesh.	47 - 59
<u>Acts</u>	Luke's historical account of early Church miracles & evangelism.	60 - 77
<u>Romans</u>	Salvation by faith in Jesus rather than by following the Jewish law.	78 - 84
<u>1 Corinthians</u>	Paul urges the gifted Corinthians to replace worldliness with love.	85 - 91
<u>2 Corinthians</u>	Paul asserts his credentials & urges the church to donate.	92 - 96
<u>Galatians</u>	Paul reinforces salvation by the Spirit as opposed to following laws.	97 - 98
<u>Ephesians</u>	God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms.	99 - 102
<u>Philippians</u>	Great instructions on achieving peace of mind & heart.	104 - 105
<u>Colossians</u>	Paul explains that Jesus is God.	106 - 108
<u>1 Thessalonians</u>	Paul encourages the Church to love one another.	109 - 111
<u>2 Thessalonians</u>	While Jesus will return, we are better off focusing on building our faith.	112
<u>1 Timothy</u>	Paul's advice to the young Bishop of Ephesus.	113 - 115
<u>2 Timothy</u>	Timothy should avoid fear & follow Paul's example of preaching boldly.	116 - 117
<u>Titus</u>	Some instructions to church leaders.	118
<u>Philemon</u>	Paul follows Jesus' example by offering to pay to free a slave.	119
<u>Hebrews</u>	The Christian new covenant is administered by Jesus our High Priest.	120 - 127
<u>James</u>	Guard your tongue & prove your faith with accompanying works.	128 - 129
<u>1 Peter</u>	We are a chosen people, royal priests & a holy nation.	130 - 132
<u>2 Peter</u>	Guard against false teachers while God gives the ungodly time to repent.	133 - 134
<u>1 John</u>	Our Father loves us, for he calls us his children.	135 - 137
<u>2 John</u>	The truth which lives in us will guard us against deceivers.	137
<u>3 John</u>	John instructs his flock to provide support to the traveling teachers.	137
<u>Jude</u>	Jude urges us to defend the faith that God entrusted to his holy people.	138
<u>Revelation</u>	Augustine believed the Millennium started with Christ.	139 - 141
<u>Nicene Creed</u>	Universally accepted & recognized statements of the Christian faith.	142
<u>Apostles' Creed</u>	Baptismal creed used in the church during the 6 th & 7 th centuries.	143

Matthew 1 - Gospel written for a Jewish audience.

This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. Joseph, son of David, the angel said, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet: look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.' When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife.

Matthew writes for a Jewish audience.

This is how Jesus the Messiah was born.

Matthew 2

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.

About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we came to worship him. The star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother, the angel said. Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him. That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, and they stayed there until Herod's death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: I called my Son out of Egypt.

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. Get up! the angel said. Take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead. So, Joseph got up and returned to the land of Israel with Jesus and his mother. But when he learned that the new ruler of Judea was Herod's son Archelaus, he was afraid to go there. Then, after being warned in a dream, he left for the region of Galilee. So, the family went and lived in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said: he will be called a Nazarene.

Though Jesus was born King of the Universe, God had to direct his earthly father (Joseph) how to protect Him from attack.

The wise men were more than a sign, they provided material help to fund Jesus' protection.

Matthew 3

In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and began preaching. His message was, repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near. The prophet Isaiah was speaking about John when he said, he is a voice shouting in the wilderness, ‘prepare the way for the Lord’s coming! Clear the road for him!’ People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River. Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God.

I baptize with water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. But John tried to talk him out of it. I am the one who needs to be baptized by you, he said, so why are you coming to me? But Jesus said, it should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires. So, John agreed to baptize him. After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. And a voice from heaven said, this is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.

Matthew 4

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. The devil came and said to him, if you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread. Jesus told him, no! The Scriptures say, ‘people do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, if you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, he will order his angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands, so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone.’ Jesus responded, the Scriptures also say, ‘you must not test the Lord your God.’ Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. I will give it all to you, he said, if you will kneel down and worship me. Get out of here, Satan, Jesus told him. For the Scriptures say, ‘you must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.’ Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.

From then on Jesus began to preach, repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near. One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. Jesus called out to them, come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people! And they left their nets at once and followed him. A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too. They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind. Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. News about him spread as far as Syria, and people soon began bringing to him all who were sick. And whatever their sickness or disease, or if they were demon possessed or epileptic or paralyzed—he healed them all. Large crowds followed him wherever he went—people

John the Baptist starts things rolling for Jesus & baptizes Him. This is when Jesus is anointed with the Holy Spirit in preparation for His earthly ministry.

Jesus overcomes the devil’s temptations (shortcuts, foolishness & pride). Next, He begins His ministry preaching about repentance & the Kingdom of God, freely providing HEALING for body & mind!

Jesus starts to build His team.

from Galilee, the Ten Towns, Jerusalem, from all over Judea, and from east of the Jordan River.

Matthew 5

God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted. God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth. God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied. God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy. God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God. God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God. God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

Be happy! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

Editor's Note: avoid anger, adultery, divorce & revenge. But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike.

Matthew 6

When you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you.

Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money. That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?

Jesus came to bless hurting people! He also asks us to be as holy as we can be. There is a good reason for this as holiness helps advance His Kingdom & provides eternal rewards while helping us get prayers answered.

Generosity, especially to the poor, is a hallmark of Christianity.

We don't have to worry about running out of money, God will provide as we seek first the Kingdom of God.

Don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

Matthew 7

First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye. Don't waste what is holy on people who are unholy. Don't throw your pearls to pigs! They will trample the pearls, then turn and attack you.

Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. If you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.

Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets. A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.

Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse because it is built on bedrock.

Matthew 8

Suddenly, a man with leprosy approached him and knelt before him. Lord, the man said, if you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean. Jesus reached out and touched him. I am willing, he said. Be healed! And instantly the leprosy disappeared.

A Roman officer came and pleaded with him, Lord, my young servant lies in bed, paralyzed and in terrible pain. Jesus said, I will come and heal him. But the officer said, Lord, I am not worthy to have you come into my home. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed. I know this because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, 'go,' and they go, or 'come,' and they come. And if I say to my slaves, 'do this,' they do it. When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Turning to those who were following him, he said, I tell you the truth, I haven't seen faith like this in all Israel! Then Jesus said to the Roman officer, go back home. Because you believed, it has happened. And the young servant was healed that same hour.

When Jesus arrived at Peter's house, Peter's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever. But when Jesus touched her hand, the fever left her. Then she got up and prepared a meal for him. That evening many demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus. He cast out the evil spirits with a simple command, and he healed all the sick. This fulfilled the word of the Lord through the prophet Isaiah, who said, he took our sicknesses and removed our diseases.

More teaching on morality & prayer. Deal with your own sins before correcting a brother & practice the Golden Rule.

Be persistent in prayer & never give up. God will eventually answer you with what's best for you.

Great chapter showing that Jesus is fully willing & able to heal if we have the faith to ask & persevere in our asking.

The apostles also learn that Jesus can heal storms & natural disasters.

The disciples may not have known that Jesus could still the waves, but

Jesus got into the boat and started across the lake with his disciples. Suddenly, a fierce storm struck the lake, with waves breaking into the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him up, shouting, Lord, save us! We're going to drown! Jesus responded, why are you afraid? You have so little faith! Then he got up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly there was a great calm. The disciples were amazed. Who is this man? they asked. Even the winds and waves obey him! Editor's Note: Jesus & disciples were attacked during their travels to set free demon-possessed men on the other side of the Lake (casting the devils into a herd of pigs that throw themselves into the sea).

they should have known the boat wasn't going down with Jesus on board.

Matthew 9

Some people brought to him a paralyzed man on a mat. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, Be encouraged, my child! Your sins are forgiven. Is it easier to say 'your sins are forgiven,' or 'stand up and walk'? I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins. Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, stand up, pick up your mat, and go home! And the man jumped up and went home!

It is important to understand the incredible power Jesus exercised over sin, sickness, blindness, demonic oppression and death.

Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, why does your teacher eat with such scum? When Jesus heard this, he said, healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. Then he added, now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.' For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.

We have a part to play in Jesus' miracles & we must mix our faith with His power to receive answers to our prayers. This represents a new wineskin of thinking for us.

Who would patch old clothing with new cloth? For the new patch would shrink and rip away from the old cloth, leaving an even bigger tear than before. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the old skins would burst from the pressure, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. New wine is stored in new wineskins so that both are preserved.

A woman who had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding came up behind Jesus. She touched the fringe of his robe, for she thought, if I can just touch his robe, I will be healed. Jesus turned around, and when he saw her he said, daughter, be encouraged! Your faith has made you well. And the woman was healed at that moment.

We are instructed to pray that the Lord will send more workers into His fields.

The leader of a synagogue came and knelt before Jesus. My daughter has just died, he said, but you can bring her back to life again if you just come and lay your hand on her. When Jesus arrived at the official's home, he saw the noisy crowd and heard the funeral music. Get out! he told them. The girl isn't dead; she's only asleep. But the crowd laughed at him. After the crowd was put outside, however, Jesus went in and took the girl by the hand, and she stood up! The report of this miracle swept through the entire countryside.

After Jesus left the girl's home, two blind men followed along behind him, shouting, Son of David, have mercy on us! They went right into the house where he was staying, and Jesus asked them, Do you believe I can make you see? Yes, Lord, they told him, we do. Then he touched their eyes and said, because of your faith, it will happen.

Jesus cast out the demon, and then the mute man began to speak. The crowds were amazed. Nothing like this has ever happened in Israel! they exclaimed.

Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He said to his disciples, the harvest is great, but the workers are few. So, pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.

Matthew 10

Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them authority to cast out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and illness. Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is near. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received! Look, I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. So be as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves. It is not you who will be speaking—it will be the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

But don't be afraid of those who threaten you. For the time is coming when everything that is covered will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all. What I tell you now in the darkness, shout abroad when daybreak comes. What I whisper in your ear, shout from the housetops for all to hear!

Not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows. Everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But everyone who denies me here on earth, I will also deny before my Father in heaven.

If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it. Anyone who receives you receives me, and anyone who receives me receives the Father who sent me.

Matthew 11

Jesus told them, go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen— the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor. I tell you the truth, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he is! My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Then Jesus said, come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.

Jesus gives us His power & authority so we can expand the Kingdom of God by spreading the Gospel.

While there is a personal cost to us in advancing His Kingdom, God will protect us.

Even John the Baptist struggled with doubting Jesus as he was suffering in jail. We must focus on His miracles to overcome doubt.

Matthew 12

I tell you, there is one here who is even greater than the Temple! But you would not have condemned my innocent disciples if you knew the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.' For the Son of Man is Lord, even over the Sabbath! Yes, the law permits a person to do good on the Sabbath. Then he said to the man, hold out your hand. So, the man held out his hand, and it was restored, just like the other one!

Jesus knew what they were planning. So, he left that area, and many people followed him. He healed all the sick among them. This fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah concerning him: look at my Servant, whom I have chosen. He is my Beloved, who pleases me. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not fight or shout or raise his voice in public. He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle. Finally, he will cause justice to be victorious. And his name will be the hope of all the world.

Then a demon-possessed man, who was blind and couldn't speak, was brought to Jesus. He healed the man so that he could both speak and see. The crowd was amazed and asked, could it be that Jesus is the Son of David, the Messiah? Jesus knew that they thought He cast out the devil by Satan's power and replied, any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed. A town or family splintered by feuding will fall apart. But if I am casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you. For who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man and plunder his goods? Only someone even stronger—someone who could tie him up and then plunder his house. Anyone who isn't with me opposes me, and anyone who isn't working with me is actually working against me.

A tree is identified by its fruit. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad, its fruit will be bad. Whatever is in your heart determines what you say. A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart.

Jesus asked, who is my mother? Who are my brothers? Then he pointed to his disciples and said, look, these are my mother and brothers. Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!

Matthew 13

He told many stories in the form of parables, such as this one: listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds. As he scattered them across his field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them. Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn't have deep roots, they died. Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants. Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted! Blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message about the Kingdom and don't understand it. Then the evil one comes and snatches away the seed that was planted in their hearts. The seed on the rocky soil

Jesus is greater than religious traditions.

Jesus fulfills prophecy as the chosen servant.

The evil people are identified in this chapter by accusing Jesus of getting His power to cast out demons from Satan & Jesus responds that it is ridiculous to believe that He was freeing people from demonic oppression by anything other than God's power.

The parable about the farmer reveals the importance of the soil (man's heart) to produce an abundant harvest.

represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word. The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth, so no fruit is produced. The seed that fell on good soil represents those who truly hear and understand God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!

Here is another story Jesus told: the Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer (Son of Man) who planted good seed in his field. But that night as the workers slept, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat, then slipped away. When the crop began to grow and produce grain, the weeds also grew. The farmer's workers went to him and said, 'Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?' 'An enemy has done this!' the farmer exclaimed. 'Should we pull out the weeds?' they asked. 'No,' he replied, 'you'll uproot the wheat if you do, let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn.'

Here is another illustration Jesus used: the Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of garden plants; it grows into a tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches. Jesus also used this illustration: the Kingdom of Heaven is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field. Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it! Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a fishing net that was thrown into the water and caught fish of every kind. When the net was full, they dragged it up onto the shore, sat down, and sorted the good fish into crates, but threw the bad ones away.

Matthew 14

Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. That evening the disciples came to him and said, this is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves. But Jesus said, that isn't necessary—you feed them. But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish! they answered. Bring them here, he said. Then he told the people to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he gave the bread to the disciples, who distributed it to the people. They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers. About 5,000 men were fed that day, in addition to all the women and children! After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone. About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came towards his disciples in the boat by walking on the water. Jesus spoke to them at once. Don't be afraid, he said. Take courage. I am here! Then Peter called to him, Lord, if it's really you, tell me to

Many more parables are used to illustrate the Kingdom of God: a tiny mustard seed that becomes the largest plant; yeast that causes dough to rise; a treasure discovered in a field; a choice pearl; and a net that captures good fish to eat.

Jesus feeds 5,000 men & their families. Then He walks on water.

People flock to Him for healing & all receive what they seek.

come to you, walking on the water. Yes, come, Jesus said. So, Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. Save me, Lord! he shouted. Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. You have so little faith, Jesus said. Why did you doubt me? When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. Then the disciples worshiped him. You really are the Son of God! they exclaimed.

Peter walked on water! Just a few steps, but he proved the miraculous ability of Jesus followers.

When the people recognized Jesus, the news of his arrival spread quickly throughout the whole area, and soon people were bringing all their sick to be healed. They begged him to let the sick touch at least the fringe of his robe, and all who touched him were healed.

Matthew 15

It's not what goes into your mouth that defiles you; you are defiled by the words that come out of your mouth.

Jesus proves that his healings & blessings are for all people, even believing Canaanites.

Jesus said to the Canaanite woman, I was sent only to help God's lost sheep—the people of Israel. But she came and worshiped him, pleading again, Lord, help me! Jesus responded, it isn't right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs. She replied, that's true, Lord, but even dogs are allowed to eat the scraps that fall beneath their masters' table. Dear woman, Jesus said to her, your faith is great. Your request is granted. And her daughter was instantly healed.

Jesus heals a vast crowd & feeds 4,000 men & their families proving His infinite scale & power.

Jesus returned to the Sea of Galilee and climbed a hill and sat down. A vast crowd brought to him people who were lame, blind, crippled, those who couldn't speak, and many others. They laid them before Jesus, and he healed them all. The crowd was amazed! Those who hadn't been able to speak were talking, the crippled were made well, the lame were walking, and the blind could see again! And they praised the God of Israel.

Then Jesus called his disciples and told them, I feel sorry for these people. They have been here with me for three days, and they have nothing left to eat. I don't want to send them away hungry, or they will faint along the way. The disciples replied, where would we get enough food here in the wilderness for such a huge crowd? Jesus asked, how much bread do you have? They replied, seven loaves, and a few small fish. So, Jesus told all the people to sit down on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, thanked God for them, and broke them into pieces. He gave them to the disciples, who distributed the food to the crowd. They all ate as much as they wanted. Afterward, the disciples picked up seven large baskets of leftover food. There were 4,000 men who were fed that day, in addition to all the women and children.

Matthew 16

Jesus knew what they were saying, so he said, you have so little faith! Why are you arguing with each other about having no bread? Don't you understand even yet? Don't you remember the 5,000 I fed with five loaves, and the baskets of leftovers you picked up? Or the 4,000 I fed with seven loaves, and the large baskets of leftovers you picked up? So again I say, 'beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.' Then at last they understood that he wasn't speaking about the yeast in bread, but about the deceptive teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Jesus reminds that He can certainly feed the disciples since He was able to feed crowds

Then he asked them, but who do you say I am? Simon Peter answered, you are the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Jesus replied, you are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means ‘rock’), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.

numbering in the thousands.

Peter’s testimony that Jesus is the Messiah & Son of God represents the Church’s foundation.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, if any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in the glory of his Father and will judge all people according to their deeds. And I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom.

Matthew 17

Six days later Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, James and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone. As the men watched, Jesus’ appearance was transformed so that his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light. Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared and began talking with Jesus. As Peter spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, this is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy. Listen to him. Then Jesus came over and touched them. Get up, he said. Don’t be afraid. And when they looked up, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only Jesus.

Jesus provides a brief peak into God’s Kingdom.

Jesus teaches that certain healings can only come by overcoming doubt in prayer.

With enough faith, nothing is impossible.

Lord, have mercy on my son. He has seizures and suffers terribly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. So, I brought him to your disciples, but they couldn’t heal him. Bring the boy here to me. Then Jesus rebuked the demon in the boy, and it left him. From that moment the boy was well. Afterward the disciples asked Jesus privately, why couldn’t we cast out that demon? You don’t have enough faith, Jesus told them. I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, ‘move from here to there,’ and it would move. Nothing would be impossible.

What do you think, Peter? Do kings tax their own people or the people they have conquered? They tax the people they have conquered, Peter replied. Well, then, Jesus said, the citizens are free! However, we don’t want to offend them, so go down to the lake and throw in a line. Open the mouth of the first fish you catch, and you will find a large silver coin. Take it and pay the tax for both of us.

Matthew 18

So, anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. And anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf is welcoming me. Beware that you don’t look down on any of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels are always in the presence of my heavenly Father.

We have angelic protection.

While we must hold other

If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them wanders away, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others on the hills and go out to search for the one that is lost? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he will rejoice over it more than over the ninety-nine that didn't wander away! In the same way, it is not my heavenly Father's will that even one of these little ones should perish.

If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won't accept the church's decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.

Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times? No, not seven times, Jesus replied, but seventy times seven! Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt. But the man fell down before his master and begged him, 'please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.' Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt. Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?'

I tell you the truth, whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven. I also tell you this: if two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.

Matthew 19

Large crowds followed him there, and he healed their sick.

Haven't you read the Scriptures? Jesus replied. They record that from the beginning 'God made them male and female.' And he said, 'this explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together.

Jesus said, let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children. And he placed his hands on their heads and blessed them before he left.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, I tell you the truth, it is very hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. I'll say it again—it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God! The disciples were astounded. Then who in the world can be saved? they asked. Jesus looked at them intently and said, humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible. And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or property, for my sake, will receive a hundred times as much in

believers accountable for their sins, we also must forgive them when they repent.

We have the power to bind & loose on the earth. There is great power in the prayer of agreement.

Jesus is family oriented and pro-marriage and loves & blesses children.

The rich can't buy their way into the Kingdom. Only God can provide the rich & poor access into heaven (through active faith in Jesus).

return and will inherit eternal life. But many who are the greatest now will be least important then, and those who seem least important now will be the greatest then.

Matthew 20

For the Kingdom of Heaven is like the landowner who went out early one morning to hire workers for his vineyard. He agreed to pay the normal daily wage and sent them out to work. At nine o'clock in the morning he was passing through the marketplace and saw some people standing around doing nothing. So, he hired them, telling them he would pay them whatever was right at the end of the day. They went to work in the vineyard. At noon and again at three o'clock he did the same thing. At five o'clock that afternoon he was in town again and saw some more people standing around. He asked them, 'why haven't you been working today?' They replied, 'because no one hired us.' The landowner told them, 'then go out and join the others in my vineyard.' That evening he told the foreman to call the workers in and pay them, beginning with the last workers first. When those hired at five o'clock were paid, each received a full day's wage. When those hired first came to get their pay, they assumed they would receive more. But they, too, were paid a day's wage. When they received their pay, they protested to the owner, 'those people worked only one hour, and yet you've paid them just as much as you paid us who worked all day in the scorching heat.' He answered one of them, 'friend, I haven't been unfair! Didn't you agree to work all day for the usual wage? Take your money and go. I wanted to pay this last worker the same as you. Is it against the law for me to do what I want with my money? Should you be jealous because I am kind to others?'

Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Two blind men were sitting beside the road. When they heard that Jesus was coming that way, they began shouting, Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us! Be quiet! the crowd yelled at them. But they only shouted louder, Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us! When Jesus heard them, he stopped and called, what do you want me to do for you? Lord, they said, we want to see! Jesus felt sorry for them and touched their eyes. Instantly they could see! Then they followed him.

Matthew 21

Tell the people of Jerusalem, 'look, your King is coming to you. He is humble, riding on a donkey—riding on a donkey's colt.' Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting, Praise God for the Son of David! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise God in highest heaven!

The blind and the lame came to him in the Temple, and he healed them. They asked Jesus, do you hear what these children are saying? Yes, Jesus replied. Haven't you ever read the Scriptures? For they say, 'You have taught children and infants to give you praise.'

Better to be an unassuming servant so you won't be disappointed. Don't compare yourself & your rewards to others.

Our humble King cleansed the corrupt temple & cursed the fruitless nation of Israel. In the same way, we can cleanse our own world by speaking to the impeding

In the morning, as Jesus was returning to Jerusalem, he was hungry, and he noticed a fig tree beside the road. He went over to see if there were any figs, but there were only leaves. Then he said to it, may you never bear fruit again! And immediately the fig tree withered up. Then Jesus told them, I tell you the truth, if you have faith and don't doubt, you can do things like this and much more. You can even say to this mountain, 'may you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and it will happen. You can pray for anything, and if you have faith, you will receive it.

mountains in our lives, casting them into the sea!

Then Jesus asked them, didn't you ever read this in the Scriptures? 'the stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful to see.' I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation that will produce the proper fruit.

Matthew 22

The Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a king who prepared a great wedding feast for his son. When the banquet was ready, he sent his servants to notify those who were invited. But they all refused to come! So, he sent other servants to tell them, 'the feast has been prepared. The bulls and fattened cattle have been killed, and everything is ready. Come to the banquet!' And he said to his servants, 'the wedding feast is ready, and the guests I invited aren't worthy of the honor. Now go out to the street corners and invite everyone you see.' The servants brought in everyone they could find, good and bad alike, and the banquet hall was filled with guests. Many are called, but few are chosen.

Don't miss out on God's invitations!

Jesus' only commandments: 1) love the Lord your God with all your heart & soul; and 2) love others as yourself.

Here, show me the coin used for the tax. When they handed him a Roman coin, he asked, whose picture and title are stamped on it? Caesar's, they replied. Well, then, he said, give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God.

'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' So he is the God of the living, not the dead.

Jesus replied, 'you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'love your neighbor as yourself.' The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.

Matthew 23

The greatest among you must be a servant. But those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Jesus mourns over Israel's corruption. If only the nation had been humble enough to receive Him.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones God's messengers! How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings, but you wouldn't let me. And now, look, your house is abandoned and desolate. For I tell you this, you will never see me again until you say, 'blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!'

Matthew 24

As Jesus was leaving the Temple grounds, his disciples pointed out to him the various Temple buildings. But he responded, do you see all these buildings? I tell you the truth, they will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another! But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come. You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected. A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom the master can give the responsibility of managing his other household servants and feeding them. If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns.

Jesus prophecies about the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70AD, instructing His disciples to prepare.

Matthew 25

Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. The five who were foolish didn't take enough olive oil for their lamps, but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil. When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight they were roused by the shout, 'look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!' All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. Then the five foolish ones asked the others, 'please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.' But the others replied, 'we don't have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves.' But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked. Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, 'Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!' So, you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return.

Jesus expects us to prepare for His return, producing the fruit of good works according to our abilities while we wait. We must keep our lamps full of the Holy Spirit by reading the Bible & prayer so we will be ready for His return (either at His second coming or upon our death). The King of kings will grant us admittance into His Kingdom because we cared for His subjects.

He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone. He gave five bags of silver to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities. He then left on his trip. The servant who received the five bags of silver began to invest the money and earned five more. The servant with two bags of silver also went to work and earned two more. But the servant who received the one bag of silver dug a hole in the ground and hid the master's money. The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, 'Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.' The master was full of praise. 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!' The servant who had received the two bags of silver came forward and said, 'Master, you gave me two bags of silver to invest, and I have earned two more.' The master said, 'well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!' Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said, 'Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn't plant and gathering crops you didn't cultivate. I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.' Then he ordered, 'take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver. To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away.

Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’

Matthew 26

Meanwhile, Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon, a man who had previously had leprosy. While he was eating, a woman came in with a beautiful alabaster jar of expensive perfume and poured it over his head. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me. She has poured this perfume on me to prepare my body for burial. I tell you the truth, wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, this woman’s deed will be remembered and discussed.

As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, take this and eat it, for this is my body. And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them and said, each of you drink from it, for this is my blood, which confirms the covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many.

God will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered. But after I have been raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there. He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine. Jesus instructed His disciples, keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!

Don’t you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them instantly? But Jesus remained silent. Then the high priest said to him, I demand in the name of the living God—tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus replied, you have said it. And in the future you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God’s right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven.

Matthew 27

Now Jesus was standing before Pilate, the Roman governor. Are you the king of the Jews? the governor asked him. You have said it. Just then, as Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him this message: leave that innocent man alone. I suffered through a terrible nightmare about him last night.

So, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He ordered Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip, then turned him over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified. Some of the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into their headquarters and called out the entire regiment. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him. They wove thorn branches into a crown and put it on his head, and they placed a reed stick in his right hand as a scepter. Then they knelt before him in mockery and taunted, Hail! King of the Jews! And they spit on him and grabbed the stick and struck him on the head with it. When they were finally tired of mocking him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led him away to be crucified.

Jesus prepares Himself & His disciples for His sacrificial death on a cross.

Jesus introduces the Eucharist as a means of participating in our covenant with God after His departure.

Jesus prophecies to the high priest that He is the Messiah & that they will see His power during the forthcoming destruction of the temple.

Detailed description of Jesus’ crucifixion.

By Jesus’ stripes we were healed!

Crucifixion marked by miraculous signs.

After they had nailed him to the cross, the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice. Then they sat around and kept guard as he hung there. A sign was fastened above Jesus' head, announcing the charge against him. It read: This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. At about three o'clock, Jesus called out with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani? which means My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? Then Jesus shouted out again, and he released his spirit. At that moment the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, rocks split apart, and tombs opened. The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead. They left the cemetery after Jesus' resurrection, went into the holy city of Jerusalem, and appeared to many people. The Roman officer and the other soldiers at the crucifixion were terrified by the earthquake and all that had happened. They said, this man truly was the Son of God!

As evening approached, Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea who had become a follower of Jesus, went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. And Pilate issued an order to release it to him. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long sheet of clean linen cloth. He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and left.

Matthew 28

Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint. Then the angel spoke to the women. Don't be afraid! he said. I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying. And now, go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and he is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there. Remember what I have told you. The women ran quickly from the tomb. They were very frightened but also filled with great joy, and they rushed to give the disciples the angel's message. And as they went, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they ran to him, grasped his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, don't be afraid! Go tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there.

Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted! Jesus came and told his disciples, I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Jesus is risen from the dead!

The Great Commission: make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the Name of Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

Mark 1 - Gospel written by a disciple of Peter.

All of Judea, including all the people of Jerusalem, went out to see and hear John. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.

John announced: Someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I'm not even worthy to untie the straps of his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit!

One day Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. As Jesus came up out of the water, he saw the heavens splitting apart and the Holy Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice from heaven said, you are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy. The Spirit then compelled Jesus to go into the wilderness where he was tempted by Satan for forty days. He was out among the wild animals, and angels took care of him.

Jesus announced: The time promised by God has come at last! The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!

Jesus called out to them, come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people! And Simon and Peter left their nets at once and followed him.

The people were amazed at his teaching, for he taught with real authority—quite unlike the teachers of religious law.

Jesus reprimanded the demon. Be quiet! Come out of the man, he ordered. At that, the evil spirit screamed, threw the man into a convulsion, and then came out of him. Amazement gripped the audience, and they began to discuss what had happened. What sort of new teaching is this? they asked excitedly. It has such authority! Even evil spirits obey his orders!

Now Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever. They told Jesus about her right away. So he went to her bedside, took her by the hand, and helped her sit up. Then the fever left her, and she prepared a meal for them. That evening after sunset, many sick and demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus. The whole town gathered at the door to watch. So Jesus healed many people who were sick with various diseases, and he cast out many demons.

Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray. Jesus directed, we must go on to other towns as well, and I will preach to them, too. That is why I came. So, he traveled throughout the region of Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and casting out demons.

A man with leprosy came and knelt in front of Jesus, begging to be healed. If you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean, he said. Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched him. I am willing, he said. Be healed! Instantly the leprosy disappeared, and the man was healed.

As Mark was a disciple of Peter, this Gospel largely reflects Peter's theology.

Jesus is baptized, anointed with the Holy Spirit and preaches repentance & the arrival of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus demonstrates His authority over demons & disease. He is not just willing, but fully capable of even healing leprosy.

Mark 2

Four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. They couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above his head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, my child, your sins are forgiven.

Jesus knew immediately what they were thinking, so he asked them, why do you question this in your hearts? Is it easier to say to the paralyzed man 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk'? So, I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins. Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, stand up, pick up your mat, and go home! And the man jumped up, grabbed his mat, and walked out through the stunned onlookers. They were all amazed and praised God, exclaiming, we've never seen anything like this before!

As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at his tax collector's booth. Follow me and be my disciple, Jesus said to him. Levi got up and followed him.

Jesus told them, healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.

Who would patch old clothing with new cloth? For the new patch would shrink and rip away from the old cloth, leaving an even bigger tear than before. No one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the wine would burst the wineskins, and the wine and the skins would both be lost. New wine calls for new wineskins.

The Son of Man is Lord, even over the Sabbath!

Mark 3

Does the law permit good deeds on the Sabbath, or is it a day for doing evil? Is this a day to save life or to destroy it? But they wouldn't answer him. He looked around at his detractors angrily and was deeply saddened by their hard hearts. Then he said to the man, hold out your hand. The man held out his hand, and it was restored!

The news about his miracles had spread far and wide, and vast numbers of people came to see him. He had healed many people that day, so all the sick people eagerly pushed forward to touch him. And whenever those possessed by evil spirits caught sight of him, the spirits would throw them to the ground in front of him shrieking, you are the Son of God!

Then he appointed twelve of them and called them his apostles. They were to accompany him, and he would send them out to preach, giving them authority to cast out demons.

Jesus has authority to forgive sins & Jesus loves sinners.

Jesus instructs that we need a new way of thinking to accept the Kingdom of God.

Jesus has authority over religion & the Sabbath.

Jesus delegates His authority to His disciples.

Jesus is much stronger than satan & easily able to bind him & plunder his goods.

Jesus defines family in spiritual terms.

A kingdom divided by civil war will collapse. Similarly, a family splintered by feuding will fall apart. And if Satan is divided and fights against himself, how can he stand? He would never survive. Let me illustrate this further. Who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man and plunder his goods? Only someone even stronger—someone who could tie him up and then plunder his house.

Jesus replied, who is my mother? Who are my brothers? Then he looked at those around him and said, look, these are my mother and brothers. Anyone who does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.

Mark 4

Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they sprouted, grew, and produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted! Then he said, anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.

Jesus said to them, if you can't understand the meaning of this parable, how will you understand all the other parables? The farmer plants seed by taking God's word to others. The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message, only to have Satan come at once and take it away. The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word. The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced. And the seed that fell on good soil represents those who hear and accept God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!

Then Jesus asked them, would anyone light a lamp and then put it under a basket or under a bed? Of course not! A lamp is placed on a stand, where its light will shine. For everything that is hidden will eventually be brought into the open, and every secret will be brought to light. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.

Then he added, pay close attention to what you hear. The closer you listen, the more understanding you will be given—and you will receive even more. To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them.

Jesus also said, The Kingdom of God is like a farmer who scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, while he's asleep or awake, the seed sprouts and grows, but he does not understand how it happens. The earth produces the crops on its own. First a leaf blade pushes through, then the heads of wheat are formed, and finally the grain ripens. And as soon as the grain is ready, the farmer comes and harvests it with a sickle, for the harvest time has come.

The farmer sowing seed represents the most important parable. Fruitfulness is a function of soil quality (man's heart). The earth (soil) produces spiritual & physical growth all on its own.

All it takes is the smallest of seeds to produce a huge plant in God's Kingdom, providing blessings for the world (including unbelievers).

Jesus has authority over weather & storms (natural disasters).

Jesus said, how can I describe the Kingdom of God? What story should I use to illustrate it? It is like a mustard seed planted in the ground. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of all garden plants; it grows long branches, and birds can make nests in its shade.

When Jesus woke up in the back of the boat, he rebuked the wind and said to the waves, Silence! Be still! Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a great calm. Then he asked them, why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith? The disciples were absolutely terrified. Who is this man? they asked each other. Even the wind and waves obey him!

Mark 5

Jesus said to the spirit, come out of the man, you evil spirit. Jesus demanded, what is your name? And he replied, my name is Legion, because there are many of us inside this man. Then the evil spirits begged him again and again not to send them to some distant place. Send us into those pigs, the spirits begged. Let us enter them. Jesus gave them permission. The evil spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd of about 2,000 pigs plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water. The herdsmen fled to the nearby town and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. People rushed out to see what had happened. A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons. He was sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid. As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon possessed begged to go with him. But Jesus said, no, go home to your family, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been. So, the man started off to visit the Ten Towns of that region and began to proclaim the great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed at what he told them.

Then a leader of the local synagogue, whose name was Jairus, arrived. When he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet, pleading fervently with him. My little daughter is dying, he said. Please come and lay your hands on her; heal her so she can live. Jesus went with him, and all the people followed, crowding around him. A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding. She had suffered a great deal from many doctors, and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she had gotten worse. She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his robe. For she thought to herself, if I can just touch his robe, I will be healed. Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel in her body that she had been healed of her terrible condition. Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, who touched my robe? His disciples said to him, look at this crowd pressing around you. How can you ask, 'Who touched me?' But he kept on looking around to see who had done it. Then the frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her, came and fell to her knees in front of him and told him what she had done. And he said to her, daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over.

The disciples should have known that there was no way their boat was sinking with Jesus on board.

Jesus has authority over legions of demons. Jesus models how to focus on the big picture without being distracted by the details (the pigs).

The woman with an issue of blood is healed because of her strong faith.

Jesus has authority over death & restores life to the young girl. Jesus separated Himself from the fearful & naysayers before performing His miracle.

Jesus overheard Jairus' friends who told him that his daughter had died. Jesus instructed Jairus: Don't be afraid. Just have faith. When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw much commotion and weeping and wailing. He went inside and asked, why all this commotion and weeping? The child isn't dead; she's only asleep. Then Jesus stopped the crowd and wouldn't let anyone go with him except Peter, James, and John (the brother of James). Holding her hand, he said to her, Talitha koum, which means little girl, get up! And the girl, who was twelve years old, immediately stood up and walked around! They were overwhelmed and amazed.

Jesus speaks in other tongues to perform a miracle.

Mark 6

The next Sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. They asked, where did he get all this wisdom and the power to perform such miracles? Then Jesus told them, a prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown and among his relatives and his own family. And because of their unbelief, he couldn't do any miracles among them except to place his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Jesus' power is impeded by unbelief.

Jesus authorizes His disciples to use His power.

Then Jesus went from village to village, teaching the people. And he called his twelve disciples together and began sending them out two by two, giving them authority to cast out evil spirits. So, the disciples went out, telling everyone they met to repent of their sins and turn to God. And they cast out many demons and healed many sick people, anointing them with olive oil.

Jesus demonstrates His authority over lack & feeds 5,000 families. 12 left over baskets served as a reminder for each Apostle who had to carry them away.

Then Jesus said, let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile. He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat. So, they left by boat for a quiet place, where they could be alone. But many people recognized them and saw them leaving, and people from many towns ran ahead along the shore and got there ahead of them. Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So, he began teaching them many things.

Jesus demonstrates His authority over physics & walks on water.

Jesus instructed the disciples to feed the crowd. with what? they asked. We'd have to work for months to earn enough money to buy food for all these people! How much bread do you have? he asked. Go and find out. They came back and reported, we have five loaves of bread and two fish. Then Jesus told the disciples to have the people sit down in groups on the green grass. They sat down in groups of fifty or a hundred. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he kept giving the bread to the disciples so they could distribute it to the people. He also divided the fish for everyone to share. They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftover bread and fish. A total of 5,000 men and their families were fed.

Jesus is constantly warning His people not to be afraid because this impedes His power for miracles which

After telling everyone good-bye, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Late that night, the disciples were in their boat in the middle of the lake, and

Jesus was alone on land. He saw that they were in serious trouble, rowing hard and struggling against the wind and waves. About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. He intended to go past them, but when they saw him walking on the water, they cried out in terror, thinking he was a ghost. They were all terrified when they saw him. But Jesus spoke to them at once. Don't be afraid, he said. Take courage! I am here! Then he climbed into the boat, and the wind stopped. They were totally amazed, for they still didn't understand the significance of the miracle of the loaves. Their hearts were too hard to take it in.

is still at work today.

Wherever he went—in villages, cities, or the countryside—they brought the sick out to the marketplaces. They begged him to let the sick touch at least the fringe of his robe, and all who touched him were healed.

Mark 7

It's not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart. And then he added, it is what comes from inside that defiles you. For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts. All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you.

Jesus demonstrates authority over non-Jewish sinners by healing the humble pagan's daughter.

A woman who had heard about him came and fell at his feet. Her little girl was possessed by an evil spirit, and she begged him to cast out the demon from her daughter. Since she was a non-Jew, born in Syrian Phoenicia, Jesus told her, first I should feed the children—my own family, the Jews. It isn't right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs. She replied, that's true, Lord, but even the dogs under the table are allowed to eat the scraps from the children's plates. Good answer! he said. Now go home, for the demon has left your daughter. And when she arrived home, she found her little girl lying quietly in bed, and the demon was gone.

Jesus demonstrates authority over the deaf & mute.

A deaf man with a speech impediment was brought to him, and the people begged Jesus to lay his hands on the man to heal him. Jesus led him away from the crowd so they could be alone. He put his fingers into the man's ears. Then, spitting on his own fingers, he touched the man's tongue. Looking up to heaven, he sighed and said, Ephphatha, which means, be opened! Instantly the man could hear perfectly, and his tongue was freed so he could speak plainly!

Jesus speaks in other tongues to perform a miracle.

They were completely amazed and said again and again, everything he does is wonderful. He even makes the deaf to hear and gives speech to those who cannot speak.

Mark 8

I feel sorry for these people. They have been here with me for three days, and they have nothing left to eat. If I send them home hungry, they will faint along the way. For some of them have come a long distance. Jesus told all the people to sit down on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves, thanked God for them, and broke them into pieces. He gave them to his disciples, who distributed the bread to the crowd. A few small fish were found, too, so Jesus

Jesus feeds 4,000 families, demonstrating His compassion towards our physical needs.

also blessed these and told the disciples to distribute them. They ate as much as they wanted. Afterward, the disciples picked up seven large baskets of leftover food. There were about 4,000 men in the crowd that day, and Jesus sent them home after they had eaten.

When they arrived at Bethsaida, some people brought a blind man to Jesus, and they begged him to touch the man and heal him. Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. Then, spitting on the man's eyes, he laid his hands on him and asked, can you see anything now? The man looked around. Yes, he said, I see people, but I can't see them very clearly. They look like trees walking around. Then Jesus placed his hands on the man's eyes again, and his eyes were opened. His sight was completely restored, and he could see everything clearly.

Jesus and his disciples left Galilee and went up to the villages near Caesarea Philippi. As they were walking along, he asked them, who do people say I am? Well, they replied, some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the other prophets. Then he asked them, but who do you say I am? Peter replied, you are the Messiah.

Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, if any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Mark 9

Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone. As the men watched, Jesus' appearance was transformed, and his clothes became dazzling white, far whiter than any earthly bleach could ever make them. Then Elijah and Moses appeared and began talking with Jesus. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, this is my dearly loved Son. Listen to him.

One of the men in the crowd spoke up and said, Teacher, I brought my son so you could heal him. He is possessed by an evil spirit that won't let him talk. And whenever this spirit seizes him, it throws him violently to the ground. Then he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to cast out the evil spirit, but they couldn't do it. Jesus said to them, Bring the boy to me. The boy's father cried out: Have mercy on us and help us, if you can. What do you mean, 'If I can'? Jesus asked. Anything is possible if a person believes. The father instantly cried out, I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief! When Jesus saw that the crowd of onlookers was growing, he rebuked the evil spirit. Listen, you spirit that makes this boy unable to hear and speak, he said. I command you to come out of this child and never

Jesus demonstrates His authority over blindness. This account demonstrates that sometimes healings are a process.

Peter testifies by the Holy Spirit that Jesus is the Messiah.

Jesus encourages us to follow Him since there is no cost to compare with the benefit.

God testifies that Jesus is His Son.

Jesus counsels that doubt which impedes His miracles can be overcome if we at least believe enough to pray.

enter him again! Afterward, when Jesus was alone in the house with his disciples, they asked him, why couldn't we cast out that evil spirit? Jesus replied, this kind can be cast out only by prayer.

Jesus counsels us to follow His example of servant leadership.

He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else. Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not only me but also my Father who sent me.

Anyone who is not against us is for us.

Jesus said. No one who performs a miracle in my name will soon be able to speak evil of me. Anyone who is not against us is for us. If anyone gives you even a cup of water because you belong to the Messiah, I tell you the truth, that person will surely be rewarded.

Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? You must have the qualities of salt among yourselves and live in peace with each other.

Mark 10

God made them male and female from the beginning of creation. This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together.

Jesus is pro marriage, family & children.

Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it. Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.

Rich & poor both require God's saving power.

Looking at the rich man, Jesus felt genuine love for him. There is still one thing you haven't done, he told him. Go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me. The disciples were astounded. If it is so difficult to save the rich man, then who in the world can be saved? Jesus looked at them intently and said, humanly speaking, it is impossible. But not with God. Everything is possible with God. Then Peter began to speak up. We've given up everything to follow you, he said. Yes, Jesus replied, and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for my sake and for the Good News, will receive now in return a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property—along with persecution. And in the world to come that person will have eternal life. But many who are the greatest now will be least important then, and those who seem least important now will be the greatest then.

More teaching on servant leadership.

But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Then they reached Jericho, and as Jesus and his disciples left town, a large crowd followed him. A blind beggar named Bartimaeus (son of Timaeus) was sitting beside the road. When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus of Nazareth was nearby, he began to shout, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me! He shouted louder, Son of David, have mercy on me! When Jesus heard him, he stopped and said, tell him to come here. So, they called the blind man. Cheer up, they said. Come on, he's calling you! Bartimaeus threw aside his coat, jumped up, and came to Jesus. What do you want me to do for you? Jesus asked. My Rabbi, the blind man said, I want to see! And Jesus said to him, go, for your faith has healed you. Instantly the man could see, and he followed Jesus down the road.

Bartimaeus provides an example of someone with sufficient faith to ask Jesus for an otherwise impossible miracle.

Mark 11

Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it, and he sat on it. Many in the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others spread leafy branches they had cut in the fields. Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting, Praise God! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessings on the coming Kingdom of our ancestor David! Praise God in highest heaven!

Perhaps one of the most powerful chapters in the Bible on receiving answers to our prayers. We are instructed to speak to our problems without doubt in our hearts. What we believe is possible for God can be ours if we are quick to forgive.

The next morning as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. He noticed a fig tree in full leaf a little way off, so he went over to see if he could find any figs. But there were only leaves because it was too early in the season for fruit. Then Jesus said to the tree, May no one ever eat your fruit again! And the disciples heard him say it.

He said to them, the Scriptures declare, 'My Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations,' but you have turned it into a den of thieves. The next morning as they passed by the fig tree he had cursed, the disciples noticed it had withered from the roots up. Then Jesus said to the disciples, have faith in God. I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain, 'May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and it will happen. But you must really believe it will happen and have no doubt in your heart. I tell you, you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you've received it, it will be yours. But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too.

Mark 12

'The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful to see.'

Israel rejected Jesus the cornerstone.

Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay them, or shouldn't we? Jesus saw through their hypocrisy and said, why are you trying to trap me? Show me a Roman coin, and I'll tell you. When they handed it to him, he asked, whose picture and title are stamped on it? Caesar's, they replied. Well, then, Jesus said, give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God. His reply completely amazed them.

Jesus passes along only 2 commandments for us to follow: (1) love the Lord our God; and (2) love

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the God of the living, not the dead.

Jesus replied, the most important commandment is this: ‘The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these.

Jesus sat down near the collection box in the Temple and watched as the crowds dropped in their money. Many rich people put in large amounts. Then a poor widow came and dropped in two small coins. Jesus called his disciples to him and said, I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on.

Mark 13

When you are persecuted, just say what God tells you at that time, for it is not you who will be speaking, but the Holy Spirit. The one who endures to the end will be saved.

Everyone will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds with great power and glory. Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear. However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows. And since you don’t know when that time will come, be on guard! Stay alert! I say to you what I say to everyone: Watch for him!

Mark 14

Meanwhile, Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon, a man who had previously had leprosy. While he was eating, a woman came in with a beautiful alabaster jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard. She broke open the jar and poured the perfume over his head. But Jesus replied, Leave her alone. Why criticize her for doing such a good thing to me? You will always have the poor among you, and you can help them whenever you want to. But you will not always have me. She has done what she could and has anointed my body for burial ahead of time. I tell you the truth, wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, this woman’s deed will be remembered and discussed. As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, take it, for this is my body. And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And he said to them, this is my blood, which confirms the covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice for many.

Jesus prays in the garden of Gethsemane to prepare for His crucifixion: Abba, Father, he cried out in prayer, everything is possible for you. Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine. Then Jesus prayed the same prayer as before.

others as ourselves.

Jesus measures giving not by the amount, but by the sacrifice.

The key to eschatology: spend your whole life preparing for Jesus’ return (or our return to Him).

Jesus introduces the Eucharist in preparation for His departure from earth so we can remain in perpetual covenant with Him.

Jesus prays a prayer of consecration, committing Himself to completing God’s will at all costs.

The high priest asked him, Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One? Jesus said, I Am. And you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God's right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven.

Mark 15

Pilate asked Jesus, Are you the king of the Jews? Jesus replied, You said it.

After Jesus was nailed to the cross, Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. When the Roman officer who stood facing him saw how he had died, he exclaimed, this man truly was the Son of God! Joseph of Arimathea took a risk and went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. (Joseph was an honored member of the high council, and he was waiting for the Kingdom of God to come.) Joseph bought a long sheet of linen cloth. Then he took Jesus' body down from the cross, wrapped it in the cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone in front of the entrance. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where Jesus' body was laid.

Mark 16

When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a white robe sitting on the right side. The women were shocked, but the angel said, don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body. Now go and tell his disciples, including Peter, that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you before he died. The women fled from the tomb, trembling and bewildered, and they said nothing to anyone because they were too frightened.

Jesus told them, go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned. These miraculous signs will accompany those who believe: they will cast out demons in my name, and they will speak in new languages. They will be able to place their hands on the sick, and they will be healed. When the Lord Jesus had finished talking with them, he was taken up into heaven and sat down in the place of honor at God's right hand. And the disciples went everywhere and preached, and the Lord worked through them, confirming what they said by many miraculous signs.

The passion of the Christ.

The tearing of the curtain in the sanctuary signified that believers now have direct access to God.

Jesus is risen!

The Great Commission: preach & baptize. We disciples are endowed with God's miraculous power to accomplish our work.

Luke 1 - Gospel written by Greek doctor Luke for the most excellent Theophilus.

When Herod was king of Judea, there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. He was a member of the priestly order of Abijah, and his wife, Elizabeth, was also from the priestly line of Aaron. Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations. They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old. One day Zechariah was serving God in the Temple, for his order was on duty that week. As was the custom of the priests, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. While the incense was being burned, a great crowd stood outside, praying. While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar. Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him. But the angel said, don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly. Zechariah said to the angel, how can I be sure this will happen? I'm an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years. Then the angel said, I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of God. It was he who sent me to bring you this good news! But now, since you didn't believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled at the proper time. Soon afterward his wife, Elizabeth, became pregnant and went into seclusion for five months. How kind the Lord is! she exclaimed. He has taken away my disgrace of having no children.

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you! Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. Don't be afraid, Mary, the angel told her, for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end! Mary asked the angel, but how can this happen? I am a virgin. The angel replied, the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. For the word of God will never fail. Mary responded, I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true. And then the angel left her.

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

Luke, the medical doctor, is the only New Testament Bible author that is not Jewish. At the beginning of his letter, Luke states that he is writing an accurate account of Jesus' life for the most honorable Theophilus, perhaps a wealthy Greek. This could explain why there are so many teachings about money in Luke's Gospel.

Luke 1 provides a beautiful account of both the birth of John the Baptist (who prepares the way of the Lord) as well as Mary's Immaculate Conception. Mary provides a stark contrast to Zechariah (John's father) by believing Gabriel's message from God without questioning or doubt. This is

why the Scripture says that all generations will call Mary blessed.

Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me? When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said. Mary responded, oh, how my soul praises the Lord. How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior! For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One is holy, and he has done great things for me. He shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear him. His mighty arm has done tremendous things! He has scattered the proud and haughty ones. He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands. He has helped his servant Israel and remembered to be merciful. For he made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children forever.

When it was time for Elizabeth's baby to be born, she gave birth to a son. The baby's father motioned for a writing tablet, and to everyone's surprise he wrote, his name is John. Instantly Zechariah could speak again, and he began praising God. Awe fell upon the whole neighborhood, and the news of what had happened spread throughout the Judean hills. Everyone who heard about it reflected on these events and asked, what will this child turn out to be? For the hand of the Lord was surely upon him in a special way. Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave this prophecy: Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and redeemed his people. He has sent us a mighty Savior from the royal line of his servant David, just as he promised through his holy prophets long ago. Now we will be saved from our enemies and from all who hate us. He has been merciful to our ancestors by remembering his sacred covenant—the covenant he swore with an oath to our ancestor Abraham. We have been rescued from our enemies so we can serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness for as long as we live. And you, my little son, will be called the prophet of the Most High, because you will prepare the way for the Lord. You will tell his people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins. Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace. John grew up and became strong in spirit. And he lived in the wilderness until he began his public ministry to Israel.

Luke 2

The time came for Mary's baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them. That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. Don't be afraid! he said. I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger. Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased. When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, Let's go to

Beautiful rendition of the Christmas story. Our Savior is born!

Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about. They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them. Eight days later, when the baby was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel even before he was conceived.

At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So, when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people. He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel! Jesus' parents were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother, this child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul. Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was very old and never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer. She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem. When Jesus' parents had fulfilled all the requirements of the law of the Lord, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee. There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him.

When Jesus was twelve years old, they attended the festival as usual. After the celebration was over, they started home to Nazareth, but Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. Three days later they finally discovered him in the Temple, sitting among the religious teachers, listening to them and asking questions. All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. But why did you need to search? Didn't you know that I must be in my Father's house? Then he returned to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. And his mother stored all these things in her heart. Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people.

Luke 3

At this time a message from God came to John son of Zechariah, who was living in the wilderness. Then John went from place to place on both sides of the Jordan River, preaching that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. Isaiah had spoken of John when he said, he is a voice shouting in the wilderness, 'prepare the way for the Lord's coming! Clear the road for him! The valleys will be filled, and the mountains and hills made level. The curves will

John starts his ministry by baptizing repentant sinners & also baptizes Jesus at which time

be straightened, and the rough places made smooth. And then all people will see the salvation sent from God.'

John stated, I baptize you with water; but someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

One day when the crowds were being baptized, Jesus himself was baptized. As he was praying, the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit, in bodily form, descended on him like a dove. And a voice from heaven said, You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy.

Luke 4

Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where he was tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus ate nothing all that time and became very hungry. Then the devil said to him, if you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread. But Jesus told him, No! The Scriptures say, 'people do not live by bread alone.' Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them, the devil said, because they are mine to give to anyone I please. I will give it all to you if you will worship me. Jesus replied, the Scriptures say, 'you must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.' Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, if you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, 'he will order his angels to protect and guard you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.' Jesus responded, the Scriptures also say, 'you must not test the Lord your God.' When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity came.

Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power. Reports about him spread quickly through the whole region. He taught regularly in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home, he went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures. The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord's favor has come. The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day! Everyone spoke well of him and was amazed by the gracious words that came from his lips. How can this be? they asked. Isn't this Joseph's son? Jesus replied, I tell you the truth, no prophet is accepted in his own hometown.

The people were amazed at his teaching, for he spoke with authority. Once when he was in the synagogue, a man possessed by a demon—an evil spirit—cried out, shouting, go away! Why are you interfering with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God! But Jesus reprimanded him. Be quiet! Come out of the man, he ordered. At that, the demon threw the man to the floor as the crowd watched; then it came out of him without hurting him further. Amazed, the

Jesus is anointed with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is tempted by the devil – shortcuts, pride & stupidity.

Jesus fulfills Isaiah's prophecy from the Old Testament that the anointed one will preach the Good News (in all its forms) to the poor.

Jesus begins His ministry of healing & setting captives free from demonic oppression.

people exclaimed, What authority and power this man's words possess! Even evil spirits obey him, and they flee at his command!

The village brought sick family members to Jesus. No matter what their diseases were, the touch of his hand healed every one.

Jesus went to Simon's home, where he found Simon's mother-in-law very sick with a high fever. Please heal her, everyone begged. Standing at her bedside, he rebuked the fever, and it left her. And she got up at once and prepared a meal for them. As the sun went down that evening, people throughout the village brought sick family members to Jesus. No matter what their diseases were, the touch of his hand healed every one. Many were possessed by demons; and the demons came out at his command, shouting, you are the Son of God! But because they knew he was the Messiah, he rebuked them and refused to let them speak.

Luke 5

Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked Simon, its owner, to push it out into the water. So, he sat in the boat and taught the crowds from there. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish. Master, Simon replied, we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, I'll let the nets down again. And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear! Jesus replied to Simon, don't be afraid! From now on you'll be fishing for people! And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.

Jesus pays Peter with a huge catch of fish for the use of his boat.

A man bowed with his face to the ground, begging to be healed. Lord, he said, if you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean. Jesus reached out and touched him. I am willing, he said. Be healed! And instantly the leprosy disappeared.

Jesus reveals both His willingness & ability to heal leprosy.

Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a sleeping mat. They tried to take him inside to Jesus, but they couldn't reach him because of the crowd. So, they went up to the roof and took off some tiles. Then they lowered the sick man on his mat down into the crowd, right in front of Jesus. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the man, young man, your sins are forgiven. Is it easier to say 'your sins are forgiven,' or 'stand up and walk'? So, I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins. Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, stand up, pick up your mat, and go home! And immediately, as everyone watched, the man jumped up, picked up his mat, and went home praising God.

Jesus proves his authority to forgive sins by healing the invalid.

Jesus answered them, healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent.

Jesus has come for humble people who know they need a savior & who are capable of recognizing Him by thinking outside the box.

Then Jesus gave them this illustration: No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and uses it to patch an old garment. For then the new garment would be ruined, and the new patch wouldn't even match the old garment. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the new wine would burst the wineskins, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. New wine must be stored in new wineskins.

Luke 6

Jesus added, The Son of Man is Lord, even over the Sabbath. He said to the man with the deformed hand, come and stand in front of everyone. So, the man came forward. Then Jesus said to his critics, I have a question for you. Does the law permit good deeds on the Sabbath, or is it a day for doing evil? Is this a day to save life or to destroy it? He looked around at them one by one and then said to the man, hold out your hand. The man held out his hand, and it was restored!

They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those troubled by evil spirits were healed. Everyone tried to touch him, because healing power went out from him, and he healed everyone. Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said, God *blesses* you who are poor, for the Kingdom of God is yours. God *blesses* you who are hungry now, for you will be satisfied. God *blesses* you who weep now, for in due time you will laugh. What *blessings* await you when people hate you and exclude you and mock you and curse you as evil because you follow the Son of Man. When that happens, be happy! Yes, leap for joy! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, their ancestors treated the ancient prophets that same way.

But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. Do to others as you would like them to do to you. Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven. Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back. And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying, 'friend, let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye. A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. A tree is identified by its fruit. Figs are never gathered from thornbushes, and grapes are not picked from bramble bushes. A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart.

I will show you what it's like when someone comes to me, listens to my teaching, and then follows it. It is like a person building a house who digs deep and lays the foundation on solid rock. When the floodwaters rise and break against that house, it stands firm because it is well built. But anyone who hears and doesn't obey is like a person who builds a house right on the ground, without a foundation. When the floods sweep down against that house, it will collapse into a heap of ruins.

Jesus teaches us to be compassionate towards others in the same way that He is compassionate towards us.

Great blessings await us when we act with generosity, compassion & forgiveness. Our blessings will be pressed down, shaken together & running over.

Acting this way identifies us as Christians & provides a firm foundation for our lives that helps us to weather storms.

Luke 7

The highly valued slave of a Roman officer was sick and near death. When the officer heard about Jesus, he sent some respected Jewish elders to ask him to come and heal his slave. So, Jesus went with them. But just before they arrived at the house, the officer sent some friends to say, Lord, don't trouble yourself by coming to my home, for I am not worthy of such an honor. I am not even worthy to come and meet you. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed. I know this because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, 'go,' and they go, or 'come,' and they come. And if I say to my slaves, 'do this,' they do it. When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. I tell you, I haven't seen faith like this in all Israel! And when the officer's friends returned to his house, they found the slave completely healed.

The young man who had died was a widow's only son, and a large crowd from the village was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart overflowed with compassion. Don't cry! he said. Then he walked over to the coffin and touched it, and the bearers stopped. Young man, he said, I tell you, get up. Then the dead boy sat up and began to talk! And Jesus gave him back to his mother.

At that very time, Jesus cured many people of their diseases, illnesses, and evil spirits, and he restored sight to many who were blind. Then he told John the Baptist's disciples, go back to John and tell him what you have seen and heard—the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor. And he added, God blesses those who do not fall away because of me.

Simon, he said to the Pharisee, I have something to say to you. Go ahead, Teacher, Simon replied. Then Jesus told him this story: A man loaned money to two people—500 pieces of silver to one and 50 pieces to the other. But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, canceling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more after that? Simon answered, I suppose the one for whom he canceled the larger debt. That's right, Jesus said, a person who is forgiven little shows only little love.

Luke 8

A farmer went out to plant his seed. As he scattered it across his field, some seed fell on a footpath, where it was stepped on, and the birds ate it. Other seed fell among rocks. It began to grow, but the plant soon wilted and died for lack of moisture. Other seed fell among thorns that grew up with it and choked out the tender plants. Still other seed fell on fertile soil. This seed grew and produced a crop that was a hundred times as much as had been planted! This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is God's word. The seeds that fell on the footpath represent those who hear the message, only to have the devil come and take it away from their hearts and prevent them from believing and being saved. The seeds on the rocky soil represent those who hear the message and receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they believe for a while, then they fall away when they face temptation. The seeds that fell among the thorns represent those who hear the message, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. And so they never grow into maturity. And the seeds

The Roman officer's testimony demonstrates an understanding of Jesus' authority to such an extent that Jesus praised his faith as exceeding anything that existed in Israel.

Jesus raises the dead, heals all diseases & illnesses, destroys the devil's work and restores sight to the blind.

Good-hearted people hear God's word, cling to it, and patiently produce a huge harvest. Those who listen to Jesus' teaching will be given more understanding.

that fell on the good soil represent honest, good-hearted people who hear God's word, cling to it, and patiently produce a huge harvest.

No one lights a lamp and then covers it with a bowl or hides it under a bed. A lamp is placed on a stand, where its light can be seen by all who enter the house. Pay attention to how you hear. To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given.

Jesus replied, my mother & my brothers are all those who hear God's word & obey it.

As they sailed across, Jesus settled down for a nap. But soon a fierce storm came down on the lake. The boat was filling with water, and they were in real danger. The disciples went and woke him up, shouting, Master, Master, we're going to drown! When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and the raging waves. Suddenly the storm stopped and all was calm. The disciples were terrified and amazed. Who is this man? they asked each other. When he gives a command, even the wind and waves obey him!

A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been freed from the demons. He was sitting at Jesus' feet, fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid. Then those who had seen what happened told the others how the demon-possessed man had been healed. The man who had been freed from the demons begged to go with him. But Jesus sent him home, saying, no, go back to your family, and tell them everything God has done for you.

Then a man named Jairus, a leader of the local synagogue, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come home with him. His only daughter, who was about twelve years old, was dying. As Jesus went with him they received a report that the child died. Jesus said to Jairus, don't be afraid. Just have faith, and she will be healed. When they arrived at the house, Jesus wouldn't let anyone go in with him except Peter, John, James, and the little girl's father and mother. The house was filled with people weeping and wailing, but he said, stop the weeping! She isn't dead; she's only asleep. Then Jesus took her by the hand and said in a loud voice, my child, get up! And at that moment her life returned, and she immediately stood up!

A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding, and she could find no cure. Coming up behind Jesus, she touched the fringe of his robe. Immediately, the bleeding stopped. Daughter, he said to her, your faith has made you well. Go in peace.

Luke 9

One day Jesus called together his twelve disciples and gave them power and authority to cast out all demons and to heal all diseases. Then he sent them out to tell everyone about the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

The crowds found out where he was going, and they followed him. He welcomed them and taught them about the Kingdom of God, and he healed those who were sick.

Late in the afternoon the twelve disciples came to him and said, send the crowds away to the nearby villages and farms, so they can find food and lodging for the night. But

Jesus exercises authority over the weather & storms as He overcomes demonic opposition to free the man on the other side of the lake.

Jesus was able to work with Jairus' faith in the face of extremely bad news to restore life to his daughter.

The great faith of the woman with the issue of blood touched Jesus' healing power.

Jesus delegates his miracle working power to His disciples.

Jesus feeds 5,000 families.

Jesus said, you feed them. But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish, they answered. Or are you expecting us to go and buy enough food for this whole crowd? For there were about 5,000 men there. Jesus replied, tell them to sit down in groups of about fifty each. So, the people all sat down. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he kept giving the bread and fish to the disciples so they could distribute it to the people. They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers!

Peter replied, you are the Messiah sent from God!

Then he said to the crowd, if any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed?

Jesus took Peter, John, and James up on a mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was transformed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly, two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared and began talking with Jesus. They were glorious to see. And they were speaking about his exodus from this world, which was about to be fulfilled in Jerusalem. A voice from the cloud said, this is my Son, my Chosen One. Listen to him. When the voice finished, Jesus was there alone.

A man in the crowd called out to him, Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, my only child. An evil spirit keeps seizing him, making him scream. It throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It batters him and hardly ever leaves him alone. I begged your disciples to cast out the spirit, but they couldn't do it. Jesus said, Bring your son here. As the boy came forward, the demon knocked him to the ground and threw him into a violent convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit and healed the boy. Then he gave him back to his father.

Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me also welcomes my Father who sent me. Whoever is the least among you is the greatest.

Your duty is to go and preach about the Kingdom of God. Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God.

Luke 10

The Lord chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns and places he planned to visit. Now go and remember that I am sending you out as lambs among wolves. Heal the sick, and tell them, 'the Kingdom of God is near you now.' When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to him, Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name! Yes, he told them, I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning! Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you. But don't rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven.

Peter testifies that Jesus is the Messiah sent from God.

God the Father testifies that Jesus is His chosen one, His son.

Jesus covers for His disciples when their ability to cast out a demon is insufficient.

Jesus delegates His authority over demonic forces to the 72, showing that this delegation extends beyond the Apostles to all believers & this is still true.

My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Jesus is the only way to God the Father.

Jesus replied, what does the law of Moses say? How do you read it? The man answered, 'you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'love your neighbor as yourself.' Right! Jesus told him. Do this and you will live!

Our only commandments are to love the Lord our God and love others as ourselves.

Jesus replied with a story: A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits? Jesus asked. The man replied, the one who showed him mercy. Then Jesus said, yes, now go and do the same.

The good neighbor is the Samaritan who stops to help.

Jesus came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me. But the Lord said to her, my dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.

Sometimes it is better to quietly spend time with the Lord rather than get busy serving Him.

Luke 11

Jesus said, this is how you should pray: Father, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. Give us each day the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation. Then, teaching them more about prayer, he used this story: suppose you went to a friend's house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, 'a friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.' And suppose he calls out from his bedroom, 'don't bother me. The door is locked for the night, and my family and I are all in bed. I can't help you.' But I tell you this—though he won't do it for friendship's sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence. And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. You fathers—if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not!

The Lord's prayer.

Persistence in prayer produces results: ask, seek & knock.

Jesus is strong enough to bind demons.

God's light illuminates our mind and thoughts, leading us & guiding us so that we can help

One day Jesus cast out a demon from a man who couldn't speak, and when the demon was gone, the man began to speak. The crowds were amazed. He said, any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed. A family splintered by feuding will fall apart. But if I

am casting out demons by the power of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you. For when a strong man is fully armed and guards his palace, his possessions are safe—until someone even stronger attacks and overpowers him, strips him of his weapons, and carries off his belongings.

No one lights a lamp and then hides it or puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where its light can be seen by all who enter the house. Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. But when it is unhealthy, your body is filled with darkness. Make sure that the light you think you have is not actually darkness. If you are filled with light, with no dark corners, then your whole life will be radiant, as though a floodlight were filling you with light.

Luke 12

What is the price of five sparrows—two copper coins? Yet God does not forget a single one of them. And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows. I tell you the truth, everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, the Son of Man will also acknowledge in the presence of God's angels.

Then he said, beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own. Then he told them a story: A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. He said to himself, 'what should I do? I don't have room for all my crops.' Then he said, 'I know! I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I'll have room enough to store all my wheat and other goods. And I'll sit back and say to myself, my friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!' But God said to him, 'you fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?' Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.

Then, turning to his disciples, Jesus said, that is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food to eat or enough clothes to wear. For life is more than food, and your body more than clothing. Look at the ravens. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than any birds! Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? And if worry can't accomplish a little thing like that, what's the use of worrying over bigger things?

And don't be concerned about what to eat and what to drink. Don't worry about such things. These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers all over the world, but your Father already knows your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and he will give you everything you need. So don't be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom.

Be generous and store up treasure in heaven! And the purses of heaven never get old or develop holes. Your treasure will be safe; no thief can steal it and no moth can destroy it. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

light the way of others.

We don't have to be pre-occupied by life's necessities because God will take care of all our needs.

Use your wealth to honor God.

Seek first the Kingdom of God and He will give us all we need.

Don't stop working to build God's Kingdom. Keep at it until death or until the end of the world!

Be dressed for service and keep your lamps burning, as though you were waiting for your master to return from the wedding feast. The servants who are ready and waiting for his return will be rewarded.

Luke 13

The gardener answered, ‘Sir, give the fig tree one more chance. Leave it another year, and I’ll give it special attention and plenty of fertilizer. If we get figs next year, fine. If not, then you can cut it down.’

One Sabbath day as Jesus was teaching in a synagogue, he saw a woman who had been crippled by an evil spirit. She had been bent double for eighteen years and was unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, dear woman, you are healed of your sickness! Then he touched her, and instantly she could stand straight. How she praised God! This dear woman, a daughter of Abraham, has been held in bondage by Satan for eighteen years. Isn’t it right that she be released, even on the Sabbath?

Then Jesus said, what is the Kingdom of God like? How can I illustrate it? It is like a tiny mustard seed that a man planted in a garden; it grows and becomes a tree, and the birds make nests in its branches. He also asked, what else is the Kingdom of God like? It is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough.

Work hard to enter the narrow door to God’s Kingdom, for many will try to enter but will fail. And people will come from all over the world—from east and west, north and south—to take their places in the Kingdom of God. And note this: Some who seem least important now will be the greatest then, and some who are the greatest now will be least important then.

Luke 14

Jesus touched the sick man and healed him and sent him away on the sabbath day.

Take the lowest place at the foot of the table. Then when your host sees you, he will come and say, ‘friend, we have a better place for you!’ Then you will be honored in front of all the other guests. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. Then he turned to his host. When you put on a luncheon or a banquet, he said, don’t invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Then at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you.

If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. But don’t begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down with his counselors to discuss whether his army of 10,000

Jesus gives us plenty of time to bear fruit & even fertilizes our lives so we can succeed.

Jesus does not allow religious tradition (sabbaths) to stop him from setting people free.

God’s Kingdom grows like a seed or yeast.

Worldly status does not translate into Kingdom placement.

Jesus teaches us to keep humble in our social interactions.

We should know that sometimes our allegiance to Jesus can cost us relationships.

We must be salt of the earth (flavor & preservation) as we represent Jesus.

could defeat the 20,000 soldiers marching against him? And if he can't, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace while the enemy is still far away.

Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? Flavorless salt is good neither for the soil nor for the manure pile. It is thrown away. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!

Luke 15

If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the 99 others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders. When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, 'rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over 99 others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!

Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Won't she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, 'rejoice with me because I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents.

To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now before you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons. This younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living. When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'at home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! I will go home to my father and say, Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.' And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.' But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So, the party began. After the older son became jealous, his father said to him, 'Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours. We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!'

Luke 16

Jesus told this story to his disciples: There was a certain rich man who had a manager handling his affairs. One day a report came that the manager was wasting his employer's money. So, the employer called him in and said, 'what's this I hear about you? Get your report in order, because you are going to be fired.' The manager thought to himself, 'now what? My boss has fired me. I don't have the strength to dig ditches, and I'm too proud to beg. Ah, I know how to ensure that I'll have plenty of friends who

This chapter includes several parables to teach about how God the Father prioritizes the redemption of the lost. This is why He sent Jesus to die for our sins, so we can be redeemed.

However, as revealed by the parable of the lost son, God does not favor the wayward over those who remain faithful even though He may celebrate their return. In the end, the faithful son receives a rich inheritance & the ability to enjoy it.

The shrewd manager starts by stealing for himself & then steals for the benefit of

will give me a home when I am fired.’ So, he invited each person who owed money to his employer to come and he reduced their debts. The rich man had to admire the dishonest rascal for being so shrewd. Here’s the lesson: use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends.

If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities. And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? And if you are not faithful with other people’s things, why should you be trusted with things of your own? No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.

Luke 17

If another believer sins, rebuke that person; then if there is repentance, forgive. Even if that person wrongs you 7x a day and each time turns again and asks forgiveness, you must forgive.

The apostles said to the Lord, show us how to increase our faith. The Lord answered, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘may you be uprooted and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you! When a servant comes in from plowing or taking care of sheep, does his master say, ‘come in and eat with me’? No, he says, ‘prepare my meal, put on your apron, and serve me while I eat. Then you can eat later.’ And does the master thank the servant for doing what he was told to do? Of course not. In the same way, when you obey me you should say, ‘we are unworthy servants who have simply done our duty.’

Ten men with leprosy stood at a distance, crying out, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us! He looked at them and said, Go show yourselves to the priests. And as they went, they were cleansed of their leprosy. One of them, when he saw that he was healed, came back to Jesus, shouting, Praise God! He fell to the ground at Jesus’ feet, thanking him for what he had done. This man was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, Didn’t I heal ten men? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give glory to God except this foreigner? And Jesus said to the man, stand up and go. Your faith has healed you.

One day the Pharisees asked Jesus, when will the Kingdom of God come? Jesus replied, The Kingdom of God can’t be detected by visible signs. You won’t be able to say, ‘Here it is!’ or ‘It’s over there!’ For the Kingdom of God is already among you.

Luke 18

One day Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up. There was a judge in a certain city, he said, who neither feared God nor cared about people. A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, saying, ‘give me justice in this dispute with my enemy.’ The judge ignored her for a while, but finally he said to himself, ‘I don’t fear God or care about people, but this woman is driving me crazy. I’m going to see that she gets justice, because she is wearing me out with her constant requests!’ Then the Lord said, learn a lesson from this unjust judge. Even he rendered a

others & his boss appreciates the incremental improvement.

The higher principle is to be faithful with God’s money. The rich are responsible to help the poor.

To exercise strong faith that can uproot mulberry trees we must forgive & continue working while we wait for our words/prayer to manifest.

We must always remember to give thanks for our miracles big & small.

While Jesus does discuss end-time signs, we are better off focusing on the fact that God’s Kingdom is already in our midst.

Persistent prayers produce results.

Humble prayers produce results.

just decision in the end. So don't you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly!

The tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.' I tell you, this sinner, not the self-righteous Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.

How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God! Those who heard this said, then who in the world can be saved? He replied, what is impossible for people is possible with God.

As the man came near, Jesus asked him, what do you want me to do for you? Lord, he said, I want to see! And Jesus said, all right, receive your sight! Your faith has healed you. Instantly the man could see, and he followed Jesus, praising God. And all who saw it praised God, too.

Luke 19

Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. He ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way. When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. Zacchaeus! he said. Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today. Zacchaeus quickly took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. But the people were displeased. He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner, they grumbled. Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much! Jesus responded, Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.

A nobleman was called away to a distant empire to be crowned king and then return. Before he left, he called together ten of his servants and divided among them ten pounds of silver, saying, 'Invest this for me while I am gone.' After he was crowned king, he returned and called in the servants to whom he had given the money. He wanted to find out what their profits were. The king rewarded his servants according to their faithfulness & fruitfulness, punishing the wicked, unproductive servant who buried his money in the ground. The king replied, 'to those who use well what they are given, even more will be given. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away'.

The disciples brought a colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it for him to ride on.

Entrance into God's Kingdom requires childlike trust & cannot be earned/bought with money or in any other way.

Another faith healing provides sight to the blind.

Zacchaeus the tax collector is transformed from a greedy, rich man to a follower of Jesus. He doesn't have to give away all his possessions or change his occupation to do this.

Jesus the king expects us to be productive with the talents He gives us.

Jesus' triumphal entrance into Jerusalem as a humble King

As he rode along, the crowds spread out their garments on the road ahead of him. When he reached the place where the road started down the Mount of Olives, all of his followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen. Blessings on the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in highest heaven!

riding a donkey. He comes to cleanse the city that has broken His heart & prophesizes its destruction by Rome recorded in 70AD.

‘How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes’. Then Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out the people selling animals for sacrifices. He said to them, the Scriptures declare, ‘my Temple will be a house of prayer,’ but you have turned it into a den of thieves.

Luke 20

Now Jesus turned to the people again and told them this story: A man planted a vineyard, leased it to tenant farmers, and moved to another country to live for several years. At the time of the grape harvest, he sent one of his servants to collect his share of the crop. But the farmers attacked the servant, beat him up, and sent him back empty-handed. ‘What will I do?’ the owner asked himself. ‘I know! I’ll send my cherished son. Surely they will respect him.’ But when the tenant farmers saw his son, they said to each other, ‘here comes the heir to this estate. Let’s kill him and get the estate for ourselves!’ So, they dragged him out of the vineyard and murdered him. What do you suppose the owner of the vineyard will do to them? Jesus asked. I’ll tell you—he will come and kill those farmers and lease the vineyard to others. ‘The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.’

Jesus is verbally attacked by the Jewish religious leaders who resisted His ascendancy as their King. They challenge Jesus about whether Caesar is really the king & some theological issues. Jesus finishes with Scripture from Psalms identifying Him as Israel’s true King.

Show me a Roman coin. Whose picture and title are stamped on it? Caesar’s, they replied. Well then, Jesus said, give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God.

Then Jesus presented them with a question. Why is it, he asked, that the Messiah is said to be the son of David? For David himself wrote in the book of Psalms: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit in the place of honor at my right hand until I humble your enemies, making them a footstool under your feet.’ Since David called the Messiah ‘Lord,’ how can the Messiah be his son?

Luke 21

While Jesus was in the Temple, he watched the rich people dropping their gifts in the collection box. Then a poor widow came by and dropped in two small coins. I tell you the truth, Jesus said, this poor widow has given more than all the rest of them. For they have given a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she has.

Giving is not measured by amount, but by heart.

You will be dragged into synagogues and prisons, and you will stand trial before kings and governors because you are my followers. But this will be your opportunity to tell them about me. So don’t worry in advance about how to answer the charges against you, for I will give you the right words and such wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to reply or refute you! Not a hair of your head will perish! By standing firm, you will win your souls.

Jesus caringly instructs His followers about how to overcome coming trials & tribulations that

Don't let your hearts be dulled by carousing and drunkenness, and by the worries of this life. Don't let that day catch you unaware, like a trap. For that day will come upon everyone living on the earth. Keep alert at all times. And pray that you might be strong enough to stand before the Son of Man.

they will shortly face.

Luke 22

Jesus sent Peter and John ahead and said, go and prepare the Passover meal, so we can eat it together. They went off to the city and found everything just as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover meal there. Jesus and the apostles sat down together at the table. Jesus said, I have been very eager to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. Then he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. Then he said, take this and share it among yourselves. He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. After supper he took another cup of wine and said, this cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.

Jesus introduces the Eucharist, His Body & Blood, so we can partake in the new covenant between God & His Church family.

Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. I am among you as one who serves.

Jesus, the suffering servant, promises His apostles that they will rule as kings over the 12 tribes of Israel.

Just as my Father has granted me a Kingdom, I now grant you the right to eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom. And you will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

The time has come for this prophecy about me to be fulfilled: 'He was counted among the rebels.' Yes, everything written about me by the prophets will come true.

Jesus left the upstairs room and went as usual to the Mount of Olives. There he told them, pray that you will not give in to temptation. He walked away, about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine. Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened him. He prayed more fervently, and he was in such agony of spirit that his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood.

Submitting to God's will that He should take the world's sins upon Himself on the cross is so difficult for Jesus that He sweats drops of blood.

At last he stood up again and returned to the disciples, only to find them asleep, exhausted from grief. Why are you sleeping? he asked them. Get up and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation.

Jesus confesses that He is the Son of God, King of Kings & Lord of Lords.

After the temple guards arrested Jesus, they began mocking and beating him. They blindfolded him and said, prophesy to us! Who hit you that time? And they hurled all sorts of terrible insults at him.

Jesus replied, 'the Son of Man will be seated in the place of power at God's right hand'. They all shouted, so, are you claiming to be the Son of God? And he replied, you say that I am. Why do we need other witnesses? they said. We ourselves heard him say it.

Luke 23

The Jews handed over Jesus to Pilate (the Roman Governor) who asked him, are you the king of the Jews? Jesus replied, you have said it.

Then Pilate called together the leading Jewish priests and other religious leaders, along with the people, and he announced his verdict. You brought this man to me, accusing him of leading a revolt. I have examined him thoroughly on this point in your presence and find him innocent. King Herod came to the same conclusion and sent him back to us. Nothing this man has done calls for the death penalty. So I will have him flogged, and then I will release him. Then the crowd roared with one voice, kill him!

The Romans brought Jesus to a place called The Skull and they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left. Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing.

One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, So, you're the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you're at it! But the other criminal protested, Don't you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong. Then he said, Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom. And Jesus replied, I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise. By this time it was about noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. The light from the sun was gone. And suddenly, the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn down the middle. Then Jesus shouted, Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands! And with those words he breathed his last. When the Roman officer overseeing the execution saw what had happened, he worshiped God and said, surely this man was innocent.

Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph. He was a member of the Jewish high council, but he had not agreed with the decision and actions of the other religious leaders. He went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Then he took the body down from the cross and wrapped it in a long sheet of linen cloth and laid it in a new tomb that had been carved out of rock.

Luke 24

Very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, they found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. So, they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes. Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! They rushed back from the tomb to tell his eleven disciples—and everyone else—what had happened. The story sounded like nonsense to the men, so they didn't believe it. However, Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb to look. Stooping, he peered in and saw the empty linen wrappings; then he went home again, wondering what had happened.

That same day two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. But God kept them from recognizing him. He asked them,

Jesus confesses that He is King of the Jews.

Jesus forgives His persecutors.

Jesus saves the criminal on the cross, proving that no one is beyond redemption if they will only repent & believe in Jesus.

God tears the sanctuary curtain to signify that Christians now have direct access to His throne.

Jesus dies & is buried in a tomb.

Jesus is risen!

The 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus can't recognize Jesus until He serves them the Eucharist.

Jesus opens the mind of His disciples to the Scriptures that

what are you discussing so intently as you walk along? They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days. What things? Jesus asked. The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth, they said. He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago. Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! Then Jesus said to them, 'wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?' Jesus went home with them and as they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!

As the two from Emmaus told their story to the disciples of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them. Peace be with you, he said. Why are you frightened? he asked. Why are your hearts filled with doubt? Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don't have bodies, as you see that I do. As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet. Still, they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, do you have anything here to eat? They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he ate it as they watched. Then he said, when I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. And he said, yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: 'There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.' You are witnesses of all these things. And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power.

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

prophesized about Him. This shows that we can't understand Scriptures without the Holy Spirit's help.

Before Jesus ascends to heaven where He is seated at God's right hand of authority, He instructs His disciples to preach the Gospel: there is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.

Praise the Lord, this message of salvation is available to one and all.

John 1 - Gospel testifying that Jesus came in the flesh.

In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God. So, the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

John the Baptist (the voice shouting in the wilderness, 'clear the way for the Lord's coming!' consistent with the words of the prophet Isaiah) testified about Jesus, 'someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.' From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another. God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel. Then John testified, I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and resting upon him. I didn't know he was the one, but when God sent me to baptize with water, he told me, 'the one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that he is the Chosen One of God.

As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, look! There is the Lamb of God! When John's two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus. Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, we have found the Messiah (which means Christ). In turn, Jesus called another set of brothers, Philip & Nathanael, who were also from Galilee. Philip told his brother, we have found the very person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth. Nathanael testified about Jesus, Rabbi, you are the Son of God—the King of Israel! Jesus told him I tell you the truth, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down on the Son of Man, the one who is the stairway between heaven and earth.

John 2

The wine supply ran out during the wedding festivities, so Jesus' mother told him, they have no more wine. Dear woman, that's not our problem, Jesus replied. My time has not yet come. But his mother told the servants, do whatever he tells you. Jesus performed a miracle and when the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from, he called the bridegroom over. A host always serves

John counters the gnostic idea that Jesus was spirit only & did not come in the flesh.

Jesus is the Word of God (Spirit), God's eternal voice which gives life to everything.

Belief that Jesus, God's voice, took on a human body as the Father's one & only Son allows us to become born again as children of God.

John the Baptist testified that Jesus is the Chosen One of God.

Nathanael testifies that Jesus is the King of Israel.

Mary provides us all great advice, do whatever He tells you & because of the

the best wine first, but you have kept the best until now! This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased the money changers out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. He told them, get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace! Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: passion for God's house will consume me.

Jesus told His detractors, destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. What! they exclaimed. It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days? But when Jesus said this temple, he meant his own body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this, and they believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said. Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him.

John 3

There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. Rabbi, he said, we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you. Jesus replied, I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God. I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. No one can explain how people are born of the Spirit.

No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven. And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. God's light came into the world, but all who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.

John the Baptist replied to his disciples, no one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven. Jesus must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less. He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from heaven and is greater than anyone else. He is sent by God and speaks God's words, for God gives him the Spirit without limit. The Father loves his Son and has put everything into his hands. Anyone who believes in God's Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't obey the Son will never experience eternal life.

request of his mother, Jesus performs His first miracle – turning water into wine.

Jesus cleanses the temple & prophecies that He will create a new temple - the Church (Body of Christ).

A spiritual rebirth provided by God's Holy Spirit (following our natural birth) is necessary for us to enter God's Kingdom.

The Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

John 4

Jesus replied to the Samaritan woman, if you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water. Those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life. Please, sir, the woman said, give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water. Go and get your husband, Jesus told her. I don't have a husband, the woman replied. Jesus said, you're right! You don't have a husband—for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now. The time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth. The woman said, I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us. Jesus told her, I Am the Messiah!

The Samaritans from the village said to the woman, now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world.

Jesus explained to His disciples: My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work. The fields are already ripe for harvest, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike!

There was a government official in nearby Capernaum whose son was very sick. The official pleaded, Lord, please come now before my little boy dies. Then Jesus told him, go back home. Your son will live! And the man believed what Jesus said and started home. While the man was on his way, some of his servants met him with the news that his son was alive and well and he and his entire household believed in Jesus.

John 5

When Jesus saw the sick man and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, would you like to get well? Jesus told him, stand up, pick up your mat, and walk! Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking!

Jesus replied to the Jewish leaders who were upset about the healing on the sabbath, my Father is always working, and so am I. I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even greater works than healing this man. For just as the Father gives life to those he raises from the dead, so the Son gives life to anyone he wants. In addition, the Father judges no one. Instead, he has given the Son absolute authority to judge, so that everyone will honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son is certainly not honoring the Father who sent him. I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life. The Father has life in himself, and he has granted that same life-giving power to his Son. And he has given him authority to judge everyone because he

While Jesus is fully human, He is also fully God & God is Spirit. As such, we must worship God in spirit (described as living water) & truth. This was the lesson for the Samaritans who were fleshy.

The government official saves his son's life by simply believing Jesus at His Word.

We must seek our healings.

Jesus testifies to the doubting Jewish leaders that He is actually God's Son authorized to do His Father's work & to judge who will be saved & who will perish. Jesus' miracles prove that He

is the Son of Man. I can do nothing on my own. I judge as God tells me. Therefore, my judgment is just, because I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will. The Father gave me these works to accomplish, and they prove that he sent me. You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me! If you really believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me.

John 6

A huge crowd kept following him wherever he went, because they saw his miraculous signs as he healed the sick. Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. After testing Philip by asking him how they could feed the crowd with just 5 loaves of bread, Jesus instructed: tell everyone to sit down. So, they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.) Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterward he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted. After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted. So, they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves.

A gale swept down upon their boat, and the sea grew very rough. The disciples had rowed three or four miles when suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the water toward the boat. They were terrified, but he called out to them, don't be afraid. I am here! Then they were eager to let him in the boat, and immediately they arrived at their destination!

Jesus told them, this is the only work God wants from you: believe in the one he has sent. Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. They said, give us that bread every day. Jesus replied, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. Those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them. For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will. And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me for it is my Father's will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me. Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. Anyone who believes has eternal life. Yes, I am the bread of life! I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh.

Jesus said again, I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me. I am the true bread that came down from heaven. The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

came from God the Father.

It is Jesus, not the Scriptures, that gives eternal life.

Jesus proves He is outside of man's understanding by feeding 5,000 families with 5 loaves of bread. Further, the leftovers were enough to fill a basket for each of the 12 apostles to serve as their reminder.

Jesus is our God who can walk on water, once again defying our limited understanding.

Jesus operates miraculously in the Spirit & is also fully operational in the flesh. He offers us His flesh & blood (Eucharist) which we must consume to receive eternal life. Jesus is the true bread of life as opposed to the loaves

Simon Peter testified, Lord, you have the words that give eternal life. We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God.

that the crowds were seeking.

John 7

Midway through the festival, Jesus went up to the Temple and began to teach. The people were surprised when they heard him. How does he know so much when he hasn't been trained? they asked. Jesus told them, my message is not my own; it comes from God who sent me. Anyone who wants to do the will of God will know whether my teaching is from God or is merely my own. Those who speak for themselves want glory only for themselves, but a person who seeks to honor the one who sent him speaks truth, not lies. Look beneath the surface so you can judge correctly.

Jesus testifies once again that He is the living water that quenches our spiritual thirst.

On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, anyone who is thirsty may come to me! Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'rivers of living water will flow from his heart.' (When he said living water, he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)

John 8

Teacher, they said to Jesus, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say? All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone! Then he stooped down and wrote in the dust. When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you? No, Lord, she said. And Jesus said, Neither do I. Go and sin no more.

The story of the woman caught in adultery shows that Jesus did not come to condemn, but to save.

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life. Jesus continued, unless you believe that I Am who I claim to be, you will die in your sins. I say only what I have heard from the one who sent me, and he is completely truthful. When you have lifted up the Son of Man on the cross, then you will understand that I Am He. I do nothing on my own but say only what the Father taught me. And the one who sent me is with me—he has not deserted me. For I always do what pleases him. Then many who heard him say these things believed in him.

Jesus testifies that He is I AM, God incarnate. Jesus is the Light of the world that sets us free from the darkness.

Jesus said to the people who believed in him, you are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free. I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I Am!

John 9

The disciples asked Jesus, why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins? It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins, Jesus answered. This happened so the power of God could be seen in him. We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. The night is coming, and then no one can work. But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world. Then he spit on the

Jesus restores sight to the man born blind & this is analogous to

ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man's eyes. He told him, go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam (Siloam means sent). So the man went and washed and came back seeing!

The formerly blind man replied to the Pharisees who were upset about Jesus healing on the sabbath, I don't know whether he is a sinner. But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see! We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will. Ever since the world began, no one has been able to open the eyes of someone born blind. If this man were not from God, he couldn't have done it.

When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and asked, do you believe in the Son of Man? The man answered, who is he, sir? I want to believe in him. You have seen him, Jesus said, and he is speaking to you! Yes, Lord, I believe! the man said. And he worshiped Jesus. Then Jesus told him, I entered this world to render judgment—to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see that they are blind.

John 10

The gatekeeper of a sheepfold opens the gate for the shepherd, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him and he isn't their shepherd.

I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. I sacrifice my life for the sheep. The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded.

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. The Father and I are one.

John 11

When Jesus heard that his good friend was very sick, he said Lazarus's sickness would not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this. So, although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, he stayed where he was for the next two days. Finally, he said to his disciples, let's go back to Judea. When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask.

Jesus offering spiritual sight to blind sinners who think they can see. The great insight & testimony of the man healed of blindness contrasts with the spiritually blind pharisees.

The Good Shepherd leads & protects us if we can train ourselves to follow His voice.

Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, fueled by Martha's powerful testimony about her belief that

Jesus told her, your brother will rise again. Yes, Martha said, he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day. Jesus told her, I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha? Yes, Lord, she told him. I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God. When Jesus saw her sister Mary weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled. Where have you put him? he asked them. They told him, Lord, come and see. Then Jesus wept. Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance. Roll the stone aside, Jesus told them. So, they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, Father, thank you for hearing me. You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me. Then Jesus shouted, Lazarus, come out! And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, unwrap him and let him go! Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this happen.

Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God. Though she didn't have faith that Jesus would raise her brother from the grave, she had faith in her Lord & Savior.

John 12

Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived in Bethany, the home of Lazarus—the man he had raised from the dead. A dinner was prepared in Jesus' honor. Martha served, and Lazarus was among those who ate with him. Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus' feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair.

Mary expressed her great love for Jesus who gave her brother back from the dead.

The next day, the news that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem swept through the city. A large crowd of Passover visitors took palm branches and went down the road to meet him. They shouted, Praise God! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hail to the King of Israel! Jesus found a young donkey and rode on it, fulfilling the prophecy that said: Don't be afraid, people of Jerusalem. Look, your King is coming, riding on a donkey's colt. Many in the crowd had seen Jesus call Lazarus from the tomb, raising him from the dead, and they were telling others about it. That was the reason so many went out to meet him—because they had heard about this miraculous sign.

Jesus made His triumphal entrance into Jerusalem as the humble King of Israel riding a donkey as prophesized in the Old Testament.

Jesus instructed, now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me. Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, 'father, save me from this hour'? But this is the very reason I came! Father, bring glory to your name. Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again. When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to him. Then Jesus told them, the voice was for your benefit, not mine. The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.

Jesus prophesizes about His atoning death that will glorify God by: producing a plentiful harvest of new lives; & casting out satan.

Jesus shouted to the crowds, If you trust me, you are trusting not only me, but also God who sent me. For when you see me, you are seeing the one who sent me. I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark. I will not judge those who hear me but don't obey me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it. But all who reject me and my message will be judged on the day of judgment by the truth I have spoken. I don't speak on my own authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me what to say and how to say it.

Our trust in Jesus & God illuminates our dark world, allowing us to see.

John 13

Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. So, he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him. After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, do you understand what I was doing? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.

Jesus washes the disciples' feet to teach us about servant leadership.

Jesus commands us to love each other to prove we are His disciples.

Jesus said, the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory, and God will be glorified because of him. And since God receives glory because of the Son, he will give his own glory to the Son, and he will do so at once. So now I am giving you a new commandment: love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.

Judas betrays Jesus & then Jesus predicts Peter's denial.

John 14

Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. Jesus told him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

Jesus prepares His disciples for His crucifixion.

Believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do. I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!

Jesus reveals an amazing truth, believers will do greater works than our Lord because Jesus will answer our prayers to glorify God!

If you love me, obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, but you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.

Equally amazing, God will send us the Holy Spirit to

No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. Since I live, you also will live. When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them.

All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me. When the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.

John 15

I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He prunes the branches that bear fruit so they will produce even more. You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! This is my commandment: love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. This is my command: love each other.

I will send you the Advocate —the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me.

John 16

It is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me. Righteousness is available because I go to the Father. Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, 'The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.

live inside of us so we will never be alone. The Holy Spirit will guide us in all our ways and bring us peace that transcends understanding.

We must remain as close & dependent on Jesus as fruit is to its vine. We do this by obeying Jesus' commandment to love one another. The objective is that we should bear fruit in our lives that is pleasing to Jesus. The Holy Spirit of Truth will instruct us about our God given assignments.

The Holy Spirit was sent to convict the world of its primary sin that it refuses to believe in Jesus. The Holy Spirit communicates to us directly from Jesus.

I will see you again then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy. At that time you won't need to ask me for anything. I tell you the truth, you will ask the Father directly, and he will grant your request because you use my name. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy. The Father himself loves you dearly because you love me and believe that I came from God. I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.

We are instructed to use the name of Jesus in our prayers to God.

John 17

Jesus looked up to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you. For you have given him authority over everyone. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth. Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began.

Jesus prays for His disciples and for us. He asks God to protect us by the power of His name. His prayer is that there will be such unity between us, Jesus & God that the world will recognize God through us. Jesus also prays for Church unity which could only be attributed to God's power.

My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you. All who are mine belong to you, and you have given them to me, so they bring me glory. Holy Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are. I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth. I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!

John 18

Who are you looking for? Jesus asked the temple guards who came to arrest Him. Jesus the Nazarene, they replied. I Am he, Jesus said. (Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.) As Jesus said I Am he, they all drew back and fell to the ground! Once more he asked them, who are you looking for? And again they replied, Jesus the Nazarene. I told you that I Am he, Jesus said. And since I am the one you want, let these others go.

Jesus is betrayed & arrested. Peter denies Jesus 3x. Jesus is questioned by Pilate the Roman Governor.

Jesus answered, My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world. Pilate said, so you are a king? Jesus responded, you say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.

John 19

Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip. The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put a purple robe on him. Hail! King of the Jews! they mocked, as they slapped him across the face.

Pilate took Jesus back into the headquarters again and asked him, where are you from? But Jesus gave no answer. Why don't you talk to me? Pilate demanded. Don't you realize that I have the power to release you or crucify you? Then Jesus said, you would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above. Pilate tried to release him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, if you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar.

Pilate sat down on the judgment seat on the platform that is called the Stone Pavement (in Hebrew, Gabbatha). It was now about noon on the day of preparation for the Passover. And Pilate said to the people, look, here is your king! Away with him, they yelled. Away with him! Crucify him! What? Crucify your king? Pilate asked. We have no king but Caesar, the leading priests shouted back. Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.

Carrying the cross by himself, he went to the place called Place of the Skull (in Hebrew, Golgotha). There they nailed him to the cross. Two others were crucified with him, one on either side, with Jesus between them. And Pilate posted a sign on the cross that read, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. The leading priests objected and said to Pilate, change it from 'The King of the Jews' to 'He said, I am King of the Jews.' Pilate replied, no, what I have written, I have written.

Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved, he said to her, dear woman, here is your son. And he said to his disciple John, here is your mother. And from then on John took her into his home.

Jesus said: it is finished! Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. The soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs. One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. (This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account. He speaks the truth so that you also may continue to believe.) These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, not one of his bones will be broken, and they will look on the one they pierced.

Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for permission to take down Jesus' body. When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away. The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before. And so, because it was the day of preparation for the Jewish Passover and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

By the Lord stripes we were healed!

Details of Jesus trial & crucifixion. Jesus died as our Passover Lamb, with His blood redeeming us from death.

Pilate recognized that Jesus was indeed the King of the Jews.

Even on the cross, Jesus was careful to make accommodations for the care of His mother. Jesus dies & is buried.

John 20

Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved (John). She said, they have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him! Peter and the other disciple (John) started out for the tomb. Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He noticed the linen wrappings lying there while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. Then the other disciple also went in, and he saw and believed— for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead.

Mary was standing outside the tomb crying. She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. Dear woman, why are you crying? Jesus asked her. Who are you looking for? She thought he was the gardener. Sir, she said, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him. Mary! Jesus said. She turned to him and cried out, Rabboni! Don't cling to me, Jesus said, for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, I have seen the Lord! Then she gave them his message.

That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! Peace be with you, he said. As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! Again he said, peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you. Then he breathed on them and said, receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.

Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. Peace be with you, he said. Then he said to Thomas, put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe! My Lord and my God! Thomas exclaimed. Then Jesus told him, You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.

The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

John 21

Later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. This is how it happened. Several of the disciples were there—Simon Peter, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples. Simon Peter said, I'm going fishing. We'll come, too, they all said. So, they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all night. At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn't see who he was. He called out, fellows, have you caught any

The disciples discover Jesus' empty tomb.

Jesus appears to His disciples to bless them with peace & the Holy Spirit.

Jesus commissions the disciples to go forth in His Name & authorizes them to loose & bind sins.

Jesus patiently pursues doubting Thomas, meeting His disciple where he was at.

John testifies about many more unrecorded miracles performed by Jesus to strengthen our faith in the power of His Name.

Peter leads the disciples back to their vocation as fishermen. They don't catch anything

fish? No, they replied. Then he said, throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you'll get some! So, they did, and they couldn't haul in the net because there were so many fish in it.

When they got to the shore, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread. Bring some of the fish you've just caught, Jesus said. Now come and have some breakfast! Jesus said. Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish.

After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, Simon son of John, do you love me more than these? Yes, Lord, Peter replied, you know I love you. Then feed my lambs, Jesus told him. Jesus repeated the question: Simon son of John, do you love me? Yes, Lord, Peter said, you know I love you. Then take care of my sheep, Jesus said. A third time he asked him, Simon son of John, do you love me? Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you. Jesus said, Then feed my sheep.

John concludes by stating that he is the disciple who testifies to these events recorded here. And we know that his account of these things is accurate. Jesus also did many other things. If they were all written down, I suppose the whole world could not contain the books that would be written.

until Jesus blesses them on the shore with a net breaking haul of fish.

Jesus prompts Peter to testify 3x about his love for Jesus to override his 3 denials. Jesus commissions Peter to feed His sheep as the head of His Church.

John concludes by assuring us that his incredible testimony about Jesus is accurate.

Acts 1 - Luke's historical account of early Church miracles & evangelism.

In my first book I told you, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions through the Holy Spirit. During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God. Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. Men of Galilee, they said, why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!

The disciples all met together and were constantly united in prayer, along with Mary the mother of Jesus, several other women, and the brothers of Jesus. During this time, when about 120 believers were together in one place, Peter stood up and addressed them. Brothers, he said, the Scriptures had to be fulfilled concerning Judas, who guided those who arrested Jesus. This was predicted long ago by the Holy Spirit, speaking through King David.

Then they all prayed, O Lord, you know every heart. Show us which of these men you have chosen as an apostle to replace Judas in this ministry, for he has deserted us and gone where he belongs. Then they cast lots, and Matthias was selected to become an apostle with the other eleven.

Acts 2

On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this. What you see was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel: in the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on my servants—men and women alike—and they will prophesy. And I will cause wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

The Acts of the Apostles (Holy Spirit) was written by Luke for the Greek, Theophilus.

The disciples are promised power to evangelize by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Their power also came from persistent, united prayer.

They chose Matthias to replace Judas by picking lots. This is before they had experience being led by the Holy Spirit.

The Apostles are baptized in the Holy Spirit & speak in other tongues.

Peter preaches from Joel about restoring the fortunes of Judah & Jerusalem and 3,000 repressed Jews are saved.

People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene by doing powerful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to a cross and killed him. But God released him from the horrors of death and raised him back to life, for death could not keep him in its grip. God raised Jesus from the dead, and we are all witnesses of this. Now he is exalted to the place of highest honor in heaven, at God's right hand. And the Father, as he had promised, gave him the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today. So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah! Peter's words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, brothers, what should we do? Peter replied, each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Acts 3

Peter and John went to the Temple one afternoon to take part in the three o'clock prayer service. As they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the people going into the Temple. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money. Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, look at us! Peter said, I don't have any silver or gold for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk! Then Peter took the lame man by the right hand and helped him up. Peter saw his opportunity and addressed the crowd. People of Israel, he said, what is so surprising about this? And why stare at us as though we had made this man walk by our own power or godliness? For it is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the God of all our ancestors—who has brought glory to his servant Jesus by doing this. Through faith in the name of Jesus, this man was healed—and you know how crippled he was before. Faith in Jesus' name has healed him before your very eyes. Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away. Then times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and he will again send you Jesus, your appointed Messiah. For he must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago through his holy prophets.

Acts 4

Peter and John were speaking to the people and many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of men who believed now totaled about 5,000.

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

The Apostles start performing miracles.

Peter heals the man born lame by the power of Jesus' Name.

Through faith in the name of Jesus, the man was healed.

Peter & John were arrested for preaching about salvation

The religious leaders were very disturbed that Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead, so they arrested them.

which extends beyond the resurrection to physical healings.

The members of the council brought in the two disciples and demanded, by what power, or in whose name, have you done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, rulers and elders of our people, are we being questioned today because we've done a good deed for a crippled man? Do you want to know how he was healed? Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene. There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved. The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing right there among them, there was nothing the council could say.

Acts 5

The apostles were performing many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers were meeting regularly at the Temple in the area known as Solomon's Colonnade. More and more people believed and were brought to the Lord. As a result of the apostles' work, sick people were brought out into the streets on beds and mats so that Peter's shadow might fall across some of them as he went by. Crowds came from the villages around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those possessed by evil spirits, and they were all healed.

The Apostles' anointing increased to the point that the sick were healed when the Apostles' shadows passed over them.

The Sadducees, who were filled with jealousy, arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. But an angel of the Lord came at night, opened the gates of the jail, and brought them out. Then he told them, go to the Temple and give the people this message of life! So at daybreak the apostles entered the Temple, as they were told, and immediately began teaching. When the high priest and his officials arrived, they convened the high council and sent for the apostles to be brought from the jail for trial. But when the Temple guards went to the jail, the men were gone.

The Apostles were miraculously rescued from jail & testify before the Sadducees who did not believe in an afterlife.

Peter and the apostles were found at the Temple and stated, we must obey God rather than any human authority. The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead after you killed him by hanging him on a cross. Then God put him in the place of honor at his right hand as Prince and Savior. He did this so the people of Israel would repent of their sins and be forgiven. We are witnesses of these things and so is the Holy Spirit, who is given by God to those who obey him.

The apostles left the high council rejoicing that God had counted them worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus. And every day, in the Temple and from house to house, they continued to teach and preach this message: Jesus is the Messiah.

Acts 6

The Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, we apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God and so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them financial responsibility. Then we apostles can spend our time in prayer and teaching the word.

The Apostles delegate the community's merchant

The seven were presented to the apostles, who prayed for them as they laid their hands on them. So God's message continued to spread. The number of believers greatly increased in Jerusalem, and many of the Jewish priests were converted, too.

Stephen (1 of the 7 deacons), a man full of God's grace and power, performed amazing miracles and signs among the people. None of them could stand against the wisdom and the Spirit with which Stephen spoke. The lying witnesses said, this man is always speaking against the holy Temple and against the law of Moses. At this point everyone in the high council stared at Stephen, because his face became as bright as an angel's.

Editor's note: This is an important chapter which has been badly obfuscated in the translation. Peter referenced Joel's prophecy about a financial renewal which was very attractive to the Jewish converts who had been suffering repression under the Romans. The Jews were used to the idea of pooling their money into a community merchant bank that financed their local economy & the new Christians were offering a competitive merchant banking solution for new believers run by the 7 Greek Deacons. They were primarily funded by wealthy Greek Christians including Barnabas (perhaps the rich young ruler in the Gospel who Jesus advised to sell his goods & invest in the Kingdom) & some wealthy widows. This newly formed competition represented a significant threat to the Jewish bankers & led to a great persecution that led to Stephen's death & the purge of the Greeks from Jerusalem. It is notable that the Apostles (who were focused on prayer & preaching) were not driven out of Jerusalem because they did not represent a threat to the Jewish bankers.

Acts 7

Stephen's speech in defense of his accusations: Brothers and fathers, listen to me. Our glorious God appeared to our ancestor Abraham in Mesopotamia before he settled in Haran. God told him, 'leave your native land and your relatives, and come into the land that I will show you.' So Abraham left the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran until his father died. Then God brought him here to the land where you now live. But God gave him no inheritance here, not even one square foot of land. God did promise, however, that eventually the whole land would belong to Abraham and his descendants—even though he had no children yet. God also gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision at that time and his son Isaac, in turn, became the father of Jacob who became the father of the twelve patriarchs of the Israelite nation. These patriarchs were jealous of their brother Joseph, and they sold him to be a slave in Egypt. But God was with him and rescued him from all his troubles. And God gave him favor before Pharaoh, king of Egypt. God also gave Joseph unusual wisdom, so that Pharaoh appointed him governor over all of Egypt and put him in charge of the palace.

As the time drew near when God would fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt greatly increased. At that time Moses was born—a beautiful child in God's eyes. When his parents had to abandon him, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and raised him as her own son. Moses was taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in both speech and action. Forty years after fleeing to live as a foreigner in the land of Midian, an angel appeared to Moses in the flame of a burning bush and the voice of the Lord called out to him, 'I am the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' Moses shook with terror and did not dare to look. Then the

banking duties to the 7 Greek Deacons, led by Stephen who is martyred by the financial competition.

Stephen recounts Israel's history, concluding with their failure to follow Moses' command to heed the instructions of Jesus who was prophesized to come. The enraged Jews stoned Stephen to death & his spirit was received into heaven by Jesus who stood-up for Stephen, rising from His position of authority seated

at God's right Hand.

Lord said to him, take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground. I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groans and have come down to rescue them. Now go, for I am sending you back to Egypt to be ruler and judge over Israel. And by means of many wonders and miraculous signs, Moses led them out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and through the wilderness for forty years. Moses himself told the people of Israel, God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among your own people.

The Jewish leaders were infuriated by Stephen's accusation that they were stubborn people who failed to listen to Moses, persecuting many prophets who predicted the coming of the Righteous One (the Messiah) and Jesus Himself. As they stoned Stephen who was full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed steadily into heaven and saw the glory of God with Jesus standing in the place of honor at God's right hand. And he told them, look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the place of honor at God's right hand!

Acts 8

A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria, preaching the Good News about Jesus wherever they went.

Philip, for example, went to the city of Samaria and told the people there about the Messiah. Crowds listened intently to Philip because they were eager to hear his message and see the miraculous signs he did. Many evil spirits were cast out, screaming as they left their victims. And many who had been paralyzed or lame were healed. So, there was great joy in that city. When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had accepted God's message, they sent Peter and John there. Then Peter and John laid their hands upon these believers, and they received the Holy Spirit.

As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, go south down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza. So, he started out, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under the Kandake, the queen of Ethiopia. The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and was reading aloud from the book of the prophet Isaiah. The Holy Spirit said to Philip, go over and walk along beside the carriage. Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, do you understand what you are reading? The man replied, how can I, unless someone instructs me? And he urged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him. The passage of Scripture he had been reading was this: he was led like a sheep to the slaughter. And as a lamb is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. He was humiliated and received no justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth. The eunuch asked Philip, tell me, was the prophet talking about himself or someone else? So, beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus. As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, Look! There's some water! Why can't I be baptized? He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing. Meanwhile, Philip found himself farther north at the town of Azotus.

Philip the Greek Deacon fled to Samaria where he performed many great miracles & conversions. He evangelized a powerful Ethiopian, baptized him & then in what represents one of the most miraculous accounts in the New Testament, was "snatched" & transported in the Spirit to a distant location.

Acts 9

As Saul the Pharisee was approaching Damascus on his mission to persecute Christians, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. He fell to the ground blind and heard a voice saying to him, Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me? Who are you, lord? Saul asked. And the voice replied, I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting! Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do. The men with Saul stood speechless, for they heard the sound of someone's voice but saw no one! There was a believer in Damascus named Ananias and the Lord spoke to him in a vision. The Lord said, go over to Straight Street, to the house of Judas. When you get there, ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying to me right now. I have shown him a vision of a man named Ananias coming in and laying hands on him so he can see again. Ananias overcame his fear of Saul and found him as instructed. Ananias laid his hands on him and said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Instantly something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized. Saul immediately began preaching about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, he is indeed the Son of God! All who heard him were amazed. Isn't this the same man who caused such devastation among Jesus' followers in Jerusalem? they asked. And didn't he come here to arrest them and take them in chains to the leading priests? Saul's preaching became more and more powerful, and the Jews in Damascus couldn't refute his proofs that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

Paul, a Pharisee, was converted on the Road to Damascus. Saul, who became known as Paul, was the most prolific author of the NT. His legendary evangelical travels across the Roman Empire entailed great suffering at the hand of the Jews.

Acts 10

In Caesarea there lived a Roman army officer named Cornelius, who was a captain of the Italian Regiment. He was a devout, God-fearing man, as was everyone in his household. He gave generously to the poor and prayed regularly to God. One afternoon about three o'clock, he had a vision in which he saw an angel of God coming toward him. Cornelius! the angel said. Cornelius stared at him in terror. What is it, sir? he asked the angel. And the angel replied, your prayers and gifts to the poor have been received by God as an offering! Now send some men to Joppa, and summon a man named Simon Peter. The next day as Cornelius' messengers were nearing the town, Peter went up on the flat roof to pray and fell into a trance. He saw the sky open, and something like a large sheet was let down by its four corners. In the sheet were all sorts of animals, reptiles, and birds. Then a voice said to him, get up, Peter; kill and eat them. No, Lord, Peter declared. I have never eaten anything that our Jewish laws have declared impure and unclean. But the voice spoke again: Do not call something unclean if God has made it clean. As Peter was puzzling over the vision, the Holy Spirit said to him, three men have come looking for you. Get up, go downstairs, and go with them without hesitation. They arrived in Caesarea the following day. Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. Peter told them, you know it is against our laws for a Jewish man to enter a Gentile home like this or to associate with you. But God has shown me that I should no longer think of anyone as impure or unclean. So, I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. After further greetings, Peter said, I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. This is the message of Good News for all people that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

The Holy Spirit instructs Peter to bring the Gospel to non-Jewish believers. This represents a new wine skin for the Church which is officially opened equally to all humans.

You know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil,

for God was with him. And we apostles are witnesses of all he did throughout Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a cross, but God raised him to life on the third day. Then God allowed him to appear, not to the general public, but to us whom God had chosen in advance to be his witnesses. We were those who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he ordered us to preach everywhere and to testify that Jesus is the one appointed by God to be the judge of all—the living and the dead. He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name. Even as Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the message. The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles, too. For they heard them speaking in other tongues and praising God. Then Peter asked, can anyone object to their being baptized, now that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we did? So, he gave orders for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Acts 11

Peter recounts to Church leadership in Jerusalem about his experience with Cornelius. When they heard, they stopped objecting to his association with Gentiles and began praising God. They said, we can see that God has also given the Gentiles the privilege of repenting of their sins and receiving eternal life.

Meanwhile, the believers who had been scattered during the persecution after Stephen's death traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch of Syria. They preached the word of God, but only to Jews. However, some of the believers who went to Antioch from Cyprus and Cyrene began preaching to the Gentiles about the Lord Jesus. The power of the Lord was with them, and a large number of these Gentiles believed and turned to the Lord.

During this time some prophets traveled from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up in one of the meetings and predicted by the Spirit that a great famine was coming upon the entire Roman world. (This was fulfilled during the reign of Claudius.) So, the believers in Antioch decided to send relief to the brothers and sisters in Judea, everyone giving as much as they could. This they did, entrusting their gifts to Barnabas and Saul to take to the elders of the church in Jerusalem.

Acts 12

The night before Peter was to be placed on trial, he was asleep, fastened with two chains between two soldiers. Suddenly, there was a bright light in the cell, and an angel of the Lord stood before Peter. The angel struck him on the side to awaken him and said, Quick! Get up! And the chains fell off his wrists. Then the angel told him, get dressed and put on your sandals. So, Peter left the cell, following the angel. But all the time he thought it was a vision. He didn't realize it was actually happening. They passed the first and second guard posts and came to the iron gate leading to the city, and this opened for them all by itself. So, they passed through and started walking down the street, and then the angel suddenly left him. Peter finally came to his senses. It's really true! he said. The Lord has sent his angel and saved me from Herod and from what the Jewish leaders had planned to do to me! When he realized this, he went to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many were gathered for prayer.

The Church formalizes the evangelical outreach to the non-Jews.

Saul & Barnabas begin collecting funds in anticipation of a famine prophesied to impact the Roman world. Hopefully, they prayed that the famine would be averted.

The power of fervent, united prayer prompts God to send an angel to miraculously free Peter from prison & to judge an evil ruler onto death.

As a result of their prayer, God executes King Herod for killing James with a sword & imprisoning Peter. As a result, the word of God continued to spread, and there were many new believers.

Acts 13

One day as the prophets & teachers were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, appoint Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them. So after more fasting and prayer, the men laid their hands on them and sent them on their way. Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the Holy Spirit. They went down to the seaport of Seleucia and then sailed for the island of Cyprus.

Saul, also known as Paul, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoke as follows to the Jewish sorcerer who was interfering with their mission, you son of the devil, full of every sort of deceit and fraud, and enemy of all that is good! Will you never stop perverting the true ways of the Lord? Watch now, for the Lord has laid his hand of punishment upon you, and you will be struck blind. You will not see the sunlight for some time. Instantly mist and darkness came over the man's eyes, and he began groping around begging for someone to take his hand and lead him. When the governor saw what had happened, he became a believer, for he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord.

After traveling to Antioch, Paul recounts Old Testament history & then declares to the city gathering: Brothers, listen! We are here to proclaim that through this man Jesus there is forgiveness for your sins. Everyone who believes in him is made right in God's sight—something the law of Moses could never do. Many Jews & devout converts to Judaism followed Paul & Barnabas, and the two men urged them to continue to rely on God's grace.

The following week almost the entire city turned out to hear them preach the word of the Lord. But when some of the Jews saw the crowds, they were jealous, so they slandered Paul and argued against whatever he said. Then Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and declared, it was necessary that we first preach the word of God to you Jews. But since you have rejected it and judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we will offer it to the Gentiles. For the Lord gave us this command when he said, 'I have made you a light to the Gentiles, to bring salvation to the farthest corners of the earth.' When the Gentiles heard this, they were very glad and thanked the Lord for his message; and all who were chosen for eternal life became believers.

Acts 14

The same thing happened in Iconium. Paul and Barnabas went to the Jewish synagogue and preached with such power that a great number of both Jews and Greeks became believers. Some of the Jews, however, spurned God's message and poisoned the minds of the Gentiles against Paul and Barnabas. But the apostles stayed there a long time, preaching boldly about the grace of the Lord. And the Lord proved their message was true by giving them power to do miraculous signs and wonders.

While they were at Lystra, Paul and Barnabas came upon a man with crippled feet. He had been that way from birth, so he had never walked. He was sitting and listening as

Barnabas (an elder who endorsed Paul early on) and Paul were appointed by the Holy Spirit to start a missionary journey.

Paul speaks blindness over a Jewish magician, proving God's higher power.

Paul & Barnabas declare that it was time to move-on from preaching to the unrepentant Jews to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Paul & Barnabas perform great miracles to authenticate their Gospel message.

Paul preached. Looking straight at him, Paul realized he had faith to be healed. So, Paul called to him in a loud voice, stand up! And the man jumped to his feet and started walking. When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in their local dialect, these men are gods in human form! But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard what was happening, they ran out among the people, shouting, Friends, we are merely human beings—just like you! We have come to bring you the Good News that you should turn from these worthless things and turn to the living God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them.

They are viciously opposed by the Jews who seemingly stone Paul to death.

Paul & Barnabas build infrastructure for the Church by appointing leadership.

Then some Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowds to their side. They stoned Paul and dragged him out of town, thinking he was dead. But as the believers gathered around him, he got up and went back into the town.

Paul and Barnabas also appointed elders in every church. With prayer and fasting, they turned the elders over to the care of the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. Finally, they returned by ship to Antioch of Syria, where their journey had begun.

Acts 15

The Council of Jerusalem meet to discuss whether the Gentiles must observe Jewish law. Peter expressed his opinion that God knows people's hearts, and he confirmed that God accepts Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit. God made no distinction between us and them, for he cleansed their hearts through faith. So why are you now challenging God by burdening the Gentile believers with a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear? We believe that we are all saved the same way, by the undeserved grace of the Lord Jesus. Then James expressed his judgment that they should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead, the Gentiles should abstain from eating food offered to idols, from sexual immorality, from eating the meat of strangled animals, and from consuming blood. Resultantly, the Council wrote a letter stating that it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay no greater burden on you than these few requirements: you must abstain from eating food offered to idols, from consuming blood or the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality. If you do this, you will do well. Farewell. There was great joy throughout the Antioch Church when they read this encouraging message.

The Church rejects the idea that Gentiles must follow Jewish law. This decision was made by both the Council & the Holy Spirit.

Paul gets into an argument with Barnabas about Barnabas' nephew Mark. In another epistle, Paul refers to Mark as an asset, showing an eventual reconciliation.

After some time, Paul said to Barnabas, let's go back and visit each city where we previously preached the word of the Lord, to see how the new believers are doing. Barnabas agreed and wanted to take along John Mark. But Paul disagreed strongly, since John Mark had departed from them in Pamphylia. Their disagreement was so sharp that they separated. Barnabas took John Mark with him and sailed for Cyprus. Paul chose Silas, and as he left, the believers entrusted him to the Lord's gracious care. Then he traveled throughout Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches there.

Acts 16

Paul launches his second missionary journey, taking along the young Timothy with Silas. They went from town to town, instructing the believers to follow the decisions made by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. So, the churches were strengthened in their faith and grew larger every day. Next Paul and Silas traveled through the area of Phrygia and Galatia, because the Holy Spirit had prevented them from preaching the

Paul's second missionary journey. He is prohibited by the Holy Spirit

word in the province of Asia at that time. That night Paul had a vision: A man from Macedonia in northern Greece was standing there, pleading with him, come over to Macedonia and help us! So, we decided to leave for Macedonia (Philippi, a major city of that district of Macedonia and a Roman colony) at once having concluded that God was calling us to preach the Good News there. On the Sabbath we went a little way outside the city to a riverbank, where we thought people would be meeting for prayer, and we sat down to speak with some women who had gathered there. One of them was Lydia from Thyatira, a merchant of expensive purple cloth, who worshiped God. As she listened to us, the Lord opened her heart, and she accepted what Paul was saying. She and her household were baptized, and she asked them to be her guests.

One day as we were going down to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl who had a spirit that enabled her to tell the future. She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, these men are servants of the Most High God, and they have come to tell you how to be saved. This went on day after day until Paul got so exasperated that he turned and said to the demon within her, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And instantly it left her. Her masters' hopes of wealth were now shattered, so they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities at the marketplace. A mob quickly formed against Paul and Silas, and the city officials ordered them stripped, beaten with wooden rods and jailed. Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening. Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off! The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and asked, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? They replied, believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household. The next morning the city officials sent the police to tell the jailer, let those men go! But Paul replied, they have publicly beaten us without a trial and put us in prison—and we are Roman citizens. So now they want us to leave secretly? Certainly not! Let them come themselves to release us!

Acts 17

Paul and Silas then traveled through the towns of Amphipolis and Apollonia and came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. Paul explained the prophecies and proved that the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead. He said, this Jesus I'm telling you about is the Messiah. Some of the Jews who listened were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with many God-fearing Greek men and quite a few prominent women. But some of the Jews were jealous, so they gathered some troublemakers from the marketplace to form a mob and start a riot. That very night the believers sent Paul and Silas to Berea. When they arrived there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth. As a result, many Jews believed, as did many of the prominent Greek women and men. But when some Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God in Berea, they went there and stirred up trouble.

from going to Asia (we don't know how) & led to Philippi by a dream.

Paul casts out a demon from a fortune teller & ends-up beaten & jailed. The praise & prayers of Paul & Silas leads to the salvation of their jailer & their own release.

Paul stands-up for himself by leveraging his rights as a Roman citizen to evoke an apology from his jailers.

Paul starts in Thessalonica & is driven away by the Jews and proceeds to Berea where he found a very open-minded audience who checked his teachings against Scriptures.

Then Paul escaped the

Paul then proceeded to Athens, and standing before the council, addressed them as follows: men of Athens, I notice that you are very religious in every way, for as I was walking along I saw your many shrines. And one of your altars had this inscription on it: ‘to an Unknown God.’ This God, whom you worship without knowing, is the one I’m telling you about. He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn’t live in man-made temples, and human hands can’t serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need. From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries. His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and exist. As some of your own poets have said, ‘we are his offspring.’ And since this is true, we shouldn’t think of God as an idol designed by craftsmen from gold or silver or stone. When they heard Paul speak about the resurrection of the dead, some laughed in contempt, but others said, we want to hear more about this later. Some joined him and became believers.

Jews by fleeing to Athens, Greece. Paul states to the Athenians that there is only one supreme God, contrasting this with their worship of many gods.

Acts 18

Paul traveled next to Corinth, another important city in Greece. He testified to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. But when they opposed and insulted him, Paul shook the dust from his clothes and said, your blood is upon your own heads—I am innocent. From now on I will go preach to the Gentiles. Then he left and went to the home of Titius Justus, a Gentile who worshiped God and lived next door to the synagogue. Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, and everyone in his household believed in the Lord. Many others in Corinth also heard Paul, became believers, and were baptized. One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision and told him, don’t be afraid! Speak out! Don’t be silent! For I am with you, and no one will attack and harm you, for many people in this city belong to me. So, Paul stayed there for the next year and a half, teaching the word of God.

Paul finally grows exacerbated again with evangelizing the Jews who violently oppose him at every turn & turns his attention once again to the non-Jews who are far more receptive.

Paul returns to Antioch of Syria and after spending some time there, Paul went back through Galatia and Phrygia, visiting and strengthening all the believers.

Meanwhile, a Jew named Apollos, an eloquent speaker who knew the Scriptures well, had arrived in Ephesus from Alexandria in Egypt. When he arrived there, he proved to be of great benefit to those who, by God’s grace, had believed. He refuted the Jews with powerful arguments in public debate. Using the Scriptures, he explained to them that Jesus was the Messiah.

Acts 19

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions until he reached Ephesus, an important city on the coast, where he found several believers. Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? he asked them. No, they replied, we haven’t even heard that there is a Holy Spirit. Then what baptism did you experience? he asked. And they replied, The baptism of John. Paul said, John’s baptism called for repentance from sin. But John himself told the people to believe in the one who would come later, meaning Jesus. As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of

Paul distinguishes between John’s baptism for the repentance of sins & the baptism of the Holy Spirit

the Lord Jesus. Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied.

Then Paul went to the synagogue in Ephesus and preached boldly for the next three months. But some rejected his message and publicly spoke against the Way. So Paul left the synagogue and took the believers with him. Then he held daily discussions at the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for the next two years, so that people throughout the province of Asia—both Jews and Greeks—heard the word of the Lord. God gave Paul the power to perform unusual miracles. When handkerchiefs or aprons that had merely touched his skin were placed on sick people, they were healed of their diseases, and evil spirits were expelled.

A group of Jews was traveling from town to town casting out evil spirits. They tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus in their incantation, saying, I command you in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to come out! But one time when they tried it, the evil spirit replied, I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but who are you? Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, overpowered them, and attacked them with such violence that they fled from the house, naked and battered.

About that time, serious trouble developed in Ephesus concerning the Way. It began with Demetrius, a silversmith who had a large business manufacturing silver shrines of the Greek goddess Artemis. He kept many craftsmen busy. He called them together and addressed them as follows: gentlemen, you know that our wealth comes from this business. But as you have seen and heard, this man Paul has persuaded many people that handmade gods aren't really gods at all. At this their anger boiled, and they began shouting, great is Artemis of the Ephesians! Soon the whole city was filled with confusion. At last the mayor was able to quiet them down enough to speak. Citizens of Ephesus, he said. Everyone knows that Ephesus is the official guardian of the temple of the great Artemis, whose image fell down to us from heaven. Since this is an undeniable fact, you should stay calm and not do anything rash. You have brought these men here, but they have stolen nothing from the temple and have not spoken against our goddess. I am afraid we are in danger of being charged with rioting by the Roman government, since there is no cause for all this commotion. And if Rome demands an explanation, we won't know what to say. Then he dismissed them, and they dispersed.

Acts 20

When the uproar was over, Paul sent for the believers and encouraged them. Then he said good-bye and left for Macedonia. After the Passover ended, we boarded a ship at Philippi in Macedonia and five days later joined them in Troas, where we stayed a week. On the first day of the week, we gathered with the local believers to share in the Lord's Supper. Paul was preaching to them, and since he was leaving the next day, he kept talking until midnight. As Paul spoke on and on, a young man named Eutychus, sitting on the windowsill, became very drowsy. Finally, he fell sound asleep and dropped three stories to his death below. Paul went down, bent over him, and took him into his arms. Don't worry, he said, he's alive! Then they all went back upstairs, shared in the Lord's Supper, and ate together.

which is accompanied by tongues & prophecy.

Paul is back at the Jewish Synagogue but returns to his Gentile focus.

The Jewish exorcists prove the higher power of Jesus through a humorous story.

The Church must overcome a huge riot from the Ephesian pagans who were threatened financially by the Gospel of freedom.

Paul has a lot to tell everyone & not much time. His late-night talk lulls a young man into a deep sleep. After he falls out of a 3-story window to his death, Paul resurrects the

Paul meets with the Ephesian elders and declared: you know that from the day I set foot in the province of Asia until now I have done the Lord's work humbly and with many tears. I have endured the trials that came to me from the plots of the Jews. I have had one message for Jews and Greeks alike—the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our Lord Jesus. And now I am bound by the spirit to go to Jerusalem. I don't know what awaits me, except that the Holy Spirit tells me in city after city that jail and suffering lie ahead. But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God. Guard yourselves and God's people. Feed and shepherd God's flock—his church, purchased with his own blood—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as leaders. And now I entrust you to God and the message of his grace that is able to build you up and give you an inheritance with all those he has set apart for himself. I have never coveted anyone's silver or gold or fine clothes. You know that these hands of mine have worked to supply my own needs and even the needs of those who were with me. And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.'

boy on the ground!

Paul explains to the elders his own decision to return to Jerusalem even though he knows from the HS what awaits him there. He instructs the elders to guard their flock & to work hard.

Acts 21

On his return trip to Jerusalem, the local believers of Tyre, Syria prophesied through the Holy Spirit that Paul should not go on to Jerusalem. Several days later a man named Agabus, who also had the gift of prophecy, arrived from Judea. He came over, took Paul's belt, and bound his own feet and hands with it. Then he said, the Holy Spirit declares, so shall the owner of this belt be bound by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem and turned over to the Gentiles.

Paul is repeatedly warned by the HS not to go to Jerusalem. This shows that Paul made his own decision & was not commanded to comply.

Paul arrives in Jerusalem and meets with the elders of the Jerusalem Church who told him, you know, dear brother, how many thousands of Jews have also believed, and they all follow the law of Moses very seriously. But the Jewish believers here in Jerusalem have been told that you are teaching all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn their backs on the laws of Moses. They've heard that you teach them not to circumcise their children or follow other Jewish customs. Here's what we want you to do. We have four men here who have completed their vow. Go with them to the Temple and join them in the purification ceremony, paying for them to have their heads ritually shaved. Then everyone will know that the rumors are all false and that you yourself observe the Jewish laws.

The elders of the Jerusalem Church demand that Paul show everyone that he is still practicing Jewish laws. This was perhaps not the best advice from the Christian leaders...

So, Paul went to the Temple the next day with the other men. Some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul in the Temple and roused a mob against him. They grabbed him, yelling, men of Israel, help us! This is the man who preaches against our people everywhere and tells everybody to disobey the Jewish laws. The whole city was rocked by these accusations, and a great riot followed. Paul was grabbed and dragged out of the Temple. As they were trying to kill him, word reached the commander of the Roman regiment that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. The commander arrested him and ordered him bound with two chains. Paul asked the commander, I am a Jew and a citizen of Tarsus in Cilicia, which is an important city. Please, let me talk to these people. The commander agreed, so Paul stood on the stairs and motioned to the people to be quiet.

Paul sparks a riot at the temple & is

Soon a deep silence enveloped the crowd, and he addressed them in their own language, Aramaic.

arrested as prophesied.

Editor's note: Paul was eager to go to Jerusalem to deliver a financial offering collected from the Gentile Churches he established throughout the Roman Empire. Perhaps this was intended to provide validity for the Gentile believers to the Jerusalem elders, while also validating Paul's life work & showing his care of his flock until the end.

Acts 22

Paul addressed the crowd as follows, I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, and I was brought up and educated here in Jerusalem under Gamaliel. I became very zealous to honor God in everything I did, just like all of you today. And I persecuted the followers of the Way, hounding some to death, arresting both men and women and throwing them in prison. As I was on the road, approaching Damascus about noon, a very bright light from heaven suddenly shone down around me. I fell to the ground blind and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' 'Who are you, lord?' I asked. And the voice replied, 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, the one you are persecuting.' I asked, 'what should I do, Lord?' And the Lord told me, 'Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told everything you are to do.' A man named Ananias lived there. He came and stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, regain your sight.' And that very moment I could see him! Then he told me, 'the God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and hear him speak. For you are to be his witness, telling everyone what you have seen and heard. Get up and be baptized. Have your sins washed away by calling on the name of the Lord.' After I returned to Jerusalem, I was praying in the Temple and fell into a trance. The Lord said to me, 'go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles!' The crowd listened until Paul said that word. Then they all began to shout, away with such a fellow! He isn't fit to live!

Paul provides his testimony to the murderous crowd in Jerusalem. He tells the Jews that he was commissioned to preach to the Gentiles & this starts a riot.

God plans ahead with Paul's Roman Citizenship to save him from torture time & again.

The commander brought Paul inside and ordered him lashed with whips to make him confess his crime. He wanted to find out why the crowd had become so furious. When they tied Paul down to lash him, Paul said to the officer standing there, is it legal for you to whip a Roman citizen who hasn't even been tried? The soldiers who were about to interrogate Paul quickly withdrew when they heard he was a Roman citizen, and the commander was frightened because he had ordered him bound and whipped. The next day the commander ordered the leading priests into session with the Jewish high council.

Acts 23

Gazing intently at the high council during the interrogation which followed, Paul began: brothers, I have always lived before God with a clear conscience! Instantly Ananias the high priest commanded those close to Paul to slap him on the mouth. But Paul said to him, God will slap you, you corrupt hypocrite!

Paul puts up a spirited defense and outsmarts the council.

Paul realized that some members of the high council were Sadducees and some were Pharisees, so he shouted, Brothers, I am a Pharisee, as were my ancestors! And I am on trial because my hope is in the resurrection of the dead! This divided the council—the

Jesus appears to Paul & encourages him.

Pharisees against the Sadducees— for the Sadducees say there is no resurrection or angels or spirits, but the Pharisees believe in all of these.

That night the Lord appeared to Paul and said, be encouraged, Paul. Just as you have been a witness to me here in Jerusalem, you must preach the Good News in Rome as well.

Paul's nephew relayed a plot to assassinate Paul to the Roman Commander, some Jews are going to ask you to bring Paul before the high council tomorrow, pretending they want to get some more information. But don't do it! There are more than forty men hiding along the way ready to ambush him. They have vowed not to eat or drink anything until they have killed him. Then the commander called two of his officers and ordered, get 200 soldiers ready to leave for Caesarea at nine o'clock tonight. Also take 200 spearmen and 70 mounted troops. When they arrived in Caesarea, they presented Paul and the Commander's letter to Governor Felix who told Paul, I will hear your case myself when your accusers arrive. Then the governor ordered him kept in the prison at Herod's headquarters.

Acts 24

Paul declares his innocence during his trial before Governor Felix where he is accused by the Jews of being a troublemaker who is constantly stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. They claimed: he is a ringleader of the cult known as the Nazarenes. Furthermore, he was trying to desecrate the Temple when we arrested him. At that point Felix, who was quite familiar with the Way, adjourned the hearing and said, wait until Lysias, the garrison commander, arrives. Then I will decide the case. He ordered an officer to keep Paul in custody but to give him some freedom and allow his friends to visit him and take care of his needs. A few days later Felix came back with his wife, Drusilla, who was Jewish. Sending for Paul, they listened as he told them about faith in Christ Jesus. As he reasoned with them about righteousness and self-control and the coming day of judgment, Felix became frightened. Go away for now, he replied. When it is more convenient, I'll call for you again. After two years went by in this way, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And because Felix wanted to gain favor with the Jewish people, he left Paul in prison.

Acts 25

Three days after Festus arrived in Caesarea to take over his new responsibilities from Felix, he left for Jerusalem where the leading priests and other Jewish leaders met with him and made their accusations against Paul. About eight or ten days later Festus returned to Caesarea, and on the following day he took his seat in court and ordered that Paul be brought in. The Jewish leaders from Jerusalem gathered around and made many serious accusations they couldn't prove. Paul denied the charges. I am not guilty of any crime against the Jewish laws or the Temple or the Roman government, he said. Then Festus, wanting to please the Jews, asked him, are you willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there? But Paul replied, No! This is the official Roman court, so I ought to be tried right here. You know very well I am not guilty of harming the Jews. If I have done something worthy of death, I don't refuse to die. But if I am innocent, no one has a right to turn me over to these men to kill me. I appeal to Caesar!

The Roman Commander takes dramatic steps to keep Paul from being assassinated under his watch, demonstrating God's protection for Paul.

Paul is unjustly jailed 2 years as a political prisoner.

Paul continues to testify before Governors & Kings.

A few days later King Agrippa arrived with his sister, Bernice, to pay their respects to Festus. During their stay of several days, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king. The accusations made against him weren't any of the crimes I expected. Instead, it was something about their religion and a dead man named Jesus, who Paul insists is alive. I'd like to hear the man myself, Agrippa said. And Festus replied, you will—tomorrow!

Festus ordered that Paul be brought in. Then Festus said, King Agrippa and all who are here, this is the man whose death is demanded by all the Jews, both here and in Jerusalem. But in my opinion, he has done nothing deserving death. However, since he appealed his case to the emperor, I have decided to send him to Rome. So, I have brought him before all of you, and especially you, King Agrippa, so that after we examine him, I might have something to write. For it makes no sense to send a prisoner to the emperor without specifying the charges against him!

Acts 26

Then King Agrippa said to Paul, you may speak in your defense. Paul responded, as the Jewish leaders are well aware, I was given a thorough Jewish training from my earliest childhood among my own people and in Jerusalem. If they would admit it, they know that I have been a member of the Pharisees, the strictest sect of our religion. Now I am on trial because of my hope in the fulfillment of God's promise made to our ancestors. In fact, that is why the twelve tribes of Israel zealously worship God night and day, and they share the same hope I have. Yet, Your Majesty, they accuse me for having this hope! Why does it seem incredible to any of you that God can raise the dead?

Paul then recounted what Jesus spoke to him on the Road to Damascus: I am sending you to the Gentiles to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God's people, who are set apart by faith in me. Paul continued, and so, King Agrippa, I obeyed that vision from heaven. I preached first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that all must repent of their sins and turn to God—and prove they have changed by the good things they do. But God has protected me right up to this present time so I can testify to everyone, from the least to the greatest. I teach nothing except what the prophets and Moses said would happen—that the Messiah would suffer and be the first to rise from the dead, and in this way announce God's light to Jews and Gentiles alike.

Festus shouted, Paul, you are insane. Too much study has made you crazy! But Paul replied, I am not insane, Most Excellent Festus. What I am saying is the sober truth. And King Agrippa knows about these things. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do - Agrippa interrupted him. Do you think you can persuade me to become a Christian so quickly? Paul replied, whether quickly or not, I pray to God that both you and everyone here in this audience might become the same as I am, except for these chains. Then the king, the governor, Bernice talked it over and agreed, this man hasn't done anything to deserve death or imprisonment. And Agrippa said to Festus, he could have been set free if he hadn't appealed to Caesar.

Paul's testimony before King Agrippa.

Notably, while Paul was commissioned to preach to the Gentiles, he spent much of his time preaching to the Jews who were a source of most of his problems & persecutions. God was very careful to give Jews across the entire Roman Empire an opportunity to repent.

The Roman rulers recognized Paul's innocence.

Acts 27

Paul is sent to Rome to stand trial before Caesar as he lawfully requested: we had several days of slow sailing, and we had lost a lot of time. The weather was becoming dangerous for sea travel because it was so late in the fall, and Paul spoke to the ship's officers about it. Men, he said, I believe there is trouble ahead if we go on—shipwreck, loss of cargo, and danger to our lives as well. But the officer in charge of the prisoners listened more to the ship's captain and the owner than to Paul.

After leaving the exposed harbor, gale-force winds started to batter the ship & the crew began throwing the cargo overboard. The terrible storm raged for many days, blotting out the sun and the stars, until at last all hope was gone. No one had eaten for a long time. Finally, Paul called the crew together and said, men, you should have listened to me in the first place and not left Crete. You would have avoided all this damage and loss. But take courage! None of you will lose your lives, even though the ship will go down. For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me, and he said, 'Don't be afraid, Paul, for you will surely stand trial before Caesar! What's more, God in his goodness has granted safety to everyone sailing with you.' Take courage! For I believe God. It will be just as he said. But we will be shipwrecked on an island.

Just as day was dawning, Paul urged everyone to eat. You have been so worried that you haven't touched food for two weeks, he said. Please eat something now for your own good. For not a hair of your heads will perish. Then he took some bread, gave thanks to God before them all, and broke off a piece and ate it. Then everyone was encouraged and began to eat— all 276 of us who were on board.

After running aground, the soldiers ordered all who could swim to jump overboard first and make for land. The others held on to planks or debris from the broken ship. So, everyone escaped safely to shore.

Acts 28

Once we were safe on shore, we learned that we were on the island of Malta. The people of the island were very kind to us. It was cold and rainy, so they built a fire on the shore to welcome us. As Paul gathered an armful of sticks and was laying them on the fire, a poisonous snake, driven out by the heat, bit him on the hand. Paul shook off the snake into the fire and was unharmed. The people waited for him to swell up or suddenly drop dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw that he wasn't harmed, they changed their minds and decided he was a god. Near the shore where we landed was an estate belonging to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us and treated us kindly for three days. As it happened, Publius's father was ill with fever and dysentery. Paul went in and prayed for him, and laying his hands on him, he healed him. Then all the other sick people on the island came and were healed. As a result, we were showered with honors, and when the time came to sail, people supplied us with everything we would need for the trip.

Three months later, Paul arrives in Rome and was permitted to have his own private lodging, though he was guarded by a soldier. Three days after Paul's arrival, he called together the local Jewish leaders. He said to them, brothers, I was arrested in Jerusalem

Paul's travel to stand trial in Rome was marked by satanic opposition in the form of a great storm. Paul tried to warn his captors to avoid this peril, but they ignored his counsel. God sends an angel to encourage Paul & then saves the life of everyone onboard.

Even as a captive, Paul continued to perform healing miracles on the island of Malta. He easily shakes off the snake that tries to impede his march into Rome, foreshadowing famous battles on the Island outlined in the Editor's Note.

and handed over to the Roman government, even though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our ancestors. The Romans tried me and wanted to release me, because they found no cause for the death sentence. I asked you to come here today so we could get acquainted and so I could explain to you that I am bound with this chain because I believe that the hope of Israel—the Messiah—has already come.

So, a time was set, and on that day a large number of people came to Paul's lodging. He explained and testified about the Kingdom of God and tried to persuade them about Jesus from the Scriptures. Using the law of Moses and the books of the prophets, he spoke to them from morning until evening. Some were persuaded by the things he said, but others did not believe. And after they had argued back and forth among themselves, they left with this final word from Paul: the Holy Spirit was right when he said to your ancestors through Isaiah the prophet 'go and say to this people: when you hear what I say, you will not understand. When you see what I do, you will not comprehend. For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear, and they have closed their eyes—so their eyes cannot see, and their ears cannot hear, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and let me heal them. So I want you to know that this salvation from God has also been offered to the Gentiles, and they will accept it.

For the next two years, Paul lived in Rome at his own expense. He welcomed all who visited him, boldly proclaiming the Kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ. And no one tried to stop him.

Editor's Note: The Island of Malta off the coast of Southern Italy represents a key battleground between Christianity & Satan. During the Great Siege of Malta in 1565, just 500 courageous Knights of Malta miraculously repelled the vast naval & land forces of the cruel Ottoman Turks who were poised to conquer all of Christian Europe once they got past Malta. From June 1940 to November 1942, the fight for the control of the strategically important island of the British Crown Colony of Malta pitted the air and naval forces of Fascist Italy & Nazi Germany against the Royal Air Force (RAF) and the Royal Navy. German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel recognized its importance & in May 1941 warned that "without Malta the Axis will end by losing control of North Africa". Malta was one of the most intensively bombed areas during the war. In December 1942, air & sea forces operating from Malta went over to the offensive. By May 1943, they had sunk 230 Axis ships in 164 days, the highest Allied sinking rate of the war. The Allied victory in Malta played a major role in the eventual Allied success in North Africa.

Acts concludes with Paul's final effort to evangelize the Jews living in Rome & his warning to them that they fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of rejecting Christ because of their hard heartedness. After Paul provides an opportunity for the Jews throughout the entire Roman Empire to repent, God justly destroys the Jerusalem Temple in 70AD.

Romans 1 - *Salvation by faith in Jesus rather than by following the Jewish law.*

This letter is from Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach his Good News. God promised this Good News long ago through his prophets in the holy Scriptures. The Good News is about his Son. In his earthly life he was born into King David's family line, and he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus Christ our Lord. Through Christ, God has given us the privilege and authority as apostles to tell Gentiles everywhere what God has done for them, so that they will believe and obey him, bringing glory to his name. I am writing to all of you in Rome who are loved by God and are called to be his own holy people. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. God knows how often I pray for you. Day and night I bring you and your needs in prayer to God, whom I serve with all my heart by spreading the Good News about his Son.

I long to visit you so I can bring you some spiritual gift that will help you grow strong in the Lord. I want to work among you and see spiritual fruit. I have a great sense of obligation to people in both the civilized world and the rest of the world, to the educated and uneducated alike. So, I am eager to come to you in Rome, too, to preach the Good News. For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes. This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, It is through faith that a righteous person has life.

Romans 2

Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin? He will judge everyone according to what they have done. He will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers. Non-Jews, who do not have God's written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right. This is the message I proclaim—that the day is coming when God, through Christ Jesus, will judge everyone's secret life.

A true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not merely obeying the letter of the law; rather, it is a change of heart produced by the Spirit. And a person with a changed heart seeks praise from God, not from people.

Romans 3

As the Scriptures say, No one is righteous—not even one. No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. All have turned away; all have become useless. The purpose of the Jewish law was to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God. For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are. But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no

Paul's letter to the Romans is in preparation for a planned visit that he actually makes as a prisoner.

We bring God glory by believing & obeying Him. We accomplish this mandate through faith in Jesus' righteousness.

Jesus came to deal with our sins that separate us from God & heaven. There is no way around this for either the Jew or non-Jew. We must get our heart right before Jesus.

Perhaps one of the most important chapters in the Bible. We cannot earn salvation by following rules.

matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. God is fair and just and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus. Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law. There is only one God, and he makes people right with himself only by faith.

We must trust that Jesus paid for our sins on the cross. This joyful news is why we are obedient to our Lord & Savior.

Romans 4

The Scriptures tell us, Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith. When people work, their wages are not a gift, but something they have earned. But people are counted as righteous, not because of their work, but because of their faith in God who forgives sinners. King David also spoke of this when he described the happiness of those who are declared righteous without working for it: oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight.

Abraham pleased God by believing God's promise to him even though it seemed impossible in human terms. Every human can become a son of Abraham & God by putting our faith in Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross which sets us free from our sins. This act of faith allows us to serve our living God.

Abraham was counted as righteous by God because of his faith before he was circumcised, showing that God accepted him before he followed the law of circumcision. God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was based not on his obedience to God's law, but on a right relationship with God that comes by faith. The promise is received by faith. It is given as a free gift. Abraham is the father of all who believe. That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, I have made you the father of many nations. This happened because Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing. Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping—believing that he would become the father of many nations. And Abraham's faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah's womb. Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous. God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead who was handed over to die because of our sins and raised to life to make us right with God.

Romans 5

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory. We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love. When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ,

We have been made right in God's sight by faith.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

Problems help us develop endurance & strength of character.

There is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ. Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. God's wonderful grace rules, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Blood of Christ saves us from condemnation.

Jesus overcame Original Sin.

Romans 6

For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. Death no longer has any power over Jesus and he now lives for the glory of God. So we also should consider ourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. Sin is no longer your master, now you live under the freedom of God's grace.

We died and were buried with Christ by baptism. Our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. Now we must give ourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that we will become holy & receive God's free gift of eternal life.

Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy. But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 7

So, my dear brothers and sisters, this is the point: You died to the power of the law when you died with Christ. And now you are united with the one who was raised from the dead. As a result, we can produce a harvest of good deeds for God. When we were controlled by our old nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced a harvest of sinful deeds, resulting in death. But now we have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power. Now we can serve God in the new way of living in the Spirit.

Paul outlines our struggle with our sinful human nature while we live in our bodies.

Paul explains our struggle with sin: I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: in my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

Our minds want to do good, but our sinful flesh wants to do evil.

Jesus represents the only answer to this dilemma.

Romans 8

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. God sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit. Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.

There is no condemnation for us who belong to Christ Jesus.

Letting the Spirit control our mind leads to life & peace.

You are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you. If through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So, you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, Abba, Father. For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory.

We will live if we put to death the deeds of our sinful nature through the power of the Spirit. We are led by God's Spirit & are children of God.

We look forward to receiving new bodies that will free us from our sinful nature.

Even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it. But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.)

Romans 9

It is God who decides to show mercy. We can neither choose it nor work for it. God chooses to show mercy to some, and he chooses to harden the hearts of others so they refuse to listen. We are among those whom he selected.

What does all this mean? Even though the non-Jews were not trying to follow God's standards, they were made right with God. And it was by faith that this took place. But the people of Israel, who tried so hard to get right with God by keeping the law, never succeeded. Why not? Because they were trying to get right with God by keeping the law instead of by trusting in him. They stumbled over the great rock in their path. God warned them of this in the Scriptures when he said, I am placing a stone in Jerusalem that makes people stumble, a rock that makes them fall. But anyone who trusts in Him will never be disgraced.

We are very special because God has chosen us as His heirs.

Anyone who trusts in Him will never be disgraced.

Romans 10

For Christ has already accomplished the purpose for which the law was given. As a result, all who believe in him are made right with God.

The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart. And that message is the very message about faith that we preach: If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, how beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news! But not everyone welcomes the Good News, for Isaiah the prophet said, Lord, who has believed our message? So faith comes from hearing the Good News about Christ.

If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Faith is developed by listening to the Good News about Christ.

Romans 11

A few of the people of Israel have remained faithful because of God's grace—his undeserved kindness in choosing them. And since it is through God's kindness, then it is not by their good works. For in that case, God's grace would not be what it really is—free and undeserved. If the people of Israel turn from their unbelief, they will be grafted in again, for God has the power to graft them back into the tree.

God's gifts and his call can never be withdrawn. Oh, how great are God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways! For who can know the Lord's thoughts? Who knows enough to give him advice? And who has given him so much that he needs to pay it back? For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen.

Paul instructs us not to give up on the Jews who can be converted to Christianity if they are willing to turn from their unbelief.

Romans 12

I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So, if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all! Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. Never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.

We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.

Romans 13

Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law. The commandments are summed up in this one commandment: love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law. Clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.

Live holy & love one another.

Romans 14

Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don't argue with them about what they think is right or wrong. We don't live for ourselves or die for ourselves. If we live, it's to honor the Lord. And if we die, it's to honor the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. Don't look down on another believer. Remember, we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For the Scriptures say, 'as surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bend to me, and every tongue will declare allegiance to God.' Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God. So let's stop condemning each other. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall.

Harmony among Christians requires tolerance for the differences between each other's faith practices. Convictions are not the same for every believer.

The Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. If you serve Christ with this attitude, you will please God, and others will approve of you, too. So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up. Blessed are those who don't feel guilty for

doing something they have decided is right. But if you have doubts about whether or not you should eat something, you are sinning if you go ahead and do it. For you are not following your convictions. If you do anything you believe is not right, you are sinning.

Romans 15

We must not just please ourselves. We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord.

May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

I dare not boast about anything except what Christ has done through me. The non-Jews were convinced by the power of miraculous signs and wonders by the power of God's Spirit as I fully presented the Good News of Christ from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum. The believers in Macedonia and Achaia have eagerly taken up an offering for the poor among the believers in Jerusalem. Pray that I will be rescued from those in Judea who refuse to obey God. Pray also that the believers there will be willing to accept the donation I am taking to Jerusalem. Now may God, who gives us his peace, be with you all. Amen.

Romans 16

Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people's faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them. Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words, they deceive innocent people. But everyone knows that you are obedient to the Lord. This makes me very happy. I want you to be wise in doing right and to stay innocent of any wrong. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. Now all glory to God, who is able to make you strong, just as my Good News says. All glory to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, forever. Amen.

Accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.

This represents appropriate advice to the Church given the vast number of Christian denominations.

Paul sends greetings to his expansive ministry team.

Paul warns us to guard against false teaching & commends us to the Lord's grace.

1 Corinthians 1 - *Paul urges the gifted Corinthians to replace worldliness with love.*

I am writing to God's church in Corinth, to you who have been called by God to be his own holy people. He made you holy by means of Christ Jesus, just as he did for all people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. I always thank my God for you and for the gracious gifts he has given you, now that you belong to Christ Jesus.

Paul writes his 1st letter to the church in the important city of Corinth, Greece.

God has enriched your church in every way—with all of your eloquent words and all of your knowledge. Now you have every spiritual gift you need as you eagerly wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will keep you strong to the end so that you will be free from all blame on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns. God will do this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Members of this upscale church were gifted by the Lord.

I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.

Paul advocates for church unity.

1 Corinthians 2

I decided that while I was with you I would forget everything except Jesus Christ, the one who was crucified. I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling. And my message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit. I did this so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God. The wisdom we speak of is the mystery of God—his plan that was previously hidden, even though he made it for our ultimate glory before the world began. That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him. But it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God's deep secrets. And we have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us. But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means. Who can know the Lord's thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him? But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.

Paul indicates that he is not gifted as a speaker, but relies on the power of the Holy Spirit.

We need God's Spirit to understand His truths. People without the Spirit think it is all foolishness.

1 Corinthians 3

You still aren't ready, for you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren't you living like people of the world? When one of you says, I am a follower of Paul, and another says, I follow Apollos, aren't you acting just like people of the world? I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. It's not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What's important is that God makes the seed grow.

Paul accuses the gifted Corinthians of being wordly, boasting about their denominations.

Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you? So don't boast about following a particular human leader. For everything belongs to you— whether Paul or Apollos or Peter, or the world, or life and death, or the present and the future. Everything belongs to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

Together, all the believers represent God's united temple.

1 Corinthians 4

As for me, it matters very little how I might be evaluated by you or by any human authority. I don't even trust my own judgment on this point. My conscience is clear, but that doesn't prove I'm right. It is the Lord himself who will examine me and decide. God will reveal our private motives and give to each one whatever praise is due. What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if everything you have is from God, why boast as though it were not a gift?

Paul defends himself from the arrogant Corinthians who judge him to be a fool. Paul points out how much he has suffered for the Lord and challenges them to evaluate whether they have as much of God's power as he does.

Our dedication to Christ makes us look like fools, but you claim to be so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are so powerful! You are honored, but we are ridiculed. Even now we go hungry and thirsty, and we don't have enough clothes to keep warm. We are often beaten and have no home. We work wearily with our own hands to earn our living. We bless those who curse us. We are patient with those who abuse us. We appeal gently when evil things are said about us. Yet we are treated like the world's garbage, like everybody's trash—right up to the present moment.

Some of you have become arrogant, but I'll find out whether these arrogant people just give pretentious speeches or whether they really have God's power. For the Kingdom of God is not just a lot of talk; it is living by God's power.

1 Corinthians 5

I can hardly believe the report about the sexual immorality going on among you— something that even pagans don't do.

I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin. But I wasn't talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that. I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people. It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, you must remove the evil person from among you.

Paul strongly instructs us to cast out unrepentant sinners from the church to keep their sinful practice from polluting the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 6

How dare you file a lawsuit and ask a secular court to decide the matter instead of taking it to other believers! Don't you realize that someday we believers will judge the world. Don't you realize that we will judge angels? So, you should surely be able to resolve ordinary disputes in this life.

One day we will judge angels.

Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our

Run from sexual sin!

God. Our bodies were not made for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies. Your bodies are actually parts of Christ! Should a man take his body, which is part of Christ, and join it to a prostitute? Never! Run from sexual sin! Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

1 Corinthians 7

A wife must not leave her husband. But if she does leave him, let her remain single or else be reconciled to him. And the husband must not leave his wife. If a fellow believer has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to continue living with him, he must not leave her. And if a believing woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to continue living with her, she must not leave him.

Each of you should remain as you were when God called you. God paid a high price for you, so don't be enslaved by the world. Those who use the things of the world should not become attached to them. For this world as we know it will soon pass away. I am saying this for your benefit, not to place restrictions on you. I want you to do whatever will help you serve the Lord best, with as few distractions as possible.

1 Corinthians 8

There may be so-called gods both in heaven and on earth, and some people actually worship many gods and many lords. But for us, there is one God, the Father, by whom all things were created, and for whom we live. And there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things were created, and through whom we live.

Some are accustomed to thinking of idols as being real, so when they eat food that has been offered to idols, they think of it as the worship of real gods, and their weak consciences are violated. Don't encourage these believers to eat the food offered to idols just because you know there is nothing to it - it could cause them to sin against Christ when they do something they believe is wrong.

1 Corinthians 9

The one who plows and the one who threshes the grain should both expect a share of the harvest. Since we have planted spiritual seed among you, aren't we entitled to a harvest of physical food and drink? Yet I have never used any of these rights. And I am not writing this to suggest that I want to start now. Preaching the Good News is not something I can boast about. I am compelled by God to do it. What then is my pay? It is the opportunity to preach the Good News without charging anyone.

Even though I am a free man with no master, I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ. When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When I am with the non-Jews who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings.

Learn contentment & don't strive for advancement. God paid a high price for you, so don't be enslaved by the world. Focus on serving the Lord.

There is one God & we don't worship or consider other gods. Some believers need to guard against the exposure to these false gods.

Preachers are entitled to receive financial support from their flock.

Paul compares evangelism with a sporting event in which he competes to win.

Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should.

1 Corinthians 10

The ancient Israelites drank from the spiritual rock that traveled with them in the wilderness, and that rock was Christ. Yet God was not pleased with most of them, and their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. These things happened as a warning to us, so that we would not crave evil things as they did, or worship idols as some of them did. And don't grumble as some of them did and then were destroyed by the angel of death. If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

If someone who isn't a believer asks you home for dinner, accept the invitation if you want to. Eat whatever is offered to you without raising questions of conscience. But suppose someone tells you, this meat was offered to an idol. Don't eat it, out of consideration for the conscience of the one who told you. It might not be a matter of conscience for you, but it is for the other person.

When we bless the cup at the Lord's Table, aren't we sharing in the blood of Christ? And when we break the bread, aren't we sharing in the body of Christ? You cannot drink from the cup of the Lord and from the cup of demons, too. You say, I am allowed to do anything—but not everything is good for you. You say, I am allowed to do anything—but not everything is beneficial. Don't be concerned for your own good but for the good of others. So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Don't give offense to Jews or non-Jews or the church of God. I, too, try to please everyone in everything I do. I don't just do what is best for me; I do what is best for others so that many may be saved.

1 Corinthians 11

But there is one thing I want you to know: The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Woman reflects man's glory. For the first man didn't come from woman, but the first woman came from man. And man was not made for woman, but woman was made for man. But among the Lord's people, women are not independent of men, and men are not independent of women. For although the first woman came from man, every other man was born from a woman, and everything comes from God.

I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it. For every time you eat this bread and

Paul warns us to keep from idols & grumbling. God can keep us from temptations by showing us a way out.

He doesn't want us eating food that has been identified as something offered to idols for the sake of those offering it to us.

You should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup. For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment

drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again. So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup. For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself. That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died. But if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged by God in this way. Yet when we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

upon yourself. That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died.

1 Corinthians 12

No one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit. There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts to help each other, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. The Church has many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. We should earnestly desire the gifts most helpful to the entire church.

We have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand, that does not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. The eye can never say to the hand, I don't need you. Some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad.

Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in unknown languages. Are we all apostles? Do we all have the power to do miracles? Of course not! So, you should earnestly desire the most helpful gifts. But now let me show you a way of life that is best of all.

1 Corinthians 13

If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I

Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the

didn't love others, I would have gained nothing. Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

greatest of these is love.

Love will last forever! Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 14

Let love be your highest goal! But you should also desire the special abilities the Spirit gives—especially the ability to prophesy. For if you have the ability to speak in tongues, you will be talking only to God, since people won't be able to understand you. You will be speaking by the power of the Spirit, but it will all be mysterious. But one who prophesies strengthens others, encourages them, and comforts them. A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally, but one who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens the entire church. Since you are so eager to have the special abilities the Spirit gives, seek those that will strengthen the whole church.

So, my dear brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and don't forbid speaking in tongues. But be sure that everything is done properly and in order.

I will pray in the spirit, and I will also pray in words I understand. I will sing in the spirit, and I will also sing in words I understand. I thank God that I speak in tongues more than any of you.

Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize. When you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in tongues, and another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must strengthen all of you. God is not a God of disorder but of peace. So, my dear brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and don't forbid speaking in tongues. But be sure that everything is done properly and in order.

1 Corinthians 15

I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I (Paul) also saw him.

Christ has been raised from the dead. Just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies. Be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do

If our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. Christ must reign until he humbles all his enemies beneath his feet. And the last enemy to be destroyed is death. But someone may ask, how will the dead be raised? What kind of bodies will they have? Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also

spiritual bodies. Our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. Thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ. So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.

for the Lord is
ever useless.

1 Corinthians 16

Now regarding your question about the money being collected for God's people in Jerusalem. You should follow the same procedure I gave to the churches in Galatia. On the first day of each week, you should each put aside a portion of the money you have earned.

Be on guard.
Stand firm in
the faith. Be
courageous. Be
strong. And do
everything with
love.

Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong. And do everything with love. May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love to all of you in Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 1 - *Paul asserts his credentials & urges the church to donate.*

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give others the same comfort God has given us. For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ.

You know about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. We expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead. He did rescue us from mortal danger, and he will rescue us again. We have placed our confidence in him, and he will continue to rescue us. And you are helping us by praying for us.

You may be asking why I changed my plan to visit you again. Do you think I make my plans carelessly? Do you think I am like people of the world who say yes when they really mean no? Jesus Christ, the Son of God, does not waver between yes and no. He is God's ultimate yes, he always does what he says. For all of God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding yes! And through Christ, our amen (which means yes) ascends to God for his glory. It is God who enables us, along with you, to stand firm for Christ. He has commissioned us, and he has identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything he has promised us.

We want to work together with you so you will be full of joy, for it is by your own faith that you stand firm.

2 Corinthians 2

I am not overstating it when I say that the man who caused all the trouble hurt all of you more than he hurt me. Most of you opposed him, and that was punishment enough. Now, however, it is time to forgive and comfort him. When you forgive this man, I forgive him, too. And when I forgive whatever needs to be forgiven, I do so with Christ's authority for your benefit, so that Satan will not outsmart us. For we are familiar with his evil schemes.

Thank God! He has made us his captives and continues to lead us along in Christ's triumphal procession. Now he uses us to spread the knowledge of Christ everywhere, like a sweet perfume. Our lives are a Christ-like fragrance rising up to God. But this fragrance is perceived differently by those who are being saved and by those who are perishing. To those who are perishing, we are a dreadful smell of death and doom. But to those who are being saved, we are a life-giving perfume.

2 Corinthians 3

It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God. He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. This is a covenant not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life.

Paul starts his 2nd letter to the Corinthians by explaining how God always comforts His people. Then he explains that he changed his plan to visit them because he wanted to give them more time to deal with the sinner identified in the 1st letter.

Paul advocates forgiveness for the repentant sinner.

While Paul postponed his visit, he visited Troas & looked for Titus in Macedonia.

Paul restates that we have a new covenant based upon Spirit & faith

How glorious is the new way which makes us right with God! Since this new way gives us such confidence, we can be very bold. For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. All of us who have had the veil (the old system of laws) removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

which is superior to the old law-based covenant.

2 Corinthians 4

Therefore, since God in his mercy has given us this new way, we never give up. We don't go around preaching about ourselves. We preach that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we ourselves are your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, let there be light in the darkness, has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.

Paul explains his motivation to preach the Gospel. God put a light in his heart that he wanted to share with others. God is glorified as more people accept Jesus as their savior.

We live under constant danger of death because we serve Jesus, but we continue to preach because we have the same kind of faith the psalmist had when he said, I believed in God, so I spoke. We know that God, who raised the Lord Jesus, will also raise us with Jesus and present us to himself together with you. And as God's grace reaches more and more people, there will be great thanksgiving, and God will receive more and more glory. That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So, we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

The things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

2 Corinthians 5

We will put on heavenly bodies; we will not be spirits without bodies. God himself has prepared us for this, and as a guarantee he has given us his Holy Spirit. So, we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord. For we live by believing and not by seeing. So, whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please him. Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them. Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So, we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, come back to God! For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

We are headed to heaven with new bodies. However, no matter where we live it is our goal to please Him. We have received a new life in Christ & our old life is gone.

We live by believing and not by seeing.

2 Corinthians 6

We prove ourselves by our purity, our understanding, our patience, our kindness, by the Holy Spirit within us, and by our sincere love. We faithfully preach the truth. God's power is working in us. We use the weapons of righteousness in the right hand for attack and the left hand for defense. We serve God whether people honor us or despise us, whether they slander us or praise us. We are honest, but they call us impostors. Oh, dear Corinthian friends! I am asking you to respond as if you were my own children. Open your hearts to us!

Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore, come out from among unbelievers, and separate yourselves from them, says the Lord. Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you. And I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.

2 Corinthians 7

Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God. I am not sorry that I sent that severe letter to you (1 Corinthians) because it produced the kind of sorrow that God wants us to experience which leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.

2 Corinthians 8

Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving. You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich. Now you should finish what you started. Let the eagerness you showed in the beginning be matched now by your giving. Give in proportion to what you have. Whatever you give is acceptable if you give it eagerly. And give according to what you have, not what you don't have. Of course, I don't mean your giving should make life easy for others and hard for yourselves. I only mean that there should be some equality.

Paul announces that he will travel together with Titus to guard against any criticism for the way they are handling this generous financial gift. We are careful to be honorable before the Lord, but we also want everyone else to see that we are honorable.

2 Corinthians 9

Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves a person who gives cheerfully. And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. As the

Paul's life & testimony prove his credentials & he asks the Corinthians to trust him.

Paul warns us to keep separate from unbelievers.

Paul was happy that his 1st letter sparked repentance, helping purify the Corinthians.

Paul asks the Corinthians to donate towards his collection for the church in Jerusalem. He asks them to only give what they can afford.

Paul uses an analogy of giving & sowing seed, the more the

Scriptures say, they share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever. For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. So, two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God. As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ. And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the overflowing grace God has given to you. Thank God for this gift too wonderful for words!

farmer sows, the bigger his crop.

For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ.

2 Corinthians 10

Now I, Paul, appeal to you with the gentleness and kindness of Christ—though I realize you think I am timid in person and bold only when I write from far away. We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.

Paul defends his authority to a church that was clearly questioning his right to govern them from a distance.

We will not boast about things done outside our area of authority. We will boast only about what has happened within the boundaries of the work God has given us, which includes our working with you. We are not reaching beyond these boundaries when we claim authority over you, as if we had never visited you. For we were the first to travel all the way to Corinth with the Good News of Christ. Nor do we boast and claim credit for the work someone else has done. Instead, we hope that your faith will grow so that the boundaries of our work among you will be extended. As the Scriptures say, if you want to boast, boast only about the Lord. When people commend themselves, it doesn't count for much. The important thing is for the Lord to commend them.

2 Corinthians 11

I hope you will put up with a little more of my foolishness. Please bear with me. For I am jealous for you with the jealousy of God himself. I promised you as a pure bride to one husband—Christ.

Paul asserts his authority over the church that he himself established.

Paul goes on to assert his authority over the false apostles vying for the church's attention. Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So, it is no wonder that his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. In the end they will get the punishment their wicked deeds deserve.

2 Corinthians 12

This boasting will do no good, but I must go on. I will reluctantly tell about visions and revelations from the Lord. I was caught up to the third heaven fourteen years ago. Whether I was in my body or out of my body, I don't know—only God knows. Yes, only God knows whether I was in my body or outside my body. But I do know that I was caught up to paradise and heard things so astounding that they cannot be expressed in words, things no human is allowed to tell.

Paul further asserts his authority by recounting his catching-up to the third heaven

To keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud. Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time he said, my grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness. So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.

& the proof of his miracles & signs.

You have made me act like a fool. I certainly gave you proof that I am an apostle. For I patiently did many signs and wonders and miracles among you. The only thing I failed to do, which I do in the other churches, was to become a financial burden to you. Perhaps you think we're saying these things just to defend ourselves. No, we tell you this as Christ's servants, and with God as our witness. Everything we do, dear friends, is to strengthen you.

2 Corinthians 13

Dear brothers and sisters, I close my letter with these last words: Be joyful. Grow to maturity. Encourage each other. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Paul's conclusion.

Galatians 1 - *Paul reinforces salvation by the Spirit as opposed to following laws.*

May God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. Jesus gave his life for our sins, just as God our Father planned, in order to rescue us from this evil world in which we live. Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant. But even before I was born, God chose me and called me by his marvelous grace. Then it pleased him to reveal his Son to me so that I would proclaim the Good News about Jesus.

Paul greets the Galatians with an explanation about his credentials.

Galatians 2

We know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law.

Paul warns the believers not to return to Judaism. If keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die.

When I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So, I died to the law—I stopped trying to meet all its requirements—so that I might live for God. My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not treat the grace of God as meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die.

Galatians 3

Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit by obeying the law of Moses? Of course not! You received the Spirit because you believed the message you heard about Christ. How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? Have you experienced so much for nothing? Surely it was not in vain, was it? I ask you again, does God give you the Holy Spirit and work miracles among you because you obey the law? Of course not! It is because you believe the message you heard about Christ. In the same way, Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith. The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God. What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would make the non-Jews right in his sight because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, all nations will be blessed through you. So, all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.

After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own effort? All who put their faith in Christ share Abraham's blessings.

Galatians 4

When the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, Abba, Father. Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir.

God sent Jesus to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children.

The Scriptures say that Abraham had two sons, one from his slave wife and one from his freeborn wife. The son of the slave wife was born in a human attempt to bring about the fulfillment of God's promise. But the son of the freeborn wife was born as God's own fulfillment of his promise. These two women serve as an illustration of God's two

covenants. The first woman, Hagar, represents Mount Sinai where people received the law that enslaved them. And now Jerusalem is just like Mount Sinai in Arabia, because she and her children live in slavery to the law. But the other woman, Sarah, represents the heavenly Jerusalem. She is the free woman, and she is our mother. And you, dear brothers and sisters, are children of the promise, just like Isaac.

Galatians 5

Christ has truly set us free. If you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God's grace. We who live by the Spirit eagerly wait to receive by faith the righteousness God has promised to us. What is important is faith expressing itself in love. Don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: Love your neighbor as yourself.

Let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.

The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

Galatians 6

If another believer is overcome by some sin, you should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important. Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else.

Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. So, let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. Whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.

As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world's interest in me has also died. What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation. May God's peace and mercy be upon all who live by this principle; they are the new people of God. Dear brothers and sisters, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature.

The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.

Pay careful attention to your own work. You will always harvest what you plant. Whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.

Ephesians 1 - God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms.

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So, we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding. God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan. And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.

You have heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance. I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.

Ephesians 2

God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms.

We have received an inheritance from God.

Christ has identified us as his own by giving us the Holy Spirit.

Paul prays that our hearts will be flooded with light so that we can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called. The church is made complete by Christ, who fills all things with himself.

God raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms. Once we were far away from God,

Now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ. For Christ himself has brought peace to us. We are citizens along with all of God's holy people. We are members of God's family. Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord, part of a dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

but now we have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ

Ephesians 3

This is God's plan: that we might share in the riches inherited by God's children. We enjoy the promise of blessings because we belong to Christ Jesus. By God's grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News. Though I am the least deserving of all God's people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling you about the endless treasures available to you in Christ. God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence.

We enjoy the promise of blessings because we belong to Jesus. Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence. Through God's unlimited resources He empowers us with inner strength.

I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 4

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.

Paul wants us to live a life worthy of God's calling. We must be patient with each other & forgive one another so we can be bound together in peace. The goal is unity, with each part of the Body of Christ doing its work.

He has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. That is why the Scriptures say, when he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people. Christ also descended to our lowly world. And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself. Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

We will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. Throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

Throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes

Don't sin by letting anger control you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil. If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Ephesians 5

Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God. For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. Live as people of light! For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true. Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ.

Carefully determine what pleases the Lord and live as people of light.

Each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. As the Scriptures say, a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Ephesians 6

Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord. Employees, obey your earthly employers with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the

Work with enthusiasm as if you are serving God rather than people.

Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do. Employers, treat your employees in the same way. Don't threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites.

Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.

Peace be with you, dear brothers and sisters, and may God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you love with faithfulness. May God's grace be eternally upon all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor & stand firm against all the devil's strategies. Base your life on God's truth, rely on God's righteousness, build-up your faith shield, don't doubt your salvation & confess Biblical promises to take ground. Constantly pray over all things!

Philippians 1 - *Great instructions on achieving peace of mind & heart.*

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return. May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God.

I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains because of Christ. And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear. I know that as you pray for me and the Spirit of Jesus Christ helps me, this will lead to my deliverance.

For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better. But if I live, I can do more fruitful work for Christ. So, I really don't know which is better. I'm torn between two desires: I long to go and be with Christ, which would be far better for me. But for your sakes, it is better that I continue to live. Knowing this, I am convinced that I will remain alive so I can continue to help all of you grow and experience the joy of your faith. And when I come to you again, you will have even more reason to take pride in Christ Jesus because of what he is doing through me.

Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing together with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News. Don't be intimidated in any way by your enemies. This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God himself.

Philippians 2

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.

Paul is writing to all of God's holy people in Philippi who belong to Christ Jesus, including the church leaders and deacons.

May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ.

Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ.

Paul encourages believers to remain united & serve one another, having the same attitude as Christ who humbled Himself as a

Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

human to save us.

Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ's return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless.

Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.

Philippians 3

Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. I never get tired of telling you these things, and I do it to safeguard your faith. For we who worship by the Spirit of God put no confidence in human effort.

Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord.

I once thought these things (following the Jewish law) were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead.

God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith.

I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. But we must hold on to the progress we have already made.

I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. I focus on forgetting the past & looking forward to what lies ahead.

We are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.

Philippians 4

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stay true to the Lord. Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of

Always be full of joy in the Lord. Don't worry about anything; pray about everything. Tell

praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me. Then the God of peace will be with you.

I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.

You have done well to share with me in my present difficulty. I want you to receive a reward for your kindness. At the moment I have all I need—and more! I am generously supplied with the gifts you sent me. They are a sweet-smelling sacrifice that is acceptable and pleasing to God. And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus. Now all glory to God our Father forever and ever! Amen. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand.

We can do everything through Christ, who gives us strength.

Colossians 1 - *Paul explains that Jesus is God.*

We are writing to God's holy people in the city of Colosse, who are faithful brothers and sisters in Christ. May God our Father give you grace and peace. We always pray for you, and we give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all of God's people, which come from your confident hope of what God has reserved for you in heaven. This Good News that is going out all over the world is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace.

Epaphras, our beloved co-worker has told us about the love for others that the Holy Spirit has given you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better. We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy, always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light. For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross. This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault. But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it.

God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for everyone. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his glory. So, we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ. That's why I work and struggle so hard, depending on Christ's mighty power that works within me.

This Good News that is going out all over the world is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives.

Paul prays that the church will have complete knowledge of God's will and that God will give them spiritual wisdom & understanding. He also prays that they will be strengthened by God's glorious power.

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.

God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ.

This is the secret: Christ lives in us!

Colossians 2

I want the churches to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So, you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority. When you came to Christ, your sinful nature was cut away. For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.

Christ, the head of the body, holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it. You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world.

Colossians 3

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory. So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you.

Put on your new nature and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. In this new life, it doesn't matter who you were, Christ is all that matters and he lives in all of us. Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly. Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord. Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged. Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord

In Christ lies hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Let your roots grow down into Jesus, and let your lives be built on him.

Paul declares that Jesus is God: For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body.

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on heaven where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Your real life is hidden with Christ. Clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in harmony. Let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts and always be thankful.

will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.

Colossians 4

Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart. Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am here in chains. Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should. Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.

Paul's ministry team prays for each other, asking God for the strength to follow His will.

Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.

1 Thessalonians 1 - *Paul encourages the Church to love one another.*

This letter is from Paul, Silas, and Timothy. We are writing to the church in Thessalonica, to you who belong to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. May God give you grace and peace. We always thank God for all of you and pray for you constantly. As we pray to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and the enduring hope you have because of our Lord Jesus Christ. We know, dear brothers and sisters, that God loves you and has chosen you to be his own people. For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true. And you know of our concern for you from the way we lived when we were with you.

This letter is from Paul, Silas, and Timothy writing to the church in Thessalonica.

Wherever we go we find people telling us about your faith in God. And they speak of how you are looking forward to the coming of God's Son from heaven—Jesus, whom God raised from the dead. He is the one who has rescued us from the terrors of the coming judgment.

1 Thessalonians 2

God gave us the courage to declare his Good News to you boldly, in spite of great opposition. You can see we were not preaching with any deceit or impure motives or trickery. For we speak as messengers approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News. Our purpose is to please God, not people. He alone examines the motives of our hearts.

Paul defends his credentials as an Apostle.

Don't you remember, dear brothers and sisters, how hard we worked among you? Night and day we toiled to earn a living so that we would not be a burden to any of you as we preached God's Good News to you. You yourselves are our witnesses—and so is God—that we were devout and honest and faultless toward all of you believers. And you know that we treated each of you as a father treats his own children. We pleaded with you, encouraged you, and urged you to live your lives in a way that God would consider worthy. For he called you to share in his Kingdom and glory. Therefore, we never stop thanking God that when you received his message from us, you didn't think of our words as mere human ideas. You accepted what we said as the very word of God—which, of course, it is. And this word continues to work in you who believe.

Paul's instructions are not human ideas but the very Word of God.

We wanted very much to come to you, and I, Paul, tried again and again, but Satan prevented us. After all, what gives us hope and joy, and what will be our proud reward and crown as we stand before our Lord Jesus when he returns? It is you! Yes, you are our pride and joy.

1 Thessalonians 3

Timothy has just returned, bringing us good news about your faith and love. He reports that you always remember our visit with joy and that you want to see us as much as we want to see you. So, we have been greatly encouraged in the midst of our troubles and suffering. It gives us new life to know that you are standing firm in the Lord. How we thank God for you! Because of you we have great joy as we enter God's presence. Night and day we pray earnestly for you, asking God to let us see you again to fill the gaps in your faith.

May the Lord make your love for one another grow & overflow. May he make your hearts strong,

May the Lord make your love for one another and for all people grow and overflow, just as our love for you overflows. May he, as a result, make your hearts strong, blameless, and holy as you stand before God our Father when our Lord Jesus comes again with all his holy people. Amen.

blameless, and holy when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy people.

1 Thessalonians 4

Dear brothers and sisters, we urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus to live in a way that pleases God. You live this way already, and we encourage you to do so even more. God's will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. God has called us to live holy lives, not impure lives. Therefore, anyone who refuses to live by these rules is not disobeying human teaching but is rejecting God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

God has called us to live holy lives, not impure lives.

We don't need to write to you about the importance of loving each other, for God himself has taught you to love one another. Indeed, you already show your love for all the believers throughout Macedonia. Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before. Then people who are not believers will respect the way you live, and you will not need to depend on others.

Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands.

For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died. The Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. Encourage each other with these words.

Be encouraged! The Lord is returning for us.

1 Thessalonians 5

The day of the Lord's return will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night. But you aren't in the dark about these things, dear brothers and sisters, and you won't be surprised when the day of the Lord comes like a thief. For you are all children of the light and of the day; we don't belong to darkness and night. So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be clearheaded. But let us who live in the light be clearheaded, protected by the armor of faith and love, and wearing as our helmet the confidence of our salvation. For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us. Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever. Encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

Don't try to predict the Lord's return, keep spiritually alert.

Dear brothers and sisters, honor those who are your leaders in the Lord's work. They work hard among you and give you spiritual guidance. Show them great respect and wholehearted love because of their work. And live peacefully with each other.

Believers don't have to worry because God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us.

Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are lazy. Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. Be patient with everyone. See that no one pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good to each other and to all people. Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's

Warn those who are lazy. Encourage

will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. Do not scoff at prophecies, but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. Stay away from every kind of evil. Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful.

those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. Always be joyful. Never stop praying.

2 Thessalonians 1 - *While Jesus will return, we are better off focusing on building our faith.*

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. Dear brothers and sisters, we can't help but thank God for you, because your faith is flourishing and your love for one another is growing. In his justice he will pay back those who persecute you. And God will provide rest for you who are being persecuted and also for us when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven. When he comes on that day, he will receive glory from his holy people—praise from all who believe. And this includes you, for you believed what we told you about him. So, we keep on praying for you, asking our God to enable you to live a life worthy of his call. May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do. Then the name of our Lord Jesus will be honored because of the way you live, and you will be honored along with him. This is all made possible because of the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ.

God will provide rest for you who are being persecuted and also for us when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven.

2 Thessalonians 2

Don't be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that the day of the Lord has already begun. Don't believe them, even if they claim to have had a spiritual vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed—the one who brings destruction. He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.

Paul warns that since there will be lying & confusion about end times, we should avoid obsessing on the Lord's return. Better to stand firm and keep a strong grip on our Christian teachings. May God strengthen & comfort us.

As for us, we can't help but thank God for you, dear brothers and sisters loved by the Lord. We are always thankful that God chose you to be among the first to experience salvation—a salvation that came through the Spirit who makes you holy and through your belief in the truth. He called you to salvation when we told you the Good News; now you can share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. With all these things in mind, dear brothers and sisters, stand firm and keep a strong grip on the teaching we passed on to you both in person and by letter. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope, comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say.

2 Thessalonians 3

Dear brothers and sisters, we ask you to pray for us. Pray that the Lord's message will spread rapidly and be honored wherever it goes, just as when it came to you. Pray, too, that we will be rescued from wicked and evil people, for not everyone is a believer. But the Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one.

We need to pray for each other. Be led by love & never tire of doing good. Paul prays that the Lord will bless us with peace in every situation.

May the Lord lead your hearts into a full understanding and expression of the love of God and the patient endurance that comes from Christ. Dear brothers and sisters, never get tired of doing good. Now may the Lord of peace himself give you his peace at all times and in every situation. The Lord be with you all. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

1 Timothy 1 - *Paul's advice to the young Bishop of Ephesus.*

I am writing to Timothy, my true son in the faith. May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace, mercy, and peace.

The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith. But some people have missed this whole point. They have turned away from these things and spend their time in meaningless discussions.

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength to do his work. Oh, how generous and gracious our Lord was! He filled me with the faith and love that come from Christ Jesus. This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—and I am the worst of them all. But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life. All honor and glory to God forever and ever! He is the eternal King, the unseen one who never dies; he alone is God. Amen.

1 Timothy 2

I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. There is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus. He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time.

Women should learn quietly and submissively. I do not let women teach men or have authority over them. Women will be saved through childbearing as they live in faith, love, holiness, and modesty.

1 Timothy 3

Paul instructs Timothy who was a Bishop of Ephesus to be careful about appointing pastors & deacons. A church leader must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money. He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?

Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith: Christ was revealed in a human body and vindicated by the Spirit. He was seen by angels and announced to the nations. He was believed in throughout the world and taken to heaven in glory.

The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Pray for all people & for our leaders so we can have peace. There is one God & one Mediator who can reconcile God & humanity — Christ Jesus

Christ was revealed in a human body & vindicated by the Spirit. He was seen by angels & announced to the nations. He was taken to heaven in glory.

1 Timothy 4

Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons.

Everything God created is good, we should not reject any of it but receive it with thanks. For we know it is made acceptable by the word of God and prayer. Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come. This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it. This is why we work hard and continue to struggle, for our hope is in the living God, who is the Savior of all people and particularly of all believers. Teach these things and insist that everyone learn them. Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. Until I get there, focus on reading the Scriptures to the church, encouraging the believers, and teaching them. Give your complete attention to these matters. Throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone will see your progress. Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you.

Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly.

Our hope is in the living God, who is the Savior of all people and particularly of all believers.

1 Timothy 5

Paul instructs Timothy on how to deal with his flock. Show respect for older men, care for true widows who have no families & who have lived Godly lives. Encourage families to care for relatives as this pleases God.

Instructions for church leaders.

Do not listen to an accusation against an elder unless it is confirmed by two or three witnesses. Never be in a hurry about appointing a church leader. Those who sin should be reprimanded in front of the whole church.

Elders who do their work well should be respected and paid well, especially those who work hard at both preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, you must not muzzle an ox to keep it from eating as it treads out the grain. And in another place, those who work deserve their pay!

1 Timothy 6

Employees should show respect for their employers, especially if they are Christian employers.

Teach these things, Timothy, and encourage everyone to obey them. Some people may contradict our teaching, but these are the wholesome teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. These teachings promote a godly life.

True godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it. So, if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

True godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.

Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love,

But you, Timothy, are a man of God; run from all these evil things. Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. Fight the good fight for the true faith. Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you, which you have declared so well before many witnesses. And I charge you before God, who gives life to all, and before Christ Jesus, who gave a good testimony before Pontius Pilate, that you obey this command without wavering. At just the right time Christ will be revealed from heaven by the blessed and only almighty God, the King of all kings and Lord of all lords. He alone can never die, and he lives in light so brilliant that no human can approach him. No human eye has ever seen him, nor ever will. All honor and power to him forever! Amen.

Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.

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and gentleness.
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2 Timothy 1 - Timothy should avoid fear & follow Paul's example of preaching boldly.

I am writing to Timothy, my dear son. May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace, mercy, and peace. Fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don't be ashamed of me, either, even though I'm in prison for him. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer with me for the sake of the Good News. For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus. And now he has made all of this plain to us by the appearing of Christ Jesus, our Savior. He broke the power of death and illuminated the way to life and immortality through the Good News.

I know the one in whom I trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until the day of his return. Through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, carefully guard the precious truth that has been entrusted to you.

2 Timothy 2

Timothy, my dear son, be strong through the grace that God gives you in Christ Jesus. Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. Soldiers don't get tied up in the affairs of civilian life, for then they cannot please the officer who enlisted them. And athletes cannot win the prize unless they follow the rules. And hardworking farmers should be the first to enjoy the fruit of their labor. Always remember that Jesus Christ, a descendant of King David, was raised from the dead. This is the Good News I preach.

I am willing to endure anything if it will bring salvation and eternal glory in Christ Jesus to those God has chosen. This is a trustworthy saying: If we die with him, we will also live with him. If we endure hardship, we will reign with him. If we deny him, he will deny us. If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is.

Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth. God's truth stands firm like a foundation stone with this inscription: The Lord knows those who are his, and all who belong to the Lord must turn away from evil.

If you keep yourself pure, you will be a special utensil for honorable use. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work. Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts. Again I say, don't get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will learn the truth. Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.

God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

He broke the power of death and illuminated the way to life and immortality through the Good News.

Be strong through the grace that God gives you in Christ Jesus.

Jesus Christ, a descendant of King David, was raised from the dead. This is the Good News I preach.

Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval.

If you keep yourself pure, you will be a special utensil for honorable use.

2 Timothy 3

You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. People, who love themselves and money, will scoff at God and consider nothing sacred.

But you, Timothy, certainly know what I teach, and how I live, and what my purpose in life is. You know my faith, my patience, my love, and my endurance. Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

2 Timothy 4

Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching. You should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing.

The Lord stood with me and gave me strength so that I might preach the Good News in its entirety for all the non-Jews to hear. And he rescued me from certain death. Yes, and the Lord will deliver me from every evil attack and will bring me safely into his heavenly Kingdom. All glory to God forever and ever! Amen. May the Lord be with your spirit. And may his grace be with all of you.

Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

Scripture corrects & teaches us.

Paul tells Timothy to follow his example of spreading the Gospel.

The Lord will deliver us from every evil attack and will bring us safely into his heavenly Kingdom.

Titus 1 - *Some instructions to church leaders.*

I am writing to Titus, my true son in the faith that we share. May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior give you grace and peace. I have been sent to proclaim faith to those God has chosen and to teach them to know the truth that shows them how to live godly lives. This truth gives them confidence that they have eternal life, which God—who does not lie—promised them before the world began.

A church leader is a manager of God's household, so he must live a blameless life. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered; he must not be a heavy drinker, violent, or dishonest with money. Rather, he must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must love what is good. He must live wisely and be just. He must live a devout and disciplined life. He must have a strong belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with wholesome teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong. Everything is pure to those whose hearts are pure. But nothing is pure to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, because their minds and consciences are corrupted.

Titus 2

As for you, Titus, promote the kind of living that reflects wholesome teaching. Teach the older men to exercise self-control, to be worthy of respect, and to live wisely. They must have sound faith and be filled with love and patience. Similarly, teach the older women to live in a way that honors God. They must not slander others or be heavy drinkers. Instead, they should teach others what is good. These older women must train the younger women to love their husbands and their children, to live wisely and be pure, to work in their homes, to do good, and to be submissive to their husbands. In the same way, encourage the young men to live wisely. And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching. Teach the truth so that your teaching can't be criticized.

We are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God, while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed. He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing good deeds.

Titus 3

When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. Because of his grace he made us right in his sight and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life. If people are causing divisions among you, give a first and second warning. After that, have nothing more to do with them. Our people must learn to do good by meeting the urgent needs of others; then they will not be unproductive. Please give my greetings to the believers—all who love us. May God's grace be with you all.

I am writing to Titus, my true son in the faith that we share.

Church leaders should encourage others with wholesome teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong.

Paul tells Titus to teach, encourage & correct the believers.

Jesus gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, committed to doing good deeds.

God saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. We must do good by meeting the needs of others.

Philemon 1 - *Paul follows Jesus' example by offering to pay to free a slave.*

This letter is from Paul, a prisoner for preaching the Good News about Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy. I am writing to Philemon, our beloved co-worker. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ. Your love has given me much joy and comfort, my brother, for your kindness has often refreshed the hearts of God's people.

I am boldly asking a favor of you. I could demand it in the name of Christ because it is the right thing for you to do. But because of our love, I prefer simply to ask you. Consider this as a request from me—Paul, an old man and now also a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus. I appeal to you to show kindness to my child, Onesimus. I became his father in the faith while here in prison. Onesimus hasn't been of much use to you in the past, but now he is very useful to both of us. I am sending him back to you, and with him comes my own heart.

It seems you lost Onesimus for a little while so that you could have him back forever. He is no longer like a slave to you. He is more than a slave, for he is a beloved brother, especially to me. Now he will mean much more to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

So, if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge it to me. I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it. And I won't mention that you owe me your very soul! Yes, my brother, please do me this favor for the Lord's sake. Give me this encouragement in Christ.

Paul pleads for Philemon to free Onesimus the slave. Paul offers to pay for Onesimus' freedom if Philemon won't do it voluntary. With this request, Paul models how Jesus paid with His life to free us from slavery to sin & death.

Hebrews 1 - *The Christian new covenant is administered by Jesus our High Priest.*

Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe. The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven. This shows that the Son is far greater than the angels, just as the name God gave him is greater than their names. For God never said to any angel what he said to Jesus: You are my Son. Today I have become your Father. God also said, I will be his Father, and he will be my Son. And when he brought his supreme Son into the world, God said, let all of God's angels worship him. Regarding the angels, he says, he sends his angels like the winds, his servants like flames of fire. But to the Son he says, your throne, O God, endures forever and ever. You rule with a scepter of justice. You love justice and hate evil. Therefore, O God, your God has anointed you, pouring out the oil of joy on you more than on anyone else.

Heaven and earth will perish, but God will live forever. God never said to any of the angels, sit in the place of honor at my right hand until I humble your enemies, making them a footstool under your feet. Therefore, angels are only servants—spirits sent to care for people who will inherit salvation.

Hebrews 2

We must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it. God confirmed the message delivered to us by those who heard him speak by giving signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit whenever he chose.

It is not angels who will control the future world we are talking about. For in one place the Scriptures say, what are mere mortals that you should think about them, or a son of man that you should care for him? Yet for a little while you made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You gave them authority over all things. Now when it says all things, it means nothing is left out. But we have not yet seen all things put under their authority. What we do see is Jesus, who for a little while was given a position a little lower than the angels; and because he suffered death for us, he is now crowned with glory and honor. Yes, by God's grace, Jesus tasted death for everyone. God, for whom and through whom everything was made, chose to bring many children into glory. And it was only right that he should make Jesus, through his suffering, a perfect leader, fit to bring them into their salvation. So now Jesus and the ones he makes holy have the same Father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters. Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying. We also know that the Son did not come to help angels; he came to help the descendants of Abraham. Therefore, it was necessary for him to be made in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters, so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. Then he could offer a sacrifice that would take away the sins of

The 1611 edition of the King James Bible ends the Epistle to the Hebrews with “Written to the Hebrewes, from Italy, by Timothie”.

God gave Jesus our savior the highest name, exceeding that of the angels.

Clearly this Jewish audience had great respect for angels. The author makes a point to emphasize that men & particularly the son of man is ranked higher than angels even though man's authority has not been yet revealed. Jesus, who calls us His brothers & sisters, is our faithful high priest.

the people. Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested.

Hebrews 3

Jesus deserves far more glory than Moses, just as a person who builds a house deserves more praise than the house itself. For every house has a builder, but the one who built everything is God. But Christ, as the Son, is in charge of God's entire house. And we are God's house, if we keep our courage and remain confident in our hope in Christ. That is why the Holy Spirit says, today when you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled, when they tested me in the wilderness. In my anger I took an oath: 'They will never enter my place of rest.' Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. You must warn each other every day, while it is still today, so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ. Remember what it says: today when you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled. So we see that because of their unbelief they were not able to enter his rest.

Jesus deserves far more glory than Moses, just as a person who builds a house deserves more praise than the house itself.

If we remain faithful, we will share in all that belongs to Christ.

Hebrews 4

God's promise of entering his rest still stands, so this good news—that God has prepared this rest—has been announced to us just as it was to them. For only we who believe can enter his rest. We know it is ready because of the place in the Scriptures where it mentions the seventh day: on the seventh day God rested from all his work.

God's offer of entering His rest is available to us who will believe.

God's rest is there for people to enter, but those who first heard this good news failed to enter because they disobeyed God. So, God set another time for entering his rest, and that time is today. God announced this through David much later in the words already quoted: today when you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts. So, there is a special rest still waiting for the people of God. For all who have entered into God's rest have rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world. So let us do our best to enter that rest. But if we disobey God, as the people of Israel did, we will fall.

The word of God is alive and powerful.

We have a great High Priest who has entered heaven.

The word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.

Let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God.

So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

Hebrews 5

Christ was chosen by God to become High Priest. He was chosen by God, who said to him, you are my Son. Today I have become your Father. And in another passage God said to him, you are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears, to the one who could rescue him from death. And God heard his prayers because of his deep reverence for God. Even though Jesus was God's Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered. In this way, God qualified him as a perfect High Priest, and he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey him. And God designated him to be a High Priest.

We must become spiritually mature so that through training we can have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.

Hebrews 6

We must become like the ground that soaks up the falling rain and bears a good crop for the farmer, it has God's blessing. God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other believers. Our great desire is that you will keep on loving others as long as life lasts, in order to make certain that what you hope for will come true. Then you will not become spiritually dull and indifferent. Instead, you will follow the example of those who are going to inherit God's promises because of their faith and endurance.

Since there was no one greater to swear by, God took an oath in his own name to Abraham, saying: I will certainly bless you, and I will multiply your descendants beyond number. Then Abraham waited patiently, and he received what God had promised. God also bound himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that he would never change his mind. God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest.

Hebrews 7

The author explains to the Hebrews (the intended audience) how Jesus is patterned by God after an eternal priesthood which is superior to the Jewish priesthood implemented by Moses. Jesus implemented a new, better and eternal covenant to replace the Old Testament and priesthood which was based upon laws that the Israelis could not follow. The author's message to the Jews is that they need to enter God's rest through Jesus.

There was an oath regarding Jesus. For God said to him, the Lord has taken an oath and will not break his vow: 'You are a priest forever.' Because of this oath, Jesus is the one who guarantees this better covenant with God.

Because Jesus lives forever, his priesthood lasts forever. Therefore, he is able, once and forever, to save those who come to God through him. He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf. He is the kind of high priest we need because he is holy and

God qualified Jesus as a perfect High Priest, and He became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey Him.

God will not forget how hard we have worked for Him.

We can inherit Abraham's blessings by holding on to our confidence in His provision & salvation.

The Lord has taken an oath and will not break his vow: 'You are a priest forever.' Because of this oath, Jesus is the one who guarantees this better covenant with God.

blameless, unstained by sin. He has been set apart from sinners and has been given the highest place of honor in heaven. Unlike those other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices every day. They did this for their own sins first and then for the sins of the people. But Jesus did this once for all when he offered himself as the sacrifice for the people's sins. The law appointed high priests who were limited by human weakness. But after the law was given, God appointed his Son with an oath, and his Son has been made the perfect High Priest forever.

Hebrews 8

Here is the main point: we have a High Priest who sat down in the place of honor beside the throne of the majestic God in heaven. There he ministers in the heavenly Tabernacle, the true place of worship that was built by the Lord and not by human hands.

Jesus, our High Priest, has been given a ministry that is far superior to the old priesthood, for he is the one who mediates for us a far better covenant with God, based on better promises. If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant to replace it. But when God found fault with the people, he said: The day is coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors.

This is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, you should know the Lord. For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me already. And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.

When God speaks of a new covenant, it means he has made the first one obsolete.

Hebrews 9

Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. The blood of Christ purifies our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. He has entered that greater, more perfect Tabernacle in heaven, which was not made by human hands and is not part of this created world. With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever.

Jesus our High Priest is the one who mediates a new covenant between God and people, so that all who are called can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set us free from the penalty of the sins we have committed.

Jesus did not enter heaven to offer himself again and again, like the Jewish high priests who entered the Most Holy Place year after year with the blood of an animal. If that had been necessary, Christ would have had to die again and again, ever since the world began. But now, once for all time, he has appeared at the end of the age to remove sin by his own death as a sacrifice. Christ was offered once for all time as a sacrifice to take

Jesus, our High Priest, has been given a ministry that is far superior to the old Jewish priesthood, for he is the one who mediates for us a far better covenant with God, based on better promises.

God has written His laws on our hearts & we are His people.

Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins and now mediates a new covenant between God and people.

away the sins of many people. He will come again, not to deal with our sins, but to bring salvation to all who are eagerly waiting for him.

Hebrews 10

When Christ came into the world, he said to God, you did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings. But you have given me a body to offer. You were not pleased with burnt offerings or other offerings for sin. Then He said, ‘look, I have come to do your will, O God—as is written about me in the Scriptures.’ He cancels the first covenant in order to put the second into effect. For God’s will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time.

Our High Priest offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down in the place of honor at God’s right hand. For by that one offering he forever made perfect those who are being made holy. This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds. Then he says, I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds.

Dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven’s Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God’s house, let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ’s blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water. Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. Do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you! Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God’s will. Then you will receive all that he has promised. For in just a little while, the Coming One will come and not delay. And my righteous ones will live by faith.

Hebrews 11

Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see. Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation. By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God’s command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen.

It was by faith that Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God than Cain did. Abel’s offering gave evidence that he was a righteous man, and God showed his approval of his gifts. Although Abel is long dead, he still speaks to us by his example of faith. It was by faith that Enoch was taken up to heaven without dying—he disappeared, because God took him. For before he was taken up, he was known as a person who pleased God.

It is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him. It was by

God’s will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time.

We can boldly enter heaven’s Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus.

Since we have a great High Priest who rules over God’s house, let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him.

This great chapter of faith provides to the letter’s Hebrew audience countless examples of heroic Jewish believers.

Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence

faith that Noah built a large boat to save his family from the flood. He obeyed God, who warned him about things that had never happened before. It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. And even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith—for he was like a foreigner, living in tents. And so did Isaac and Jacob, who inherited the same promise. Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God. It was by faith that even Sarah was able to have a child, though she was barren and was too old. She believed that God would keep his promise. And so, a whole nation came from this one man who was as good as dead—a nation with so many people that, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore, there is no way to count them.

All these people died still believing what God had promised them. They did not receive what was promised, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed it. They agreed that they were foreigners and nomads here on earth. Obviously, people who say such things are looking forward to a country they can call their own. God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. It was by faith that Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice when God was testing him. Abraham, who had received God's promises, was ready to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, even though God had told him, Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted. Abraham reasoned that if Isaac died, God was able to bring him back to life again. And in a sense, Abraham did receive his son back from the dead. It was by faith that Isaac promised blessings for the future to his sons, Jacob and Esau. It was by faith that Jacob, when he was old and dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons and bowed in worship as he leaned on his staff. It was by faith that Joseph, when he was about to die, said confidently that the people of Israel would leave Egypt. It was by faith that Moses' parents hid him for three months when he was born. They saw that God had given them an unusual child, and they were not afraid to disobey the king's command. It was by faith that Moses, when he grew up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to share the oppression of God's people instead of enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin. He thought it was better to suffer for the sake of Christ than to own the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to his great reward. It was by faith that Moses left the land of Egypt, not fearing the king's anger. He kept right on going because he kept his eyes on the one who is invisible. It was by faith that Moses commanded the people of Israel to keep the Passover and to sprinkle blood on the doorposts so that the angel of death would not kill their firstborn sons. It was by faith that the people of Israel went right through the Red Sea as though they were on dry ground. But when the Egyptians tried to follow, they were all drowned. It was by faith that the people of Israel marched around Jericho for seven days, and the walls came crashing down. It was by faith that Rahab the prostitute was not destroyed with the people in her city who refused to obey God. For she had given a friendly welcome to the spies. How much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets. By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They shut the mouths of lions, quenched the flames of fire, and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight. Women received their loved ones back again from death.

of things we cannot see.

By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God's command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen.

It is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

By faith these people of faith overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them.

Also, many believers had great faith to testify about their faith as martyrs. All these people earned a good reputation because of their faith, yet none of them received all that God had promised. For God had something better in mind for us, so that they would not reach perfection without us.

Hebrews 12

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.

Do not forget the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said, my child, don't make light of the Lord's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you. For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child. As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all. Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn't we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever? For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees. Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong.

Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life. Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many. Make sure that no one is immoral or godless.

You have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering. You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect. You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel. Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe.

Since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off the sin that so easily trips us up. Let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus.

Don't give up when God corrects you. For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child.

Work at living in peace with everyone & work at living a holy life.

Hebrews 13

Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it! Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies. Give honor to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in marriage. Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, I will never fail you. I will never abandon you. So, we can say with confidence, the Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me? Remember your leaders who taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come from their lives and follow the example of their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be attracted by strange, new ideas.

This world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come. Let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name. And don't forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.

Now may the God of peace— who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and ratified an eternal covenant with his blood— may he equip you with all you need for doing his will. May he produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, every good thing that is pleasing to him. All glory to him forever and ever! Amen. May God's grace be with you all.

Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. Do good & share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.

May the God of peace equip us with everything we need for doing His will. May he produce in us every good thing that is pleasing to him.

James 1 - *Guard your tongue & prove your faith with accompanying works.*

This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am writing to the twelve tribes—Jewish believers scattered abroad. Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind.

God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. And remember, God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else.

Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession. Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. Get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.

If you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

James 2

Be kind to the poor. If you have been merciful, God will be merciful to you.

What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well—but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? Faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.

Don't you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith. He was even called the friend of God. So, you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone. Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works.

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you.

Whatever is good & perfect is a gift coming down from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens.

Don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says.

Blessings flow from following the perfect law that sets you free. Do what it says.

Faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.

We are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone. Faith is dead without good works.

James 3

If we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way. We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong.

If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. The wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. Those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace & reap a harvest of righteousness.

If we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.

James 4

Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God?

He gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. So, humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor.

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor.

Don't speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters. If you criticize and judge each other, then you are criticizing and judging God's law (to love others as yourself). But your job is to obey the law, not to judge whether it applies to you. God alone, who gave the law, is the Judge. So, what right do you have to judge your neighbor?

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Don't judge your neighbor.

It is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.

James 5

Be patient as you wait for the Lord's return. Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. You, too, must be patient for the coming of the Lord is near. We give great honor to those who endure under suffering. For instance, you know about Job, a man of great endurance. You can see how the Lord was kind to him at the end, for the Lord is full of tenderness & mercy.

Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come & pray over you. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. The prayer of the righteous has great power & produces wonderful results.

Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years! Then, when he prayed again, the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops.

My dear brothers and sisters, if someone among you wanders away from the truth and is brought back, you can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back from wandering will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins.

1 Peter 1 - *We are a chosen people, royal priests & a holy nation.*

This letter is from Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and his Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. May God give you more and more grace and peace.

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, beyond the reach of change and decay. And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see. So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So, when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.

Now this Good News has been announced to you by those who preached in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. It is all so wonderful that even the angels are eagerly watching these things happen. Prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control. Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world. You must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. And remember that the heavenly Father to whom you pray has no favorites. He will judge or reward you according to what you do. So, you must live in reverent fear of him during your time here as temporary residents. For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but now in these last days he has been revealed for your sake. Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And you have placed your faith and hope in God because he raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory. You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart. For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God.

1 Peter 2

You are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God. As the Scriptures say, I am placing a cornerstone in Jerusalem, chosen for great honor, and anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.

It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

We have a priceless inheritance that is kept in heaven for us beyond the reach of change and decay. God is protecting us by his power until we receive this salvation.

God paid a ransom to save us from the empty life we inherited from your ancestors.

Love each other deeply with all your heart.

Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God.

You are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. You are a chosen

You are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. You can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God's mercy. Dear friends, I warn you as temporary residents and foreigners to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors.

people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession.

It is God's will that your honorable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you. For you are free, yet you are God's slaves, so don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. Respect everyone, and love the family of believers.

He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds we are healed.

God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly. He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed. Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.

1 Peter 3

Women should clothe themselves with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God. This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They put their trust in God and accepted the authority of their husbands. In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.

All of you should be of one mind. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers.

All of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted and keep a humble attitude. Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. Even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats. You must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Remember that Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit. Now Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honor next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept his authority.

Jesus is seated in the place of honor next to God, and all the angels and powers accept his authority.

1 Peter 4

Don't spend the rest of your lives chasing your own desires but be anxious to do the will of God. You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy—their immorality and lust.

Be earnest and disciplined in your prayers. Show deep love

The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and disciplined in your prayers. Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay. God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever!

for each other,
for love covers
a multitude of
sins.

God has given
each of you a
gift from his
great variety of
spiritual gifts.
Use them well
to serve one
another.

Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering. It is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being called by his name! So, if you are suffering in a manner that pleases God, keep on doing what is right, and trust your lives to the God who created you, for he will never fail you.

1 Peter 5

As a fellow elder, I appeal to you: care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God.

Humble
yourselves
under the
mighty power
of God, and at
the right time
he will lift you
up in honor.
Give all your
worries and
cares to God,
for he cares
about you.

Humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are. In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So, after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation. All power to him forever! Amen.

2 Peter 1 - Guard against false teachers while God gives the ungodly time to repent.

This letter is from Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ. I am writing to you who share the same precious faith we have. This faith was given to you because of the justice and fairness of Jesus Christ, our God and Savior. May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires. In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Do these things, and you will never fall away. Then God will give you a grand entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. His promises enable us to share his divine nature.

Supplement your faith with moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, patient endurance, godliness, brotherly affection, and love for everyone.

Work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen.

For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw his majestic splendor with our own eyes when he received honor and glory from God the Father. The voice from the majestic glory of God said to him, this is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy. We ourselves heard that voice from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain. Because of that experience, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. You must pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a lamp shining in a dark place—until the Day dawns, and Christ the Morning Star shines in your hearts. Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.

2 Peter 2

Beware of false teachers and prophets. These false teachers are like unthinking animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed. They scoff at things they do not understand, and like animals, they will be destroyed. God did not spare even the angels who sinned. He threw them into hell, in gloomy pits of darkness, where they are being held until the day of judgment.

Beware of false teachers and prophets.

The Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials.

Just like God rescued Lot from Sodom, the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials, even while keeping the wicked under punishment until the day of final judgment.

2 Peter 3

This is my second letter to you, dear friends, and in both of them I have tried to stimulate your wholesome thinking and refresh your memory. I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires.

In the last days, scoffers will come, mocking

They are being kept for the day of judgment, when ungodly people will be destroyed. But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: a day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise to bring His judgement, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.

Since everything around us is going to be destroyed, what holy and godly lives you should live, looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness. And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight. And remember, our Lord's patience gives people time to be saved. This is what our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him—speaking of these things in all of his letters. Some of his comments are hard to understand, and those who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters to mean something quite different, just as they do with other parts of Scripture.

You must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All glory to him, both now and forever! Amen.

the truth and following their own desires.

God is giving ungodly people time since He does not want anyone to be destroyed but wants everyone to repent.

We are looking forward to the new heavens & a new earth.

1 John 1 - *Our Father loves us, for he calls us his children.*

We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life. This one who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen him. Now we testify and proclaim to you that he is the one who is eternal life. He was with the Father, and then he was revealed to us. We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that you may fully share our joy.

This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. If we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

1 John 2

My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. If anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world. Those who obey God's word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.

Dear friends, I am not writing a new commandment for you; rather it is an old one you have had from the very beginning. This old commandment—to love one another—is the same message you heard before. Yet it is also new. Jesus lived the truth of this commandment, and you also are living it. For the darkness is disappearing, and the true light is already shining.

I am writing to you who are God's children because your sins have been forgiven through Jesus. Do not love this world nor the things it offers you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. This world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. Anyone who does what pleases God will live forever. The Holy One has given you his Spirit, and all of you know the truth. You have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. The Spirit teaches you everything you need to know, and what he teaches is true—it is not a lie. Just as he has taught you, remain in fellowship with Christ. Dear children, remain in fellowship with Christ so that when he returns, you will be full of courage and not shrink back from him in shame. Since we know that Christ is righteous, we also know that all who do what is right are God's children.

We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. He is the Word of life. God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. We must confess our sins.

My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. If anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.

Do not love this world nor the things it offers you.

1 John 3

See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him.

You know that Jesus came to take away our sins, and there is no sin in him. When people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. The Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil. This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another. If we love our brothers and sisters who are believers, it proves that we have passed from death to life. We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So, we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God's love be in that person? Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God. Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if we don't feel guilty, we can come to God with bold confidence. We will receive from him whatever we ask because we obey him and do the things that please him. And this is his commandment: we must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us. Those who obey God's commandments remain in fellowship with him, and he with them. And we know he lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us.

1 John 4

Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. There are many false prophets in the world. This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: if a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God. You belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. We belong to God, and those who know God listen to us. If they do not belong to God, they do not listen to us. That is how we know if someone has the Spirit of truth or the spirit of deception.

God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us. And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So, we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world. Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully

See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children. The Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil. If we love the believers, it proves that we have passed from death to life. We will receive from him whatever we ask because we obey him and do the things that please him.

You belong to God, my dear children.

Do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit.

The Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.

We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in

experienced his perfect love. We love each other because he loved us first. He has given us this command: those who love God must also love their fellow believers.

God, and God lives in them.

1 John 5

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has become a child of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves his children, too. We know we love God's children if we love God and obey his commandments. Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome. Every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus Christ was revealed as God's Son by his baptism in water and by shedding his blood on the cross—not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit, who is truth, confirms it with his testimony. So we have these three witnesses—the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and all three agree. Since we believe human testimony, surely we can believe the greater testimony that comes from God. God has testified about his Son. This is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has become a child of God. Loving God means keeping his commandments. Every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. We are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him.

I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life. We are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for. We know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life. Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts.

2 John 1 - *The truth which lives in us will guard us against deceivers.*

This letter is from John, the elder. I am writing to the chosen lady and to her children (the Church), whom I love in the truth—as does everyone else who knows the truth—because the truth lives in us and will be with us forever. Grace, mercy, and peace, which come from God the Father and from Jesus Christ—the Son of the Father—will continue to be with us who live in truth and love. Love means doing what God has commanded us, and he has commanded us to love one another, just as you heard from the beginning.

The truth which lives in us will guard us against deceivers who say Jesus did not come in the flesh.

John warns us to guard against many deceivers who have gone out into the world. They deny that Jesus Christ came in a real body. Such a person is a deceiver and an antichrist.

3 John 1 - *John instructs his flock to provide support to the traveling teachers.*

Dear friend, I hope all is well with you and that you are as healthy in body as you are strong in spirit. Dear friend, you are being faithful to God when you care for the traveling teachers who pass through, even though they are strangers to you. They have told the church here of your loving friendship. Please continue providing for such teachers in a manner that pleases God. For they are traveling for the Lord, and they accept nothing from people who are not believers. We ourselves should support them so that we can be their partners as they teach the truth. Peace be with you.

John instructs his flock to provide support to the traveling teachers.

Jude 1 - Jude urges us to defend the faith that God entrusted to his holy people.

This letter is from Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and a brother of James. I am writing to all who have been called by God the Father, who loves you and keeps you safe in the care of Jesus Christ. May God give you more and more mercy, peace, and love.

Jude urges us to defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people: I want to remind you, though you already know these things, that Jesus first rescued the nation of Israel from Egypt, but later he destroyed those who did not remain faithful. And I remind you of the angels who did not stay within the limits of authority God gave them but left the place where they belonged. God has kept them securely chained in prisons of darkness, waiting for the great day of judgment. And don't forget Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns, which were filled with immorality and every kind of sexual perversion. Those cities were destroyed by fire and serve as a warning of the eternal fire of God's judgment. In the same way, these people—who claim authority from their dreams—live immoral lives, defy authority, and scoff at spiritual authority. When these people eat with you in your fellowship meals commemorating the Lord's love, they are like dangerous reefs that can shipwreck you. These people are grumblers and complainers, living only to satisfy their desires. They brag loudly about themselves, and they flatter others to get what they want.

But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God's love. And you must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering. Rescue others by snatching them from the flames of judgment. Show mercy to still others, but do so with great caution, hating the sins that contaminate their lives. All glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. All glory to him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Amen.

Jude urges us to defend the faith that God has entrusted to his holy people.

But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life.

Show mercy to those whose faith is wavering. Rescue others by snatching them from judgment.

Revelations 1 - Augustine believed the Millennium started with Christ.

This is a revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants the events that must soon take place. He sent an angel to present this revelation to his servant John, who faithfully reported everything he saw. This is his report of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

This letter is from John to the seven churches in the province of Asia. Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come; from the sevenfold Spirit before his throne; and from Jesus Christ. He is the faithful witness to these things, the first to rise from the dead, and the ruler of all the kings of the world. All glory to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us. He has made us a Kingdom of priests for God his Father. All glory and power to him forever and ever!

Jesus said: I am the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end, says the Lord God. I am the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come—the Almighty One.

John said: I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet blast. It said, write in a book everything you see, and send it to the seven churches in the cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.

Editor's note: After 2,000 years the Church has not been able to agree on how to interpret this prophetic book which is very different in nature from the rest of the New Testament. While this book was included in the scriptural canon, some Church doctors questioned its inclusion. In the fourth century, Eusebius said that some accept it as canonical, but he and others referred to it as a questioned book. Martin Luther rejected the book & Calvin excluded the book from his commentaries. St. Augustine commented on Revelation in his book *The City of God* and divided humans & angels into two societies or, as he puts it, cities. One serves God and is populated by the good angels and all humans of good will. The other opposes God and is made up of fallen angels and all humans of evil will. Augustine believed the Millennium started with Christ. He quoted Matt. 12:28, Luke 10:9 and Luke 11:20 to show that Christ told the people that the Kingdom had already started. In other words, we currently live in the 1,000 year Millenium rule of God's Kingdom (figurative for a long-time). Augustine's ideas that Christians could not be stopped by a bound, defeated Satan encouraged the Church to spread the Gospel throughout Europe while erecting cathedrals built to last thousands of years.

This is a revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants the events that must soon take place.

This letter is from John to the seven churches in the province of Asia.

Augustine believed the Millennium started with Christ. This Kingdom is the city of God's people brought to a higher perfection by Christ. In this more perfected state, it will continue until Christ returns.

Revelations 2-3

Messages of encouragement & correction to the 7 churches in Asia Minor (modern Turkey) that existed along a Roman mail route.

Message to 7 churches.

Revelations 4

Then as I looked, I saw a door standing open in heaven, and the same voice I had heard before spoke to me like a trumpet blast. The voice said, come up here, and I will show you what must happen after this. And instantly I was in the Spirit, and I saw a throne in heaven and someone sitting on it. John describes living beings and 24 elders worshipping at God's throne.

John is taken in the Spirit to God's throne.

Revelations 5

The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the heir to David's throne, has won the victory. He is worthy to open the scroll and its seven seals. They sang a new song with these words: you are worthy to take the scroll and break its seals and open it. For you were slaughtered, and your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. And you have caused them to become a Kingdom of priests for our God. And they will reign on the earth. And they sang in a mighty chorus: Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered—to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing. And then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea. They sang: blessing and honor and glory and power belong to the one sitting on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever.

Jesus is the only one worthy to open the sealed scroll which may reference the Old Testament book of Daniel.

Revelations 6 - 10

The Lamb breaks the seven seals on the scroll, unleashing the judgements of war, bloodshed, economic crisis, death & God's wrath. The seventh seal unleashes 4 trumpets calling for more horrific judgements on the earth, sea, rivers & heavens.

Judgements & wrath

Revelations 11

The 2 witnesses prophesy, are killed & raised to heaven.

2 witnesses

Revelations 12 - 18

- Signs of the end: a woman gives birth to a male child; a dragon appears from the sky; the man child's ascension; the dragon's defeat in heaven; heaven's victory song; and the women's escape.
- Appearance of the beast & false prophet who are allowed to rule for a short time.
- Bowls of God's wrath follows.
- Destruction of Babylon (earth's political structure) which is ruled by the Great Prostitute.

Signs of the end.

Destruction of the earth's corrupt political structure.

Revelations 19 - 22

The dragon is bound in the abyss for 1,000 years (the Millennium).

The Word of God, King of Kings & Lord of Lord conquers the earth & sets up a new heaven & earth where He rules from the New Jerusalem that is described as a cube (1,400 miles long, wide & high). The city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light. A river with the water of life flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. On each side of the river grew a tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, with a fresh crop each month. The leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations.

Praise the Lord! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice, and let us give honor to him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself.

I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever. And the one sitting on the throne said, look, I am making everything new!

Praise the Lord!
For the Lord
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Almighty,
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God's home is
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Look, I am
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Nicene Creed

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

The Nicene Creed is likely the most universally accepted and recognized statements of the Christian faith. The Nicene Creed was first adopted in A.D. 325 at the Council of Nicea. The Roman Emperor Constantine had convened the Council of Nicea in an attempt to unify the Christian church with one doctrine, especially on the issues of the Trinity and the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.

Amen.

The present text of the Apostles' Creed is similar to the baptismal creed used in the church in Rome in the 3rd and 4th centuries. It reached its final form in southwestern France in the late 6th or early 7th century. Gradually it replaced other baptismal creeds and was acknowledged as the official statement of faith of the entire Catholic church in the West by the time that Innocent III was pope (1198–1216). All creedal Protestant churches accept the Apostles' Creed and use it in worship, but some (e.g., the United Methodist Church) delete the line He descended to the dead.